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SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

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VOLUME ONE

REASON AND REVELATION

BEING AND GOD

TO MY FORMER STUDENTS
HERE AND ABROAD

PREFACE

FOR a quarter of a century I have wanted to write a systematic theology. It always has been impossible for me to think theologically in any other than a systematic way. The smallest problem, if taken seriously and radically, drove me to all other problems and to the anticipation of a whole in which they could find their solution. But world history, personal destiny, and special problems kept me from fulfilling this selfchosen task. Somehow the mimeographed propositions which I have used for my lectures became a substitute for the system for my pupils and friends. The present volume deals with the problems contained in the Introduction and the first two parts of the propositions. The content of the propositions has been preserved and expanded, while the propositional form has been dissolved and replaced by a continuous text. The scope of a theological system can be almost unlimited, as the Scholastic and Protestant Orthodox "Summae" show. Personal, practical limitations, as well as the problem of space, have kept me from moving even in the direction of a "Summa." It has been impossible to deal with all the traditional problems of a theological system. Those which are not decisive for the structure of the system have had to be omitted, while others are only mentioned because they have been discussed by me in other writings. Furthermore, it has been impossible to make extensive references to the Bible or the classical theologians. The elaboration of the line of thought has consumed all effort and all space. The biblical and ecclesiastical character of the solutions to theological problems presented in this volume will not be difficult to recognize, although it is more implicit than explicit. Finally, it has been impossible to enter into an open discussion with the different representatives of contemporary theology and philosophy, although an "underground" discussion with them is going on on almost every page.

My purpose, and I believe it is a justified purpose, has been to present the method and the structure of a theological system written from an apologetic point of view and carried through in a continuous correlation with philosophy. The subject of all sections of this system is the method of correlation and its systematic consequences illustrated in a discussion of the main theological problems. If I have succeeded in proving the

apologetic adequacy and the systematic fertility of this method, I shall not regret the limitations of the system.

This volume could not have been written without the help of some of my younger friends who really proved that they were friends by the selfless way in which they read and criticized the first and second drafts, from the theological as well as the stylistic point of view. First, I want to mention Professor A. T. Mollegen, professor of Christian ethics at The Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia, who offered important material and formal criticisms concerning large sections of the first draft. The main burden, however, was carried by my former assistant, John Dillenberger, of the Department of Religion, Columbia University, and by my present assistant, Cornelius Loew, who in regular conferences formulated the final text and took care of the entire technical side of the preparation of the manuscript. I also wish to mention my former secretary, the late Mrs. Hilde Frankel, who with great toil transferred my handwritten pages to typewritten copy, making it available to all those who helped me. I am grateful to the publishers, the University of Chicago Press, who waited patiently for several years for the completion of the manuscript.

I dedicate this book to my students, here and in Germany, who from year to year have urged me to publish the theological system with which they became acquainted in my lectures. Their desire to have in print what they heard in the classroom was the strongest psych&logical force in overcoming my hesitations, my perfectionism, and my awareness of my limitations. My ardent desire is that they shall find in these pages something of what they expect-a help in answering the questions they are asked by people inside and outside their churches.

A help in answering questions: this is exactly the purpose of this theological system.

NEW YORK CITY
August 20, 1950

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. THE POINT OF VIEW

1. MESSAGE AND SITUATION

THEOLOGY, as a function of the Christian church, must serve the needs of the church. A theological system is supposed to satisfy two basic needs: the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation. Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received. Not many theological systems have been able to balance these two demands perfectly. Most of them either sacrifice elements of the truth or are not able to speak to the situation. Some of them combine both shortcomings. Afraid of missing the eternal truth, they identify it with some previous theological work, with traditional concepts and solutions, and try to impose these on a new, different situation. They confuse eternal truth with a temporal expression of this truth. This is evident in European theological orthodoxy, which in America is known as fundamentalism. When fundamentalism is combined with an antitheological bias, as it is, for instance, in its biblicistic-evangelical form, the theological truth of yesterday is defended as an unchangeable message against the theological truth of today and tomorrow. Fundamentalism fails to make contact with the present situation, not because it speaks from beyond every situation, but because it speaks from a situation of the past. It elevates something finite and transitory to infinite and eternal validity. In this respect fundamentalism has demonic traits. It destroys the humble honesty of the search for truth, it splits the conscience of its thoughtful adherents, and it makes them fanatical because they are forced to suppress elements of truth of which they are dimly aware.

Fundamentalists in America and orthodox theologians in Europe can point to the fact that their theology is eagerly received and held by many people just because of the historical or biographical situation in which men find themselves today. The fact is obvious, but the interpretation is wrong. "Situation," as one pole of all theological work, does not refer to the psychological or sociological state in which individuals or groups live. It refers to the scientific and artistic, the economic, political, and ethical

forms in which they express their interpretation of existence. The "situation" to which theology must speak relevantly is not the situation of the individual as individual and not the situation of the group as group. Theology is neither preaching nor counseling; therefore, the success of a theology when it is applied to preaching or to the care of souls is not necessarily a criterion of its truth. The fact that fundamentalist ideas are eagerly grasped in a period of personal or communal distintegration does not prove their theological validity, just as the success of a liberal theology in periods of personal or communal integration is no certification of its truth. The "situation" theology must consider is the creative interpretation of existence, an interpretation which is carried on in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions. The "situation" certainly is not independent of these factors. However, theology deals with the cultural expression they have found in practice as well as in theory and not with these conditioning factors as such. Thus theology is not concerned with the political split between East and West, but it *is* concerned with the political interpretation of this split. Theology is not concerned with the spread of mental diseases or with our increasing awareness of them, but it *is* concerned with the psychiatric interpretation of these trends. The "situation" to which theology must respond is the totality of man's creative self-interpretation in a special period. Fundamentalism and orthodoxy reject this task, and, in doing so, they miss the meaning of theology.

"Kerygmatic" theology is related to fundamentalism and orthodoxy in so far as it emphasizes the unchangeable truth of the message (kerygma) over against the changing demands of the situation. It tries to avoid the shortcomings of fundamentalism by subjecting every theology, including orthodoxy, to the criterion of the Christian message. This message is contained in the Bible, but it is not identical with the Bible. It is expressed in the classical tradition of Christian theology, but it is not identical with any special form of that tradition. Reformation theology and, in our own day, the neo-Reformation theology of Barth and his school are outstanding examples of kerygmatic theology. In his day Luther was attacked by orthodox thinkers, and now Barth and his followers are under heavy attack by fundamentalists. This means that it is not entirely fair to call Luther "orthodox" or Barth "neo-orthodox." Luther was in danger of becoming orthodox, and Barth is in danger of becoming so; but this was not their intention. Both made a serious attempt to rediscover the eternal message *within* the Bible and tradition,

over against a distorted tradition and a mechanically misused Bible. Luther's criticism of the Roman system of mediations and degrees in the name of the decisive biblical categories of judgment and grace, his rediscovery of the Pauline message, and, at the same time, his courageous evaluation of the spiritual value of the biblical books were a genuine kerygmatic theology. Barth's criticism of the neo-Protestant-bourgeois synthesis achieved by liberal theology, his rediscovery of the Christian paradox, and, at the same time, the freedom of his spiritual exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans and his acceptance of radical historical criticism were a genuine kerygmatic theology. In both cases there was an emphasis on the eternal truth over against the human situation and its demands. In both cases this emphasis had prophetic, shaking, and transforming power. Without such kerygmatic reactions theology would lose itself in the relativities of the "situation"; it would become a "situation" itself-for instance, the religious nationalism of the so-called German Christians and the religious progressivism of the so-called humanists in America.

Yet the "situation" cannot be excluded from theological work. Luther was unprejudiced enough to use his own nominalist learning and Melanchthon's humanist education for the formulation of theological doctrines. But he was not conscious enough of the problem of the "situation" to avoid sliding into orthodox attitudes, thus preparing the way for the period of Protestant orthodoxy. Barth's greatness is that he corrects himself again and again in the light of the "situation" and that he strenuously tries not to become his own follower. Yet he does not realize that in doing so he ceases to be a merely kerygmatic theologian. In attempting to derive every statement directly from the ultimate truth-for instance, deriving the duty of making war against Hitler from the resurrection of the Christ*-he falls into using a method which can be called "neo-orthodox," a method which has strengthened all trends toward a theology of repristination in Europe. The pole called "situation" cannot be neglected in theology without dangerous consequences. Only a courageous participation in the "situation," that is, in all the various cultural forms which express modern man's interpretation of his existence, can overcome the present oscillation of kerygmatic theology between the freedom implied in the genuine kerygma and its orthodox fixation. In

1. Karl Barth, "A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland," in *This Christian* Cause (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941).

other words, kerygmatic theology needs apologetic theology for its completion.

2. Apologetic Theology and the Kerycma

Apologetic theology is "answering theology." It answers the questions implied in the "situation" in the power of the eternal message and with the means provided by the situation whose questions it answers.

The term "apologetic," which had such a high standing in the early church, has fallen into disrepute because of the methods employed in the abortive attempts to defend Christianity against attacks from modern humanism, naturalism, and historism. An especially weak and disgusting form of apologetics used the *argumentum ex ignorantia;* that is, it tried to discover gaps in our scientific and historical knowledge in order to find a place for God and his actions within an otherwise completely calculable and "immanent" world. Whenever our knowledge advanced, another defense position had to be given up; but eager apologetes were not dissuaded by this continuous retreat from finding in the most recent developments of physics and historiography new occasions to establish God's activity in new gaps of scientific knowledge. This undignified procedure has discredited everything which is called "apologetics."

There is, however, a more profound reason for the distrust of apologetic methods, especially on the part of the kerygmatic theologians. In order to answer a question, one must have something in common with the person who asks it. Apologetics presupposes common ground, however vague it may be. But kerygmatic theologians are inclined to deny any common ground with those outside the "theological circle." They are afraid that the common ground will destroy the uniqueness of the message. They point to the early Christian Apologists who saw a common ground in the acceptance of the Logos; they point to the Alexandrian school which found a common ground in Platonism; they point to Thomas Aquinas' use of Aristotle; above all, they point to the common ground which apologetic theology believed itself to have found with the philosophy of the Enlightenment, with Romanticism, with Hegelianism and Kantianism, with humanism and naturalism. They try to demonstrate that in each case what was assumed to be common ground actually was the ground of the "situation"; that theology lost its own ground when it entered the situation. Apologetic theology in all these forms-and that means practically all nonfundamentalist theology since the beginning of the eighteenth century-is, from the point of view

of recent kerygmatic theologians, a surrender of the kerygma, of the immovable truth. If this is an accurate reading of theological history, then the only real theology is kerygmatic theology. The "situation" cannot be entered; no answer to the questions implied in it can be given, at least not in terms which are felt to be an answer. The message must be thrown at those in the situation-thrown like a stone. This certainly can be an effective method of preaching under special psychological conditions, for instance, in revivals; it can even be effective if expressed in aggressive theological terms; but it does not fulfil the aim of the theological function of the church. And, beyond all this, it is impossible. Even kerygmatic theology must use the conceptual tools of its period. It cannot simply repeat biblical passages. Even when it does, it cannot escape the conceptual situation of the different biblical writers. Since language is the basic and all-pervasive expression of every situation, theology cannot escape the problem of the "situation." Kerygmatic theology must give up its exclusive transcendence and take seriously the attempt of apologetic theology to answer the questions put before it by the contemporary situation.

On the other hand, apologetic theology must heed the warning implied in the existence and the claim of kerygmatic theology. It loses itself if it is not based on the kerygma as the substance and criterion of each of its statements. More than two centuries of theological work have been determined by the apologetic problem. "The Christian message and the modern mind" has been the dominating theme since the end of classical orthodoxy. The perennial question has been: Can the Christian message be adapted to the modern mind without losing its essential and unique character? Most theologians have believed that it is possible; some have deemed it impossible either in the name of the Christian message or in the name of the modern mind. No doubt the voices of those who have emphasized the contrast, the *diastasis,* have been louder and more impressive-men usually are more powerful in their negations than in their affirmations. But the continuous toil of those who have tried to find a union, a "synthesis," has kept theology alive. Without them traditional Christianity would have become narrow and superstitious, and the general cultural movement would have proceeded without the "thorn in the flesh" which it needed, namely, an honest theology of cultural high standing. The wholesale condemnations of theology during the last two centuries of theology which are fashionable in traditional and neo-orthodox groups are profoundly wrong (as Barth himself has acknowledged

in his ***Die protestantische Theologie im neunzehnten Jahrhundert***). Yet certainly it is necessary to ask in every special case whether or not the apologetic bias has dissolved the Christian message. And it is further necessary to seek a theological method in which message and situation are related in such a way that neither of them is obliterated. If such a method is found, the two centuries' old question of "Christianity and the modern mind" can be attacked more successfully. The following system is an attempt to use the "method of correlation" as a way of uniting message and situation. It tries to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers implied in the message. It does not derive the answers from the questions as a self-defying apologetic theology does. Nor does it elaborate answers without relating them to the questions as a self-defying kerygmatic theology does. It correlates questions and answers, situation and message, human existence and divine manifestation.

Obviously, such a method is not a tool to be handled at will. It is neither a trick nor a mechanical device. It is itself a theological assertion, and, like all theological assertions, it is made with passion and risk; and ultimately it is not different from the system which is built upon it. System and method belong to each other and are to be judged with each other. It will be a positive judgment if the theologians of the coming generations acknowledge that it has helped them, and nontheological thinkers as well, to understand the Christian message as the answer to the questions implied in their own and in every human situation.

B. THE NATURE OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

3. The Theological Circle

Attempts to elaborate a theology as an empirical-inductive or a metaphysical deductive "science," or as a combination of both, have given ample evidence that no such an attempt can succeed. In every assumedly scientific theology there is a point where individual experience, traditional valuation, and personal commitment must decide the issue. This point, often hidden to the authors of such theologies, is obvious to those who look at them with other experiences and other commitments. If an inductive approach is employed, one must ask in what direction the writer looks for his material. And if the answer is that he looks in every direction and toward every experience, one must ask what characteristic of reality or experience is the empirical basis of his theology. Whatever the answer may be, an a priori of experience and valuation is implied.

The same is true of a deductive approach, as developed in classical idealism. The ultimate principles in idealist theology are rational expressions of an ultimate concern; like all metaphysical ultimates, they are religious ultimates at the same time. A theology derived from them is determined by the hidden theology implied in them.

In both the empirical and the metaphysical approaches, as well as in the much more numerous cases of their mixture, it can be observed that the a priori which directs the induction and the deduction is a type of mystical experience. Whether it is "being-itself" (Scholastics) or the "universal substance" (Spinoza), whether it is "beyond subjectivity and objectivity" (James) or the "identity of spirit and nature" (Schelling), whether it is "universe" (Schleiermacher) or "cosmic whole" (Hocking), whether it is "value creating process" (Whitehead) or "progressive integration" (Wieman), whether it is "absolute spirit" (Hegel) or "cosmic person" (Brightman)-each of these concepts is based on an immediate experience of something ultimate in value and being of which one can become intuitively aware. Idealism and naturalism differ very little in their starting point when they develop theological concepts. Both are dependent on a point of identity between the experiencing subject and the ultimate which appears in religious experience or in the experience of the world as "religious." The theological concepts of both idealists and naturalists are rooted in a "mystical a priori," an awareness of something that transcends the cleavage between subject and object. And if in the course of a "scientific" procedure this a priori is discovered, its discovery is possible only because it was present from the very beginning. This is the circle which no religious philosopher can escape. And it is by no means a vicious one. Every understanding of spiritual things (*Geisteswissenschaft*) is circular.

But the circle within which the theologian works is narrower than that of the philosopher of religion. He adds to the "mystical a priori" the criterion of the Christian message. While the philosopher of religion tries to remain general and abstract in his concepts, as the concept "religion" itself indicates, the theologian is consciously and by intention specific and concrete. The difference, of course, is not absolute. Since the experiential basis of every philosophy of religion is partly determined by the cultural tradition to which it belongs-even mysticism is culturally conditioned-it inescapably includes concrete and special elements. The philosopher as philosopher, however, tries to abstract from these elements and to create generally valid concepts concerning religion. The

theologian, on the other hand, claims the universal validity of the Christian message in spite of its concrete and special character. He does not justify this claim by abstracting from the concreteness of the message but by stressing its unrepeatable uniqueness. He enters the theological circle with a concrete commitment. He enters it as a member of the Christian church to perform one of the essential functions of the church -its theological self-interpretation.

The "scientific" theologian wants to be more than a philosopher of religion. He wants to interpret the Christian message generally with the help of his method. This puts him before two alternatives. He may subsume the Christian message under his concept of religion. Then Christianity is considered to be one example of religious life beside other examples, certainly the highest religion, but not the final one and not unique. Such a theology does not enter the theological circle. It keeps itself within the religious-philosophical circle and its indefinite horizons -horizons which beckon toward a future which is open for new and perhaps higher examples of religion. The scientific theologian, in spite of his desire to be a theologian, remains a philosopher of religion. Or he becomes really a theologian, an interpreter of his church and its claim to uniqueness and universal validity. Then he enters the theological circle and should admit that he has done so and stop speaking of himself as a scientific theologian in the ordinary sense of "scientific."

But even the man who has entered the theological circle consciously and openly faces another serious problem. Being inside the circle, he must have made an existential decision; he must be in the situation of faith. But no one can say of himself that he is in the situation of faith. No one can call himself a theologian, even if he is called to be a teacher of theology. Every theologian is committed ***and*** alienated; he is always in faith ***and*** in doubt; he is inside ***and*** outside the theological circle. Sometimes the one side prevails, sometimes the other; and he is never certain which side really prevails. Therefore, one criterion alone can be applied: a person can be a theologian as long as he acknowledges the content of the theological circle as his ultimate concern. Whether this is true does not depend on his intellectual or moral or emotional state; it does not depend on the intensity and certitude of faith; it does not depend on the power of regeneration or the grade of sanctification. Rather it depends on his being ultimately concerned with the Christian message even if he is sometimes inclined to attack and to reject it.

This understanding of "theological existence" resolves the conflict between the orthodox and the pietist theologians over the ***theologia irregenitorum*** ("theology of the irregenerate"). The pietists realized that one cannot be a theologian without faith, decision, commitment, without being in the theological circle. But they identified theological existence with an experience of regeneration. The orthodox protested against this, arguing that no one can be certain of his regeneration and, beyond this, that theology deals with objective materials which can be handled by any thinker inside or outside the theological circle who meets the intellectual preconditions. Today orthodox and pietist theologians are allied against the assumedly unbelieving critical theologians, while the heritage of orthodox objectivism has been taken over by the program (not the achievement) of empirical theology. In view of this age-old struggle it must be restated that the theologian belongs inside the theological circle but that the criterion whether or not he is in it is the acceptance of the Christian message as his ultimate concern.

The doctrine of the theological circle has a methodological consequence: neither the introduction nor any other part of the theological system is the logical basis for the other parts. Every part is dependent on every other part. The introduction presupposes the Christology and the doctrine of the church and vice versa. The arrangement is only a matter of expediency.

4. Two Formal Criteria of Every Theology

The last remark applies significantly to this Introduction, which is an attempt to give criteria for every theological enterprise. The criteria are formal, since they are abstracted from the concrete materials of the theological system. They are, however, derived from the whole of the Christian message. Form and content can be distinguished but not separated (this is the reason why even formalized logic cannot escape the philosophical circle). Form and content do not function as the basis of a deductive system; but they are methodological guardians at the boundary line of theology.

We have used the term "ultimate concern" without explanation. Ultimate concern is the abstract translation of the great commandment: "The Lord, our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength."[2] The religious concern is ultimate; it excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance; it makes them pre-

2. Mark 12:29 (Revised Standard Version).

liminary. The ultimate concern is unconditional, independent of any conditions of character, desire, or circumstance. The unconditional concern is total: no part of ourselves or of our world is excluded from it; there is no "place" to flee from it.[3] The total concern is infinite: no moment of relaxation and rest is possible in the face of a religious concern which is ultimate, unconditional, total, and infinite.

The word "concern" points to the "existential" character of religious experience. We cannot speak adequately of the "object of religion" without simultaneously removing its character as an object. That which is ultimate gives itself only to the attitude of ultimate concern. It is the correlate of an unconditional concern but not a "highest thing" called "the absolute" or "the unconditioned," about which we could argue in detached objectivity. It is the object of total surrender, demanding also the surrender of our subjectivity while we look at it. It is a matter of infinite passion and interest (Kierkegaard), making us its object whenever we try to make it our object. For this reason we have avoided terms like "*the* ultimate," "***the*** unconditioned," "***the*** universal," "***the*** infinite," and have spoken of ultimate, unconditional, total, infinite concern. Of course, in every concern there is *something* about which one is concerned; but this something should not appear as a separated object which could be known and handled without concern. This, then, is the first formal criterion of theology: The ***object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of ultimate concern for us.***

The negative meaning of this proposition is obvious. Theology should never leave the situation of ultimate concern and try to play a role within the arena of preliminary concerns. Theology cannot and should not give judgments about the aesthetic value of an artistic creation, about the scientific value of a physical theory or a historical conjecture, about the best methods of medical healing or social reconstruction, about the solution of political or international conflicts. The theologian ***as*** theologian is no expert in any matters of preliminary concern. And, conversely, those who are experts in these matters should not ***as such*** claim to be experts in theology. The first formal principle of theology, guarding the boundary line between ultimate concern and preliminary concerns, protects theology as well as the cultural realms on the other side of the line.

But this is not its entire meaning. Although it does not indicate the

3 Psalm 139.

content of the ultimate concern and its relation to the preliminary concerns, it has implications in both respects. There are three possible relations of the preliminary concerns to that which concerns us ultimately. The first is mutual indifference, the second is a relation in which a preliminary concern is elevated to ultimacy, and the third is one in which a preliminary concern becomes the vehicle of the ultimate concern without claiming ultimacy for itself. The first relation is predominant in ordinary life with its oscillation between conditional, partial, finite situations and experiences and moments when the question of the ultimate meaning of existence takes hold of us. Such a division, however, contradicts the unconditional, total, and infinite character of the religious concern. It places our ultimate concern beside other concerns and deprives it of its ultimacy. This attitude sidesteps the ultimacy of the biblical commandments and that of the first theological criterion. The second relation is idolatrous in its very nature. Idolatry is the elevation of a preliminary concern to ultimacy. Something essentially conditioned is taken as unconditional, something essentially partial is boosted into universality, and something essentially finite is given infinite significance (the best example is the contemporary idolatry of religious nationalism). The conflict between the finite basis of such a concern and its infinite claim leads to a conflict of ultimates; it radically contradicts the biblical commandments and the first theological criterion. The third relation between the ultimate concern and the preliminary concerns makes the latter bearers and vehicles of the former. That which is a finite concern is not elevated to infinite significance, nor is it put beside the infinite, but in and through it the infinite becomes real. Nothing is excluded from this function. In and through every preliminary concern the ultimate concern can actualize itself. Whenever this happens, the preliminary concern becomes a possible object of theology. But theology deals with it only in so far as it is a medium, a vehicle, pointing beyond itself.

Pictures, poems, and music can become objects of theology, not from the point of view of their aesthetic form, but from the point of view of their power of expressing some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately, in and through their aesthetic form. Physical or historical or psychological insights can become objects of theology, not from the point of view of their cognitive form, but from the point of view of their power of revealing some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately in and through their cognitive form. Social ideas and actions, legal projects and procedures, political programs and decisions, can become

objects of theology, not from the point of view of their social, legal, and political form, but from the point of view of their power of actualizing some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately in and through their social, legal, and political forms. Personality problems and developments, educational aims and methods, bodily and mental healing, can become objects of theology, not from the point of view of their ethical and technical form, but from the point of view of their power of mediating some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately in and through their ethical and technical form.

The question now arises: What is the content of our ultimate concern? What ***does*** concern us unconditionally? The answer, obviously, cannot be a special object, not even God, for the first criterion of theology must remain formal and general. If more is to be said about the nature of our ultimate concern, it must be derived from an analysis of the concept "ultimate concern." Our ***ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of being or not-being for us.*** This is the second formal criterion of theology.

Nothing can be of ultimate concern for us which does not have the power of threatening and saving our being. The term "being" in this context does not designate existence in time and space. Existence is continuously threatened and saved by things and events which have no ultimate concern for us. But the term "being" means the whole of human reality, the structure, the meaning, and the aim of existence. All this is threatened; it can be lost or saved. Man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning. "To be or not to be" in ***this*** sense is a matter of ultimate, unconditional, total, and infinite concern. Man is infinitely concerned about the infinity to which he belongs, from which he is separated, and for which he is longing. Man is totally concerned about the totality which is his true being and which is disrupted in time and space. Man is unconditionally concerned about that which conditions his being beyond all the conditions in him and around him. Man is ultimately concerned about that which determines his ultimate destiny beyond all preliminary necessities and accidents.

The second formal criterion of theology does not point to any special content, symbol, or doctrine. It remains formal and, consequently, open for contents which are able to express "that which determines our being or nonbeing." At the same time it excludes contents which do not have this power from entering the theological realm. Whether it is a god who

is a being beside others (even a highest being) or an angel who inhabits a celestial realm (called the realm of "spirits") or a man who possesses supranatural powers (even if he is called a god-man)-none of these is an object of theology if it fails to withstand the criticism of the second formal criterion of theology, that is, if it is not a matter of being or nonbeing for us.

5. Theology and Christianity

Theology is the methodical interpretation of the contents of the Christian faith. This is implicit in the preceding statements about the theological circle and about theology as a function of the Christian church. The question now arises whether there is a theology outside Christianity and, if so, whether or not the idea of theology is fulfilled in Christian theology in a perfect and final way. Indeed, this is what Christian theology claims; but is it more than a claim, a natural expression of the fact that the theologian works within the theological circle? Has it any validity beyond the periphery of the circle? It is the task of apologetic theology to prove that the Christian claim also has validity from the point of view of those outside the theological circle. Apologetic theology must show that trends which are immanent in all religions and cultures move toward the Christian answer. This refers both to doctrines and to the theological interpretation of theology.

If taken in the broadest sense of the word, theology, the logos or the reasoning about ***theos*** (God and divine things), is as old as religion. Thinking pervades all the spiritual activities of man. Man would not be spiritual without words, thoughts, concepts. This is especially true in religion, the all-embracing function of man's spiritual life.[4] It was a misunderstanding of Schleiermacher's definition of religion ("the feeling of absolute dependence") and a symptom of religious weakness when successors of Schleiermacher located religion in the realm of feeling as one psychological function among others. The banishment of religion into the nonrational corner of subjective emotions in order to have the realms of thought and action free from religious interference was an easy way of escaping the conflicts between religious tradition and modern thought. But this was a death sentence against religion, and religion did not and could not accept it.

4. The term "spiritual" (with a lower-case *s*) must be sharply distinguished from "Spiritual" (with a capital S). The latter refers to activities of the divine Spirit in man; the former, to the dynamic-creative nature of man's personal and communal life.

Every myth contains a theological thought which can be, and often has been, made explicit. Priestly harmonizations of different myths sometimes disclose profound theological insights. Mystical speculations, as in Vedanta Hinduism, unite meditative elevation with theological penetration. Metaphysical speculations, as in classical Greek philosophy, unite rational analysis with theological vision. Ethical, legal, and ritual interpretations of the divine law create another form of theology on the soil of prophetic monotheism. All this is "theo-logy," logos of *theos*, a rational interpretation of the religious substance of rites, symbols, and myths.

Christian theology is no exception. It does the same thing, but it does it in a way which implies the claim that it is *the* theology. The basis of this claim is the Christian doctrine that the Logos became flesh, that the principle of the divine self-revelation has become manifest in the event "Jesus as the Christ." If this message is true, Christian theology has received a foundation which transcends the foundation of any other theology and which itself cannot be transcended. Christian theology has received something which is absolutely concrete and absolutely universal at the same time. No myth, no mystical vision, no metaphysical principle, no sacred law, has the concreteness of a personal life. In comparison with a personal life everything else is relatively abstract. And none of these relatively abstract foundations of theology has the universality of the Logos, which itself is the principle of universality. In comparison with the Logos everything else is relatively particular. Christian theology is the theology in so far as it is based on the tension between the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal. Priestly and prophetic theologies can be very concrete, but they lack universality. Mystical and metaphysical theologies can be very universal, but they lack concreteness.

It seems paradoxical if one says that only that which is absolutely concrete can also be absolutely universal and vice versa, but it describes the situation adequately. Something that is merely abstract has a limited universality because it is restricted to the realities from which it is abstracted. Something that is merely particular has a limited concreteness because it must exclude other particular realities in order to maintain itself as concrete. Only that which has the power of representing everything particular is absolutely concrete. And only that which has the power of representing everything abstract is absolutely universal. This leads to a point where the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal are identical. And this is the point at which Christian theology emerges, the point which is described as the "Logos who has become flesh."[6] The Logos doctrine as the doctrine of the identity of the absolutely concrete with the absolutely universal is not one theological doctrine among others; it is the only possible foundation of a Christian theology which claims to be *the* theology. It is not necessary to call the absolutely universal the logos; other words, derived from other traditions, could replace it. The same is true of the term "flesh" with its Hellenistic connotations. But it is necessary to accept the vision of early Christianity that if Jesus is called the Christ he must represent everything particular and must be the point of identity between the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal. In so far as he is absolutely concrete, the relation to him can be a completely existential concern. In so far as he is absolutely universal, the relation to him includes potentially all possible relations and can, therefore, be unconditional and infinite. The biblical reference to the one side is found in the letters of Paul when he speaks of "being in Christ."[6] We cannot be *in* anything particular because of the self-seclusion of the particular against the particular. We can be only *in* that which is absolutely concrete and absolutely universal at the same time. The biblical reference to the other side also is given in Paul's writings when he speaks of the subjection of the cosmic powers to the Christ.[7] Only that which is absolutely universal and, at the same time, absolutely concrete can conquer cosmic pluralism.

It was not a cosmological interest (Harnack) but a matter of life and death for the early church which led to the use of the Stoic-Philonic logos doctrine in order to express the universal meaning of the event "Jesus the Christ." In so doing, the church announced its faith in the victory of the Christ over the demonic-natural powers which constitute polytheism and prevent salvation. For this reason the church fought desperately against the attempt of Arianism to make the Christ into one of the cosmic powers, although the highest, depriving him of both his absolute universality (he is less than God) and his absolute concreteness (he is more than man). The half-God Jesus of Arian theology is neither uni-

5. The Logos doctrine is misunderstood if the tension between universal and concrete is interpreted as a tension between abstract and particular. Abstraction negates parts of that from which it abstracts. Universality includes every part because it includes concreteness. Particularity excludes every particular from every other one. Concreteness represents every other concrete because it includes universality. Christian theology moves between the poles of the universal and the concrete and not between those of the abstract and the particular.

6. II Cor. 5: 17.

7. Romans, chap. 8.

versa1 enough nor concrete enough to be the basis of Christian theology.

It is obvious that these arguments do not prove the assertion of faith that in Jesus Christ the Logos has become flesh. But they show that, if this assertion is accepted, Christian theology has a foundation which infinitely transcends the foundations of everything in the history of religion which could be called "theology."

6. Theology and Philosophy: A Question

Theology claims that it constitutes a special realm of knowledge, that it deals with a special object and employs a special method. This claim places the theologian under the obligation of giving an account of the way in which he relates theology to other forms of knowledge. He must answer two questions: What is the relationship of theology to the special sciences (*Wissenschaften*) and what is its relationship to philosophy? The first question has been answered implicitly by the preceding statement of the formal criteria of theology. If nothing is an object of theology which does not concern us ultimately, theology is unconcerned about scientific procedures and results and vice versa. Theology has no right and no obligation to prejudice a physical or historical, sociological or psychological, inquiry. And no result of such an inquiry can be directly productive or disastrous for theology. The point of contact between scientific research and theology lies in the philosophical element of both, the sciences and theology. Therefore, the question of the relation of theology to the special sciences merges into the question of the relation between theology and philosophy.

The difficulty of this question lies partly in the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of philosophy. Every philosophy proposes a definition which agrees with the interest, purpose, and method of the philosopher. Under these circumstances the theologian can only suggest a definition of philosophy which is broad enough to cover most of the important philosophies which have appeared in what usually is called the history of philosophy. The suggestion made here is to call philosophy ***that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object.*** Reality as such, or reality as a whole, is not the whole of reality; it is the structure which makes reality a whole and therefore a potential object of knowledge. Inquiring into the nature of reality as such means inquiring into those structures, categories, and concepts which are presupposed in the cognitive encounter with every realm of reality. From this point of view philosophy is by definition critical. It separates the

multifarious materials of experience from those structures which make experience possible. There is no difference in this respect between constructive idealism and empirical realism. The question regarding the character of the general structures that make experience possible is always the same. It is ***the*** philosophical question.

The critical definition of philosophy is more modest than those philosophical enterprises which try to present a complete system of reality, including the results of all the special sciences as well as the general structures of prescientific experience, Such an attempt can be made from "above" or from "below." Hegel worked from "above" when he filled the categorical forms, developed in his ***Logic,*** with the available material of the scientific knowledge of his time and adjusted the material to the categories. Wundt worked from "below" when he abstracted general and metaphysical principles from the available scientific material of his time, with the help of which the entire sum of empirical knowledge could be organized. Aristotle worked from both "above" and "below" when he carried through metaphysical and scientific studies in interdependence. This also was the ideal of Leibniz when he sketched a universal calculus capable of subjecting all of reality to mathematical analysis and synthesis. But in all these cases the limits of the human mind, the finitude which prevents it from grasping the whole, became visible. No sooner was the system finished than scientific research trespassed its boundaries and disrupted it in all directions. Only the general principles were left, always discussed, questioned, changed, but never destroyed, shining through the centuries, reinterpreted by every generation, inexhaustible, never antiquated or obsolete. These principles are the material of philosophy.

This understanding of philosophy is, on the other hand, less modest than the attempt to reduce philosophy to epistemology and ethics, which was the goal of the Neo-Kantian and related schools in the nineteenth century, and less modest also than the attempt to reduce it to logical calculus, which has been the goal of logical positivism and related schools in the twentieth century. Both attempts to avoid the ontological question have been unsuccessful. The later adherents of the Neo-Kantian philosophy recognized that every epistemology contains an implicit ontology. It cannot be otherwise. Since knowing is an act which participates in being or, more precisely, in an "ontic relation," every analysis of the act of knowing must refer to an interpretation of being (cf. Nicolai Hartmann). At the same time the problem of values pointed toward an onto-

logical foundation of the validity of value-judgments. If values have no *fundamentum in re* (cf. Plato's identification of the good with the essential structures, the ideas of being), they float in the air of a transcendent validity, or else they are subjected to pragmatic tests which are arbitrary and accidental unless they introduce an ontology of essences surreptitiously. It is not necessary to discuss the pragmatic-naturalistic line of philosophical thought, for, in spite of the antimetaphysical statements of some of its adherents, it has expressed itself in definite ontological terms such as life, growth, process, experience, being (understood in an all-embracing sense), etc. But it is necessary to compare the ontological definition of philosophy, suggested above, with the radical attempts to reduce philosophy to scientific logic. The question is whether the elimination of almost all traditional philosophical problems by logical positivism is a successful escape from ontology. One's first reaction is the feeling that such an attitude pays too high a price, namely, the price of making philosophy irrelevant. But, beyond this impression, the following argument can be put forward. If the restriction of philosophy to the logic of the sciences is a matter of taste, it need not be taken seriously. If it is based on an analysis of the limits of human knowledge, it is based, like every epistemology, on ontological assumptions. There is always at least one problem about which logical positivism, like all semantic philosophies, must make a decision. What is the relation of signs, symbols, or logical operations to reality? Every answer to this question says something about the structure of being. It is ontological. And a philosophy which is so radically critical of all other philosophies should be sufficiently self-critical to see and to reveal its own ontological assumptions.

Philosophy asks the question of reality as a whole; it asks the question of the structure of being. And it answers in terms of categories, structural laws, and universal concepts. It must answer in ontological terms. Ontology is not a speculative-fantastic attempt to establish a world behind the world; it is an analysis of those structures of being which we encounter in every meeting with reality. This was also the original meaning of metaphysics; but the preposition *meta* now has the irremediable connotation of pointing to a duplication of this world by a transcendent realm of beings. Therefore, it is perhaps less misleading to speak of ontology instead of metaphysics.

Philosophy necessarily asks the question of reality as a whole, the question of the structure of being. Theology necessarily asks the same

question, for that which concerns us ultimately must belong to reality as a whole; it must belong to being. Otherwise we could not encounter it, and it could not concern us. Of course, it cannot be one being among others; then it would not concern us infinitely. It must be the ground of our being, that which determines our being or not-being, the ultimate and unconditional power of being. But the power of being, its infinite ground or "being-itself," expresses itself in and through the structure of being. Therefore, we can encounter it, be grasped by it, know it, and act toward it. Theology, when dealing with our ultimate concern, presupposes in every sentence the structure of being, its categories, laws, and concepts. Theology, therefore, cannot escape the question of being any more easily than can philosophy. The attempt of biblicism to avoid nonbiblical, ontological terms is doomed to failure as surely as are the corresponding philosophical attempts. The Bible itself always uses the categories and concepts which describe the structure of experience. On every page of every religious or theological text these concepts appear: time, space, cause, thing, subject, nature, movement, freedom, necessity, life, value, knowledge, experience, being and not-being. Biblicism may try to preserve their popular meaning, but then it ceases to be theology. It must neglect the fact that a philosophical understanding of these categories has influenced ordinary language for many centuries. It is surprising how casually theological biblicists use a term like "history" when speaking of Christianity as a historical religion or of God as the "Lord of history." They forget that the meaning they connect with the word "history" has been formed by thousands of years of historiography and philosophy of history. They forget that historical being is one kind of being in addition to others and that, in order to distinguish it from the word "nature," for instance, a general vision of the structure of being is presupposed. They forget that the problem of history is tied up with the problems of time, freedom, accident, purpose, etc., and that each of these concepts has had a development similar to the concept of history. The theologian must take seriously the meaning of the terms he uses. They must be known to him in the whole depth and breadth of their meaning. Therefore, the systematic theologian must be a philosopher in critical understanding even if not in creative power.

The structure of being and the categories and concepts describing this structure are an implicit or explicit concern of every philosopher and of every theologian. Neither of them can avoid the ontological question. Attempts from both sides to avoid it have proved abortive. If this is the

situation, the question becomes the more urgent: What is the relation between the ontological question asked by the philosopher and the ontological question asked by the theologian?

7. Theology and Philosophy: An Answer

Philosophy and theology ask the question of being. But they ask it from different perspectives. Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us. From this difference convergent and divergent trends emerge in the relation of theology and philosophy.

The first point of divergence is a difference in the cognitive attitude of the philosopher and the theologian. Although driven by the philosophical *erōs*, the philosopher tries to maintain a detached objectivity toward being and its structures. He tries to exclude the personal, social, and historical conditions which might distort an objective vision of reality. His passion is the passion for a truth which is open to general approach, subject to general criticism, changeable in accordance with every new insight, open and communicable. In all these respects he feels no different from the scientist, historian, psychologist, etc. He collaborates with them. The material for his critical analysis is largely supplied by empirical research. Just as all sciences have their origin in philosophy, so they contribute in turn to philosophy by giving to the philosopher new and exactly defined material far beyond anything he could get from a prescientific approach to reality. Of course, the philosopher, as a philosopher, neither criticizes nor augments the knowledge provided by the sciences. This knowledge forms the basis of his description of the categories, structural laws, and concepts which constitute the structure of being. In this respect the philosopher is as dependent on the scientist as he is dependent on his own prescientific observation of reality-often more dependent. This relation to the sciences (in the broad sense of *Wissenschaften*) strengthens the detached, objective attitude of the philosopher. Even in the intuitive-synthetic side of his procedure he tries to exclude influences which are not purely determined by his object.[8]

The theologian, quite differently, is not detached from his object but is involved in it. He looks at his object (which transcends the character of being an object) with passion, fear, and love. This is not the *erōs* of

8. The concept of a "philosophical faith" appears questionable from this point of view (see Karl Jaspers, *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy* [New York: Philosophical Library, 1949]).

the philosopher or his passion for objective truth; it is the love which accepts saving, and therefore personal, truth. The basic attitude of the theologian is commitment to the content he expounds. Detachment would be a denial of the very nature of this content. The attitude of the theologian is "existential." He is involved-with the whole of his existence, with his finitude and his anxiety, with his self-contradictions and his despair, with the healing forces in him and in his social situation. Every theological statement derives its seriousness from these elements of existence. The theologian, in short, is determined by his faith. Every theology presupposes that the theologian is in the theological circle. This contradicts the open, infinite, and changeable character of philosophical truth. It also differs from the way in which the philosopher is dependent on scientific research. The theologian has no direct relation to the scientist (including the historian, sociologist, psychologist). He deals with him only in so far as philosophical implications are at stake. If he abandons the existential attitude, as some of the "empirical" theologians have done, he is driven to statements the reality of which will not be acknowledged by anybody who does not share the existential presuppositions of the assumedly empirical theologian. Theology is necessarily existential, and no theology can escape the theological circle.

The second point of divergence between the theologian and the philosopher is the difference in their sources. The philosopher looks at the whole of reality to discover within it the structure of reality as a whole. He tries to penetrate into the structures of being by means of the power of his cognitive function and its structures. He assumes-and science continuously confirms this assumption-that there is an identity, or at least an analogy, between objective and subjective reason, between the logos of reality as a whole and the logos working in him. Therefore, this logos is common; every reasonable being participates in it, uses it in asking questions and criticizing the answers received. There is no particular place to discover the structure of being; there is no particular place to stand to discover the categories of experience. The place to look is all places; the place to stand is no place'at all; it is pure reason.

The theologian, on the other hand, must look where that which concerns him ultimately is manifest, and he must stand where its manifestation reaches and grasps him. The source of his knowledge is not the universal logos but the Logos "who became flesh," that is, the logos manifesting itself in a particular historical event. And the medium through which he receives the manifestation of the logos is not common

rationality but the church, its traditions and its present reality. He speaks in the church about the foundation of the church. And he speaks because he is grasped by the power of this foundation and by the community built upon it. The concrete logos which he sees is received through believing commitment and not, like the universal logos at which the philosopher looks, through rational detachment.

The third point of divergence between philosophy and theology is the difference in their content. Even when they speak about the same object, they speak about something different. The philosopher deals with the categories of being in relation to the material which is structured by them. He deals with causality as it appears in physics or psychology; he analyzes biological or historical time; he discusses astronomical as well as microcosmic space. He describes the epistemological subject and the relation of person and community. He presents the characteristics of life and spirit in their dependence on, and independence of, each other. He defines nature and history in their mutual limits and tries to penetrate into ontology and logic of being and nonbeing. Innumerable other examples could be given. They all reflect the cosmological structure of the philosophical assertions. The theologian, on the other hand, relates the same categories and concepts to the quest for a "new being." His assertions have a soteriological character. He discusses causality in relation to a ***prima causa***, the ground of the whole series of causes and effects; he deals with time in relation to eternity, with space in relation to man's existential homelessness. He speaks of the self-estrangement of the subject, about the spiritual center of personal life, and about community as a possible embodiment of the "New Being." He relates the structures of life to the creative ground of life and the structures of spirit to the divine Spirit. He speaks of the participation of nature in the "history of salvation," about the victory of being over nonbeing. Here also the examples could be increased indefinitely; they show the sharp divergence of theology from philosophy with respect to their content.

The divergence between philosophy and theology is counterbalanced by an equally obvious convergence. From both sides converging trends are at work. The philosopher, like the theologian, "exists," and he cannot jump over the concreteness of his existence and his implicit theology. He is conditioned by his psychological, sociological, and historical situation. And, like every human being, he exists in the power of an ultimate concern, whether or not he is fully conscious of it, whether or not he admits it to himself and to others. There is no reason why even the most scientific philosopher should not admit it, for without an ultimate concern his philosophy would be lacking in passion, seriousness, and creativity. Wherever we look in the history of philosophy, we find ideas and systems which claim to be ultimately relevant for human existence. Occasionally the philosophy of religion openly expresses the ultimate concern behind a system. More often it is the character of the ontological principles, or a special section of a system, such as epistemology, philosophy of nature, politics and ethics, philosophy of history, etc., which is most revealing for the discovery of the ultimate concern and the hidden theology within it. Every creative philosopher is a hidden theologian (sometimes even a declared theologian). He is a theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision. He is a theologian in the degree to which his intuition of the universal logos of the structure of reality as a whole is formed by a particular logos which appears to him on his particular place and reveals to him the meaning of the whole. And he is a theologian in the degree to which the particular logos is a matter of active commitment within a special community. There is hardly a historically significant philosopher who does not show these marks of a theologian. But the philosopher does not intend to be a theologian. He wants to serve the universal logos. He tries to turn away from his existential situation, including his ultimate concern, toward a place above all particular places, toward pure reality, The conflict between the intention of becoming universal and the destiny of remaining particular characterizes every philosophical existence. It is its burden and its greatness.

The theologian carries an analogous burden. Instead of turning away from his existential situation, including his ultimate concern, he turns toward it. He turns toward it, not in order to make a confession of it, but in order to make clear the universal validity, the logos structure, of what concerns him ultimately. And he can do this only in an attitude of detachment from his existential situation and in obedience to the universal ***logos***. This obligates him to be critical of every special expression of his ultimate concern. He cannot affirm any tradition and any authority except through a "No" and a "Yes." And it is always possible that he may not be able to go all the way from the "No" to the "Yes." He cannot join the chorus of those who live in unbroken assertions. He must take the risk of being driven beyond the boundary line of the theological circle. Therefore, the pious and powerful in the church are suspicious of him, although they live in dependence upon the work of the former

theologians who were in the same situation. Theology, since it serves not only the concrete but also the universal logos, can become a stumbling block for the human and a demonic temptation for the theologian. The detachment required in honest theological work can destroy the necessary involvement of faith. This tension is the burden and the greatness of every theological work.

The duality of divergence and convergence in the relation between theology and philosophy leads to the double question: Is there a necessary conflict between the two and is there a possible synthesis between them? Both questions must be answered negatively. Neither is a conflict between theology and philosophy necessary, nor is a synthesis between them possible.

A conflict presupposes a common basis on which to fight. But there is no common basis between theology and philosophy. If the theologian and the philosopher fight, they do so either on a philosophical or on a theological basis. The philosophical basis is the ontological analysis of the structure of being. If the theologian needs this analysis, either he must take it from a philosopher or he must himself become a philosopher. Usually he does both. If he enters the philosophical arena, conflicts as well as alliances with other philosophers are unavoidable. But all this happens on the philosophical level. The theologian has no right whatsoever to argue for a philosophical opinion in the name of his ultimate concern or on the basis of the theological circle. He is obliged to argue for a philosophical decision in the name of the universal logos and from the place which is no place: pure reason. It is a disgrace for the theologian and intolerable for the philosopher if in a philosophical discussion the theologian suddenly claims an authority other than pure reason. Conflicts on the philosophical level are conflicts between two philosophers, one of whom happens to be a theologian, but they are not conflicts between theology and philosophy.

Often, however, the conflict is fought on the theological level. The hidden theologian in the philosopher fights with the professed theologian. This situation is more frequent than most philosophers realize. Since they have developed their concepts with the honest intention of obeying the universal logos, they are reluctant to recognize the existentially conditioned elements in their systems. They feel that such elements, while they give color and direction to their creative work, diminish its truth value. In such a situation the theologian must break the resistance of the philosopher against a theological analysis of his ideas.

He can do this by pointing to the history of philosophy, which discloses that in every significant philosopher existential passion (ultimate concern) and rational power (obedience to the universal logos) are united and that the truth value of a philosophy is dependent on the amalgamation of these two elements in every concept. The insight into this situation is, at the same time, an insight into the fact that two philosophers, one of whom happens to be a theologian, can fight with each other and that two theologians, one of whom happens to be a philosopher, can fight with each other; but there is no possible conflict between theology and philosophy because there is no common basis for such a conflict. The philosopher may or may not convince the philosopher-theologian. And the theologian may or may not convert the theologian-philosopher. In no case does the theologian as such stand against the philosopher as such and vice versa.

Thus there is no conflict between theology and philosophy, and there is no synthesis either-for exactly the same reason which insures that there will be no conflict. A common basis is lacking. The idea of a synthesis between theology and philosophy has led to the dream of a "Christian philosophy." The term is ambiguous. It can mean a philosophy whose existential basis is historical Christianity. In this sense all modern philosophy is Christian, even if it is humanistic, atheistic, and intentionally anti-Christian. No philosopher living within Western Christian culture can deny his dependence on it, as no Greek philosopher could have hidden his dependence on an Apollonian-Dionysian culture, even if he was a radical critic of the gods of Homer. The modern vision of reality and its philosophical analysis is different from that of pre-Christian times, whether one is or is not existentially determined by the God of Mount Zion and the Christ of Mount Golgotha. Reality is encountered differently; experience has different dimensions and directions than in the cultural climate of Greece. No one is able to jump out of this "magic" circle. Nietzsche, who tried to do so, announced the coming of the Anti-Christ. But the Anti-Christ is dependent on the Christ against whom he arises. The early Greeks, for whose culture Nietzsche was longing, did not have to fight the Christ; indeed, they unconsciously prepared his coming by elaborating the questions to which he gave the answer and the categories in which the answer could be expressed. Modern philosophy is not pagan. Atheism and anti-Christianity are not pagan. They are anti-Christian in Christian terms. The scars of the Christian tradition cannot be erased; they are a *character indelebilis*. Even the pagan-

ism of naziism was not really a relapse to paganism (just as bestiality is not a relapse to the beast).

But the term "Christian philosophy" is often meant in a different sense. It is used to denote a philosophy which does not look at the universal logos but at the assumed or actual demands of a Christian theology. This can be done in two ways: either the church authorities or its theological interpreters nominate one of the past philosophers to be their "philosophical saint" or they demand that contemporary philosophers should develop a philosophy under special conditions and with a special aim. In both cases the philosophical *erōs* is killed. If Thomas Aquinas is officially named *the* philosopher of the Roman Catholic church, he has ceased to be for Catholic philosophers a genuine partner in the philosophical dialogue which goes on through the centuries. And if present-day Protestant philosophers are asked to accept the idea of personality as their highest ontological principle because it is the principle most congenial to the spirit of the Reformation, the work of these philosophers is mutilated. There is nothing in heaven and earth, or beyond them, to which the philosopher must subject himself except the universal logos of being as it gives itself to him in experience. Therefore, the idea of a "Christian philosophy" in the narrower sense of a philosophy which is intentionally Christian must be rejected. The fact that every modern philosophy has grown on Christian soil and shows traces of the Christian culture in which it lives has nothing to do with the self-contradicting ideal of a "Christian philosophy."

Christianity does not need a "Christian philosophy" in the narrower sense of the word. The Christian claim that the logos who has become concrete in Jesus as the Christ is at the same time the universal *logos* includes the claim that wherever the logos is at work it agrees with the Christian message. No philosophy which is obedient to the universal logos can contradict the concrete logos, the Logos "who became flesh."

C. THE ORGANIZATION OF THEOLOGY

Theology is the methodical explanation of the contents of the Christian faith. This definition is valid for all theological disciplines. Therefore, it is unfortunate if the name "theology" is reserved for systematic theology. Exegesis and homiletics are as theological as systematics. And systematics can fail to be theological as readily as can the others. The criterion of every theological discipline is whether or not it deals with the Christian message as a matter of ultimate concern.

The tension between the universal and the concrete poles in the Christian faith leads to the division of theological work into historical and constructive groups of disciplines. This is foreshadowed in the division of the New Testament into gospels (including the acts of the apostles) and epistles. It is significant, however, that in the Fourth Gospel there is a complete amalgamation of the historical and the constructive elements. This points to the fact that in the Christian message history is theological and theology is historical. Nevertheless, reasons of expediency make a division into historical and constructive disciplines unavoidable, since each of them has a different nontheological side. Historical theology includes historical research; systematic theology includes philosophical discussion. The historian and the philosopher, both of them members of the theological faculty, must unite in the theological task of interpreting the Christian message, each with his special cognitive tools. But more is involved in their co-operation. In every moment of his work the historical theologian presupposes a systematic point of view; otherwise he would be a historian of religion, not a historical theologian. This mutual immanence of the historical and the constructive elements is a decisive mark of Christian theology.

Historical theology can be subdivided into the biblical disciplines, church history, and the history of religion and culture. Biblicistic theologians are inclined to admit only the former group to full theological standing and to exclude the third group completely. Even Barth considers church history only as *Hilfswissenschaft* (a supporting science). This, of course, is a systematic-theological assertion, and, seen in the light of the critical principles, a misguided one, for all three groups combine a nontheological with a theological element. There is much nontheological research in the biblical disciplines; there can be a radically theological interpretation of the history of religion and culture from the point of view of our ultimate concern; and both assertions are true of church history. In spite of the basic significance of the biblical disciplines, it is not justifiable to exclude the two other groups from a full theological standing. This is confirmed by the fact that the three groups are largely interdependent. In some respects, the biblical literature is a section not only of church history but also of the history of religion and culture. The influence of nonbiblical religions and cultures on Bible and church history is too obvious to be denied (cf., for instance, the intertestamental period). The criterion whether or not a discipline is theological is not

its assumedly supranatural origin but its significance for the interpretation of our ultimate concern.

Systematic theology is more difficult to organize than historical theology. Questions of truth and questions of expediency must be answered before adequate organization is possible. The first problem is created by the fact that the section on "natural theology" in the classical tradition has been replaced (definitely, since Schleiermacher) by a general and autonomous philosophy of religion. But while "natural theology" was, so to speak, a preamble to the theology of revelation, developed in view of the latter and under its control, philosophy of religion is an independent philosophical discipline. Or, more exactly, philosophy of religion is a dependent part of a philosophical whole and in no sense a theological discipline. Schleiermacher was aware of this situation, and he spoke of propositions borrowed by theology from "ethics"O-ethics meaning to him philosophy of culture. But Schleiermacher did not answer the question of the relation of this "borrowed" philosophical truth to theological truth. If philosophical truth lies outside the theological circle, how can it determine the theological method? And if it lies within the theological circle, it is not autonomous and theology need not borrow it. This problem has worried all those modern theologians who have neither adhered to the traditional precritical natural theology (as Catholics and orthodox Protestants have done) nor dismissed natural theology as well as philosophy of religion by exclusively maintaining a theology of revelation (as the neo-orthodox theologians have done).

The solution which underlies the present system, and which is fully explained only by means of the whole system, accepts the philosophical and theological criticism of natural theology in its traditional sense. It also accepts the neo-orthodox criticism of a general philosophy of religion as the basis of systematic theology. At the same time, it tries to do justice to the theological motives behind natural theology and philosophy of religion. It takes the philosophical element into the structure of the system itself, using it as the material out of which questions are developed. **The** questions are answered by the theological concepts. The problem, "Natural theology or philosophy of religion?" is answered by a third way-the "method of correlation" (see below, p. 59). For the organization of systematic theology this means that no special discipline called "philosophy of religion" belongs to the realm of systematic theology. This decision does not mean, however, that the problems currently included in what is called "philosophy of religion" must be refused consideration in the theological curriculum.

9. Friedrich Schlricrmacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. H. R. **Mackintosh (Edinburgh:** T. & T. **Clark, 1928), pp. 5 ff.**

A second problem of the organization of systematic theology is the position of apologetics. Modern theologians usually have identified it with philosophy of religion, while in traditional theology the section on natural theology contained much apologetic material. The exclusion of these two methods makes another solution necessary. One contribution to a solution has been given in the second section of this system, "Apologetic Theology and the Kerygma." It points to the fact that systematic theology is "anwering theology." It must answer the questions implied in the general human and the special historical situation. Apologetics, therefore, is an omnipresent element and not a special section of systematic theology. The "method of correlation" applied in the present system gives pointed expression to the decisive character of the apologetic element in systematic theology.

This solution is also valid for the ethical element in systematic theology. It was not until the later orthodox period that, under the influence of modern philosophy, ethics was separated from dogmatics. The positive result was a much richer development of theological ethics; the negative result was an unsolved conflict with philosophical ethics. Today, in spite of the fact that some theological faculties have well-developed departments of Christian ethics, a trend toward taking theological ethics back into the unity of the system can be seen. This trend has been sup ported by the neo-orthodox movement's rejection of an independent theological ethic. A theology which, like the present system, emphasizes the existential character of theology must follow this trend all the way to its very end. The ethical element is a necessary-and often predominant-element in every theological statement. Even such formal statements as the critical principles point to the decision of the ethical individual about his "being or nonbeing." The doctrines of finitude and existence, or of anxiety and guilt, are equally ontological and ethical in character, and in the sections on "The Church" and "The Christian" the ethical element (social and personal) is predominant. These are only examples which show that an "existential" theology implies ethics in such a way that no special section for ethical theology is needed. Reasons of expediency may, nevertheless, justify the preservation of departments of Christian ethics.

The third and most significant element in systematic theology is the

dogmatic element. For a long period it supplied the name for the whole of systematic theology. Dogmatics is the statement of the doctrinal tradition for our present situation. The word "dogmatics" emphasizes the importance of the formulated and officially acknowledged dogma for the work of the systematic theologian. And in this sense the terminology is justified, for the theologian exercises a function of the church within the church and for the church. And the church is based on a foundation whose protective formulation is given in the creeds. The word "dogma" itself originally expressed this function. In the later Greek philosophical communities it designated the special doctrines accepted as the tradition of a special school. Dogmata were distinctive philosophical doctrines. In this sense the Christian community had its ***dogmata*** too. But the word received another meaning in the history of Christian thought. The function of the creeds as a protection against destructive heresies made their acceptance a matter of life and death for Christianity. The heretic was considered a demonic enemy of the message of Christ. With the complete union of church and state after Constantine, the doctrinal laws of the church also became civil laws of the state, and the heretic was considered a criminal. The destructive consequences of this situation, the demonic activities of states and churches, Catholic as well as Protestant, against theological honesty and scientific autonomy have discredited the words "dogma" and "dogmatics" to such a degree that it is hardly possible to re-establish their genuine meaning. This does not reduce the significance of the formulated ***dogmata*** for systematic theology, but it makes use of the term "dogmatics" impossible. "Systematic theology," embracing apologetics, dogmatics, and ethics, seems to be the most adequate term.

The organization of theological work is not complete without the inclusion of what is usually called "practical theology." Although Schleiermacher praised it as the crown of theology, it is not a third part in addition to the historical and the systematic parts. It is the technical theory through which these two parts are applied to the life of the church. A technical theory describes the adequate means for a given end. The given end of practical theology is the life of the church. While the doctrine of the church about its nature and its functions is a matter of systematic theology, practical theology deals with the institutions through which the nature of the church is actualized and its functions are performed. It does not deal with them from the historical point of view, telling what has been and is still going on in the church, but it looks at

them from the technical point of view, asking how to act most effectively. If the practical theologian makes a study of the history of the Protestant hymn, he works in the realm of historical theology. And if he writes an essay on the aesthetic function of the church, he works in the realm of systematic theology. But if he uses the material and the principles gained through his historical or systematic studies in order to make suggestions for the use of hymns or for the design of church buildings, he works in the realm of practical rheology. It is the technical point of view that distinguishes practical from theoretical theology. As occurs in every cognitive approach to reality, a bifurcation between pure and applied knowledge takes place in theology. And since for modern feeling in contrast to ancient feeling, pure sciences have no higher dignity than technical sciences, practical theology has no less theological standing than theoretical theology. And finally just as there is a continuous exchange of knowledge between the pure and the technical approaches in all scientific realms, so practical and theoretical theology are interdependent. This also follows from the existential character of theology, for in the state of ultimate concern the difference between theory and practice vanishes.

The organization of practical theology is implicit in the doctrine of the functions of the church. Each function is a necessary consequence of the nature of the church and therefore an end for which institutional means exist, however poorly developed they may be. Each function needs a practical discipline to interpret, to criticize, and to transform the existing institutions and to suggest new ones if necessary. Theology itself is such a function, and its institutional realization within the life of the church is one of the many concerns of practical theology.

Like historical and systematic theology, practical theology has a nontheological side. In order to discuss the institutional expressions of the life of the church, the practical theologian must use (1) our present knowledge of the general psychological and sociological structures of man and society; (2) a practical and theoretical understanding of the psychological and sociological situation of special groups; and (3) a knowledge of the cultural achievements and problems within the realms of his special interest: education, arts, music, medicine, politics, economics, social work, public communication, etc. In this way practical theology can become a bridge between the Christian message and the human situation, generally and specially. It can put new questions before the systematic theologian, questions arising out of the cultural life

of the period, and it can induce the historical theologian to make new researches from points of view which come out of the actual needs of his contemporaries. It can preserve the church from traditionalism and dogmatism, and it can induce society to take the church seriously. But it can do all this only if, in unity with historical and systematic theology, it is driven by the ultimate concern which is concrete and universal at the same time.

D. THE METHOD AND STRUCTURE OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

8. The Sources of Systematic Theology

Every methodological reflection is abstracted from the cognitive work in which one actually engages. Methodological awareness always follows the application of a method; it never precedes it. This fact has often been forgotten in recent discussions on the use of the empirical method in theology. The adherents of this method made it a kind of fetish, hoping that it would "work" in every cognitive approach to every subject. Actually they had found the basic structure of their theology before they reflected on the method to be used. And the method they described could be called "empirical" only with great difficulty and artificiality. The following methodological considerations describe the method actually used in the present system. Since the method is derived from a preceding understanding of the subject of theology, the Christian message, it anticipates the decisive assertions of the system. This is an unavoidable circle. Whether the "method of correlation" (the name I suggest without special emphasis) is empirical, constructive, or something else is unimportant as long as it proves adequate to its subject.

If the task of systematic theology is to explain the contents of the Christian faith, three questions immediately arise: What are the sources of systematic theology? What is the medium of their reception? What is the norm determining the use of the sources? The first answer to these questions might be the Bible. The Bible is the original document about the events on which Christianity is based. Although this cannot be denied, the answer is insufficient. In dealing with the question of the sources of systematic theology, we must reject the assertion of neo-orthodox biblicism that the Bible is the ***only*** source. The biblical message cannot be understood and could not have been received had there been no preparation for it in human religion and culture. And the biblical message would not have become a message for anyone, including the

theologian himself, without the experiencing participation of the church and of every Christian. If the "Word of God" or the "act of revelation" is called the source of systematic theology, it must be emphasized that the "Word of God" is not limited to the words of a book and that the act of revelation is not the "inspiring" of a "book of revelations," even if the book is the document of the final "Word of God," the fulfilment and criterion of all revelations. The biblical message embraces more (and less) than the biblical books. Systematic theology, therefore, has additional sources beyond the Bible.

The Bible, however, is the basic source of systematic theology because it is the original document about the events on which the Christian church is founded. If we use the word "document" for the Bible, we must exclude legal connotations. The Bible is not a legally conceived, formulated, and sealed record about a divine "deed" on the basis of which claims can be decided. The documentary character of the Bible is identical with the fact that it contains the original witness of those who participated in the revealing events. Their participation was their response to the happenings which became revealing events through this response. The inspiration of the biblical writers is their receptive and creative response to potentially revelatory facts. The inspiration of the writers of the New Testament is their acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, and with him, of the New Being, of which they became witnesses. Since there is no revelation unless there is someone who receives it as revelation, the act of reception is a part of the event itself. The Bible is both original event and original document; it witnesses to that of which it is a part.

The biblical material as a source of systematic theology is presented in a methodological way by the historical theologian. Biblical theology, in co-operation with the other disciplines of historical theology, opens the Bible as the basic source of systematic theology. But how it does this is by no means obvious. The biblical theologian, to the degree to which he is a theologian (which includes a systematic point of view), does not present pure facts to us; he gives us theologically interpreted facts. His exegesis is pneumatic (Spiritual) or, as we would call it today, "existential." He speaks of the results of his philosophical and detached interpretation as matters of ultimate concern to him. He unites philology and devotion in dealing with the biblical texts. It is not easy to do this with fairness to both points of view. A comparison of any recent scientific commentary on Romans (e.g., C. H. Dodd or Sanday and Headlam)

with Barth's pneumatic-existential interpretation of it lays bare the unbridged gap between both methods. All theologians, and especially the students of systematic theology, suffer because of this situation. Systematic theology needs a biblical theology which is historical-critical without any restrictions and, at the same time, devotional-interpretative, taking account of the fact that it deals with matters of ultimate concern. It is possible to fulfil this demand, for that which concerns us ultimately is not linked with any special conclusion of historical and philological research. A theology which is dependent on predetermined results of the historical approach is bound to something conditional which claims to be unconditional, that is, with something demonic. And the demonic character of any demand imposed on the historian for definite results becomes visible in the fact that it destroys his honesty. Being ultimately concerned about what is really ultimate liberates the theologian from all "sacred dishonesty." It makes conservative as well as revolutionary historical criticism open to him. Only such free historical work, united with the attitude of ultimate concern, can open the Bible to the systematic theologian as his basic source..

The genesis of the Bible is an event in church history-an event in a comparatively late stage of early church history. The systematic theologian, therefore, in using the Bible as a source, implicitly uses church history as a source. He must do this explicitly. Systematic theology has a direct and definite relation to church history. On this point there is a real difference between the Catholic and the Protestant attitude, and no systematic theologian can escape a decision about it. The decision is easy for those who are bound by the authority of the Roman church. It is also easy for those who believe that Protestantism means a radical biblicism and who assume that radical biblicism is a possible theological position. But most theologians in the non-Roman churches are not willing to accept this alternative. It is obvious to them that the radical biblicistic attitude is a self-deception. No one is able to leap over two thousand years of church history and become contemporaneous with the writers of the New Testament, except in the Spiritual sense of accepting Jesus as the Christ. Every person who encounters a biblical text is guided in his religious understanding of it by the understanding of all previous generations. Even the Reformers were dependent on the Roman tradition against which they protested. They directed special elements of the eccle. siastical tradition against others in order to fight the distortion which had affected the whole tradition, but they did not and could not jump

out of the tradition into the situation of Matthew and Paul. The Reformers were aware of this situation, and their orthodox systematizers were still aware of it. Evangelical biblicism, both past and present, is unaware of it and produces a "biblical" theology which actually is dependent on definite dogmatic developments of the post-Reformation period. Through historical scholarship the difference between the dogmatic teaching of most American evangelistic churches and the original meaning of the biblical texts can easily be shown. Church history cannot be evaded; therefore, it is a religious as well as a scholarly necessity that the relationship of systematic theology to the ecclesiastical tradition be stated frankly and pointedly.

Another approach which is not acceptable to most non-Roman theologians is the subjection of systematic theology to the decisions of councils and popes. Roman Catholic dogmatics uses those doctrinal traditions which have gained legal standing (de *fide*) as the real source of systematic theology. It presupposes dogmatically, with or without a posteriori proofs, that those doctrines whose validity is guaranteed by canon law agree essentially with the biblical message. The work of the systematic theologian is an exact and, at the same time, polemic interpretation of the statements de *fide*. This is the reason for the dogmatic sterility of Roman Catholic theology, in contrast to its liturgical and ethical creativity and the great scholarship it develops in areas of church history which are free from dogmatic prohibitions. It is important for the ecumenical character of systematic theology that Greek Orthodox theologians, although they accept the authority of tradition, deny the legalization of tradition by papal authority. This gives the Greek Orthodox theologian creative possibilities from which Roman theologians are excluded. Protestant theology protests in the name of the Protestant principle (see Part V, Sec. II) against the identification of our ultimate concern with any creation of the church, including the biblical writings in so far as their witness to what is really ultimate concern is also a conditioned expression of their own spirituality. Therefore, it is able to use all the materials provided by church history. It can make use of Greek and Roman and German and modern concepts in interpreting the biblical message; it can make use of the decisions of sectarian protests against official theology; but it is not bound to any of these concepts and decisions.

A special problem arises from the fact that no one is actually able to handle all these materials, because the denominational structures operate as an unconscious and conscious principle of selection. This cannot be

avoided, and it has a creative side. The ecclesiastical and theological climate in which the theologian grows up or for which he has later made a personal decision produces understanding through familiarity. Without such familiarity no existential use of the church-historical material is possible. The systematic theologian encounters in the concrete life of his denomination, in its liturgy and hymns, its sermons and sacraments, that which concerns him ultimately--the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Therefore, the denominational tradition is a decisive source for the systematic theologian, however ecumenically he may use it.

The biblical source is made available to the systematic theologian through a critical and ultimately concerned biblical theology. In the same way church history is made available to the systematic theologian through a historically critical and ultimately concerned history of Christian thought, formerly called "history of dogma." The traditional term "dogmatics" implies a concern which the more recent term does not express. The "history of Christian thought" can mean a detached description of the ideas of theological thinkers through the centuries. Some of the critical histories of Christian thought are not far removed from such an attitude. The historical theologian must show that in all periods Christian thought has dealt with matters of ultimate concern and that therefore it is itself a matter of ultimate concern. Systematic theology needs a history of Christian thought written from a point of view which is radically critical and, at the same time, existentially concerned.

A broader source of systematic theology than all those mentioned so far is the material presented by the history of religion and culture. Its impact on the systematic theologian begins with the language he uses and the cultural education he has received. His spiritual life is shaped by his social and individual encounter with reality. This is expressed in the language, poetry, philosophy, religion, etc., of the cultural tradition in which he has grown up and from which he takes some content in every moment of his life, in his theological work and also outside it. Beyond this immediate and unavoidable contact with his culture and religion, the systematic theologian deals with them directly in many ways. He uses culture and religion intentionally as his means of expression, he points to them for confirmation of his statements, he fights against them as contradictions of the Christian message, and, above all, he formulates the existential questions implied in them, to which his theology intends to be the answer.

This continuous and never ending use of cultural and religious contents as a source of systematic theology raises the question: How are these contents made available for use in a way parallel to the method by which the biblical theologian makes the biblical materials available and the historian of Christian thought makes the doctrinal materials available? There is no established answer to this question, since neither a theological history of religion nor a theological history of culture has been theoretically conceived and practically established.

A theological history of religion should interpret theologically the material produced by the investigation and analysis of the prereligious and religious life of mankind. It should elaborate the motives and types of religious expression, showing how they follow from the nature of the religious concern and therefore necessarily appear in all religions, including Christianity in so far as it is a religion. A theological history of religion also should point out demonic distortions and new tendencies in the religions of the world, pointing to the Christian solution and preparing the way for the acceptance of the Christian message by the adherents of non-Christian religions. One could say that a theological history of religion should be carried through in the light of the missionary principle that the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is the answer to the question asked implicitly and explicitly by the religions of mankind. Some materials taken from a theological history of religion appear in the present theological system.

A theological history of culture cannot be a continuous historical report (this is also true of the theological history of religion). It can only be what I like to call a "theology of culture,"[10] which is the attempt to analyze the theology behind all cultural expressions, to discover the ultimate concern in the ground of a philosophy, a political system, an artistic style, a set of ethical or social principles. This task is analytic rather than synthetic, historical rather than systematic. It is a preparation for the work of the systematic theologian. At the present time a theology of culture is continuously being constructed from the nontheological and, less vigorously, from the theological side. It has become an important part of the many critical analyses of the present world situation, of the cultural decline of the West, of developments in special realms. Theological analysis has been carried on in connection with the history of

10. Paul Tillich, "Ueber die Idee einer Theologie dcr Kultur," in *Kantstudien* (Berlin: Pan-Verlag, Rolf Heise, 1920); see also my *The Religious Situation (New* York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932).

modern thought, art, science, social movements (called in German *Geistesgeschichte, "the* history of spiritual life"). It should, however, be worked out in a more organized way by theologians. It should be taught as "the theology of culture" in all institutions of theological learning; for instance, as theological history of philosophy, the arts, etc. Concerning the method of such a theological analysis of culture the following might be said. The key to the theological understanding of a cultural creation is its style. Style is a term derived from the realm of the arts, but it can be applied to all realms of culture. There is a style of thought, of politics, of social life, etc. The style of a period expresses itself in its cultural forms, in its choice of objects, in the attitudes of its creative personalities, in its institutions and customs. It is an art as much as a science to "read styles," and it requires religious intuition, on the basis of an ultimate concern, to look into the depth of a style, to penetrate to the level where an ultimate concern exercises its driving power. This, however, is what is demanded of the theological historian of culture, and in performing this function he opens up a creative source for systematic theology.

This survey of the sources of systematic theology has shown their almost unlimited richness: Bible, church history, history of religion and culture. It has further shown that there are degrees of importance in this immense source material, corresponding with its more direct or more indirect relationship to the central event on which the Christian faith is based, the appearance of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. But two decisive questions have neither been asked nor answered-the question of the medium through which this material is received by the systematic theologian and the question of the norm to be used by him in evaluating the sources.

9. Experience and Systematic Theology

The sources of systematic theology can be sources only for one who participates in them, that is, through experience. Experience is the medium through which the sources "speak" to us, through which we can receive them. The question of experience, therefore, has been a central question whenever the nature and method of theology have been discussed. The theologians of the early Franciscan school were well aware of what today is called an "existential" relation to truth. For them theology was practical knowledge, based on a participation of the knowing subject in the spiritual realities, a touching and tasting (*haptus* and *gustus*) of that with which he deals. Alexander of Hales and Bonaventura were strictly "experiential" theologians. They dedicated much labor to an analysis of the nature of the especially religious experience as distinct from other forms of experience. Behind their endeavors stood the mystical-Augustinian principle of the immediate awareness of "being-itself," which is, at the same time, "truth-itself" (*esse ipsum—verum ipsum*). While the predominant theology under the guidance of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus replaced the mystical immediacy of the early Franciscans with analytical detachment, the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition never lost its power. The principle of experience was preserved by sectarian movements (largely dependent on the enthusiasm of the Franciscan radicals) in the pre-Reformation and Reformation periods. An evangelical enthusiast like Thomas Muenzer had almost all the characteristic traits of what is called today "existential experience," including the elements of anxiety and despair, the "boundary situation," the experience of "meaninglessness"; and, on the other hand, he had the ecstatic experience of a Spiritual power driving and guiding him in the practical decisions of his personal and social life. Although the victory of ecclesiastical or biblical authority in all Continental churches and the rise of classical orthodoxy suppressed the principle of experience, it never eradicated it. The principle of experience reappeared in full strength in Continental Pietism and Anglo-American Independentism, Methodism, and Evangelicaiism. In these forms it survived the period of the Enlightenment and found classical theological expression in Schleiermacher's theological method.

No presentday theology should avoid a discussion of Schleiermacher's experiential method, whether in agreement or disagreement. One of the causes for the disquieting effect of neo-orthodox theology was that it detached itself completely from Schleiermacher's method, consequently denying the theological development of the last two hundred years (one hundred before and one hundred after Schleiermacher). The crucial question of theology today is whether or not, or to what degree, this denial is justified. Certainly it would not be justified if it were based only on a mistaken interpretation of Schleiermacher. But more than this is involved in the neo-orthodox judgment. A psychological interpretation of Schleiermacher's famous definition of religion is mistaken and even unfair, inasmuch as it can easily be avoided. When he defined religion as the "feeling of absolute dependence," "feeling" meant the immediate awareness of something unconditional in the sense of the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition. This tradition was mediated to him religiously by

his Moravian education, philosophically by Spinoza and Schelling. "Feeling," in this tradition, referred not to a psychological function but to the awareness of that which transcends intellect and will, subject and object. "Dependence," in Schleiermacher's definition, was, on the Christian level, "teleological" dependence-a dependence which has moral character, which includes freedom and excludes a pantheistic and deterministic interpretation of the experience of the unconditional. Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence" was rather near to what is called in the present system "ultimate concern about the ground and meaning of our being." Understood in this way, it lies beyond much of the usual criticism directed against it.[11]

On the other hand, criticism must be directed against Schleiermacher's method in his *Glaubenslehre (The Christian Faith).* He tried to derive all contents of the Christian faith from what he called the "religious consciousness" of the Christian. In a similar way his followers, notably the Lutheran "School of Erlangen," which included the theologians Hofmann and Frank, tried to establish an entire system of theology by deriving the contents from the experience of the regenerated Christian. This was an illusion, as Frank's system clearly proves. The event on which Christianity is based (he called it "Jesus of Nazareth") is not derived from experience; it is *given* in history. Experience is not the source from which the contents of systematic theology are taken but the medium through which they are existentially received.

Another form of experiential theology not exposed to the same criticism has grown out of the evangelical tradition of American Christianity. It is distinguished from the Continental theology of experience by its alliance with philosophical empiricism and pragmatism. It tries to create an "empirical theology" on the basis of mere experience in line with the philosophical empiricists. For the method of systematic theology everything depends on the sense in which the term "experience" is used. A careful analysis of present philosophical and theological discussion shows that it is used in three ways : in an ontological, a scientific, and a mystical sense. The ontological sense of experience is a consequence of philosophical positivism. The positively given is, according to this theory, the only reality of which we can meaningfully speak. And positively given means given in experience. Reality is identical with experience. Pragmatism, as developed by William James and partly by John Dewey, reveals the philo-

11. It is fortunate that Barth has rejected Brunner's book on Schleiermachcr, *Die Mystik und das Wort* (Tiibingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1924), for this very reason.

sophical motive behind this elevation of experience to the highest ontological rank. The motive is to deny the split between an ontological subject and ontological objects, for, once established, this split cannot be overcome, the possibility of knowledge cannot be explained, and the unity of life and its processes remains a mystery. The dynamic natural., ism of recent philosophy involves the ontological concept of experience, whether this naturalism is more realistic or more idealistic or more mystical in its emphasis.

If experience in this sense is used as the source of systematic theology, nothing can appear in the theological system which transcends the whole of experience. A divine being in the traditional sense is excluded from such a theology. Since, on the other hand, the whole of experience cannot be of ultimate concern, a special experience or a special quality of the whole experience must be the source of systematic theology. For instance, the value-producing processes (Whitehead) or the uniting processes (Wieman) or the character of wholeness (Hocking) can be called the especially religious experience. But if this is done, one must have a concept of what a religious experience is. Otherwise one would not recognize it within the whole of experience. This means that there must be another kind of experience, an immediate participation in religious reality, preceding any theological analysis of reality as a whole. And this is the actual situation. The empirical theologians who use the ontological concept of experience do not derive their theology from this experience. They derive it from their participation in a concrete religious reality, from their religious experience in the mystical sense of experience. And they try to discover the corresponding elements within the whole of experience. They seek a cosmological confirmation of their personal religious life.

In spite of its circular arguing, empirical theology of this type has made a definite contribution to systematic theology. It has shown that the religious objects are not objects among others but that they are expressions of a quality or dimension of our general experience. In this, American empirical theology agrees with Continental phenomenological theology (e.g., Rudolph Otto and Max Scheler). Whenever the question is asked, "What does the 'holy' mean?" rather than the question, "Does God exist ?" we are in the line of thought in which pragmatism and phenomenology agree.[12]

12. Cf. also my own "Religionsphilosophic" in Max Dessoir's *Lehrbuch der Philosophie* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1925).

The second sense in which experience is used is derived from the experimentally tested experience of science. Experience in this sense constitutes an articulated world. It does not designate the given as such but the given in its recognizable structure. It combines rational and perceptive elements and is the result of a never finished process of experimenting and testing. Some of the empirical theologians tried to apply the method of scientific experience to theology, but they never succeeded and could not succeed for two reasons. First, the object of theology (namely, our ultimate concern and its concrete expressions) is not an object within the whole of scientific experience. It cannot be discovered by detached observation or by conclusions derived from such observation. It can be found only in acts of surrender and participation. Second, it cannot be tested by scientific methods of verification. In these methods the testing subject keeps himself outside the test situation. And if this is partially impossible, as, for example, in microphysics, he includes the effects of this fact in his calculations. The object of theology can be verified only by a participation in which the testing theologian risks himself in the ultimate sense of "to be or not to be." This test is never finished, not even in a complete life of experience. An element of risk remains and makes an experimental verification in time and space impossible.

This is confirmed by the results of scientific-experiential theology. If an epistemological analysis of experience leads to embracing concepts like "cosmic person" (Brightman) or "cosmic mind" (Boodin) or "creative process" (Wieman), these concepts are neither scientific nor theological. They are not scientific but ontological. They do not describe a being beside other beings; they point to a quality of being-itself. This is. not accomplished by scientific experience but by a vision in which scientific and nonscientific elements are united. On the other hand, these concepts are not theological. Certainly they can and must be used by systematic theology. But the "cosmic person" and the "creative process" are not in themselves matters of ultimate concern. They are philosophical possibilities with the tentative character of such. They are not religious necessities. They are theoretical, not existential. If, however, they claim religious significance—a genuine possibility of all ontological concepts-their scientific function is dropped, and they must be discussed in theological terms as symbolic expressions of our ultimate concern. In no case can scientific experience as such produce a foundation and source of systematic theology.

Mystical experience, or experience by participation, is the real problem

of experiential theology. It is secretly presupposed by the ontological as well as by the scientific concept of experience. Without an experience of participation neither the whole of experience nor articulated experience would reveal anything about our ultimate concern. But the question is: What does experience by participation reveal? For the Reformers experience was not a source of revelation. The divine Spirit testifies in us to the biblical message. No new revelations are given by the Spirit. Nothing new is mediated by the experience of the Spiritual power in us. Evangelical enthusiasm, on the other hand, derived new revelations from the presence of the Spirit. The experience of the man who has the Spirit is the source of religious truth and therefore of systematic theology. The letter of the Bible and the doctrines of the church remain letter and law if the Spirit does not interpret them in the individual Christian. Experience as the inspiring presence of the Spirit is the ultimate source of theology.

The enthusiasts of the Reformation period did not envisage Spiritual experiences transcending the Christian message. Even if, following Joachim de Fiore, they hoped for a "third period" in the history of revelation, the period of the Spirit, they did not describe it as a post-Christian period. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Son who rules the second period and of the Father who rules the first period. The third period is a transformation of the second without a change in substance. This still was the attitude of Schleiermacher, but it has not been that of recent experiential theology. The encounter with great non-Christian religions, the evolutionary scheme of thought, the openness for the new which characterizes the pragmatic method, have had the consequence that experience has become not only the main source of systematic theology but an inexhaustible source out of which new truths can be taken continually. Being open for new experiences which might even pass beyond the confines of Christian experience is now the proper attitude of the theologian. He is not bound to a circle the center of which is the event of Jesus as the Christ. Of course, as a theologian, he also works in a circle but in a circle whose periphery is extendable and whose center is changeable. "Open experience" is the source of systematic theology.

Against this conception neo-orthodoxy turns back to the Reformers, and evangelical biblicism turns back to the Reformation sects. Both deny that a religious experience which goes beyond the Christian circle can be a source of systematic theology; and neo-orthodoxy denies that experience can become a source of systematic theology at all.

If experience is called the medium through which the objective sources are received, this excludes the reliance of the theologian on a possibly post-Christian experience. But it also denies the assertion that experience is a theological source. And, finally, it denies the belief in experiences which, although remaining in the Christian circle, add some new material to the other sources. Christian theology is based on the unique event Jesus the Christ, and in spite of the infinite meaning of this event it remains ***this*** event and, as such, the criterion of every religious experience. This event is given to experience and not derived from it. Therefore, experience receives and does not produce. Its productive power is restricted to the transformation of what is given to it. But this transformation is not intended. The act of reception intends to receive and only to receive. If transformation is intended, the reception becomes falsification. The systematic theologian is bound to the Christian message which he must derive from other sources than his experience under the criterion of the norm (see next section). This excludes any intentional subjectivity, yet it gives to the subjectivity of the theologian that influence which a medium has on what is mediated through it. The medium colors the presentation and determines the interpretation of what it receives. Two extremes must be avoided in this procedure: the influence of the medium, the experience of the theologian, should not be so small that the result is a repetition instead of a transformation, and it should not be so large that the result is a new production instead of a transformation. While the first failure was predominant in several former periods of the history of Christian thought, the second failure has become more conspicuous in the modern period. The ultimate reason for this change is a change in the theological doctrine of man. Man's religious experience could become an independent source of systematic theology only if man were united with the source of all religious experience, the Spiritual power in him. Only if his spirit and the divine Spirit in him were one could his experience have revealing character. This unity is implied in the modern doctrine of man. But, as the Reformers realistically stressed against the Enthusiasts, this unity is not a fact. Even the saint must listen to what the Spirit says to his spirit, because the saint is also a sinner. There may be revelation through him, as there was through prophets and apostles. But this revelation comes against him and to him and not from him. Insight into the human situation destroys every theology which makes experience an independent source instead of a dependent medium of systematic theology.

10. The Norm of Systematic Theology

The discussion of the sources and of the medium of systematic theology has left a decisive question unanswered-the question of the criterion to which the sources as well as the mediating experience must be subjected. The necessity of such a criterion is obvious in view of the breadth and variety of the material and in view of the indefiniteness of the mediating function of experience. Sources and medium can produce a theological system only if their use is guided by a norm.

The question of the norm of Christian doctrine arose very early in the history of the church. It received a material and a formal answer. On the material side the church created a creed which, with the baptismal confession to Jesus as the Christ at its center, was supposed to contain the doctrinal norm. On the formal side the church established a hierarchy of authorities-bishops, councils, the pope-who were supposed to safeguard the norm against heretical distortions. In the Catholic churches (Roman, Greek, Anglican) the second answer became so predominant that the need for a material norm disappeared. Here Christian doctrine is what the church declares it to be through its official authorities. This is the reason for the lack of an organizing principle even in the otherwise radically organized scholastic systems. It is the reason for the final identification of the tradition with papal decisions (Council of Trent) . And it is the reason why the Bible has had such little influence on the later dogmatic development of the Greek and Roman churches.

The question of the norm again became crucial in Protestantism as soon as the ecclesiastical authorities lost their standing. A formal norm and a material norm were established, not by intentional choice, but, as in the beginnings of Christianity, by the demands of the situation. Luther broke through the Roman system in the power of the material norm which, following Paul, he called "justification through faith" and with the authority of the biblical (especially the Pauline) message. Justification and Bible in mutual interdependence were the norms of the Lutheran Reformation. In Calvinism justification was more and more replaced by predestination, and the mutuality of the material and the formal norms was weakened by a more literalistic understanding of biblical authority. But the problem and the line of solution were the same.

If we look at the whole of church history in the light of the explicit statement of the material norm by the Reformers, we find analogous norms implicit in all periods. While the norm for the early Greek church

was the liberation of finite man from death and error by the incarnation of immortal life and eternal truth, for the Roman church it was salvation from guilt and disruption by the actual and sacramental sacrifice of the God-man. For modern Protestantism it was the picture of the "synoptic" Jesus, representing the personal and social ideal of human existence; and for recent Protestantism it has been the prophetic message of the Ringdom of God in the Old and New Testaments. These symbols were the unconscious or conscious criteria for the way in which systematic theology dealt with its sources and judged the mediating experience of the theologian.

The growth of these norms is a historical process which, in spite of many conscious decisions, is on the whole unconscious. It happens in and through the encounter of the church with the Christian message. This encounter is different in each generation, and its difference becomes visible in the successive periods of church history. The norm grows; it is not produced intentionally; its appearance is not the work of theological reflection but of the Spiritual life of the church, for the church is the "home" of systematic theology. Here alone do the sources and the norms of theology have actual existence. At this place alone can experience occur as the medium of systematic theology. The lonely reader of the Bible is by no means outside the church. He has received the Bible, collected and preserved by the church through the centuries; he has received the book through the activity of the church or some of its members; he has received it as interpreted by the church even if this interpretation comes to him simply by way of the accepted translation into his own language. The experience of the systematic theologian is shaped by the sources which are mediated through it. And the most concrete and nearest of these formative sources is the church in which he lives and its collective experience. This is his "place of work" as a systematic theologian. It is, of course, his place even if he lives and works in protest against it. Protest is a form of communion.

The norm used as criterion in the present system can be stated only with reservations. In order to be a genuine norm, it must not be a private opinion of the theologian but the expression of an encounter of the church with the Christian message. Whether this is the case cannot be known at the present time.

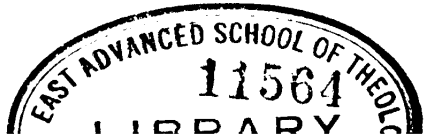
The norm of systematic theology is not identical with the "critical principle for all theology." The latter is negative and protective; the norm must be positive and constructive. The critical principle is abstract; the

norm must be concrete. The critical principle has been formulated under the pressure of the apologetic situation, in order to prevent mutual interference between theology and other forms of knowledge. The norm must be formulated under the pressure of the dogmatic situation in modern Protestantism, which is characterized by the lack of a formal authority and the quest for a material principle.

The norms of systematic theology which have been effective in church history did not exclude each other in content; they excluded each other in emphasis. The norm to be stated below is different in emphasis from that of the Reformers and from that of modern liberal theology, but it claims to preserve the same substance and to bring it out in a form more adequate to the present situation and to the biblical source.

It is not an exaggeration to say that today man experiences his present situation in terms of disruption, conflict, selfdestruction, meaninglessness, and despair in all realms of life. This experience is expressed in the arts and in literature, conceptualized in existential philosophy, actualized in political cleavages of all kinds, and analyzed in the psychology of the unconscious. It has given theology a new understanding of the demonic-tragic structures of individual and social life. The question arising out of this experience is not, as in the Reformation, the question of a merciful God and the forgiveness of sins; nor is it, as in the early Greek church, the question of finitude, of death and error; nor is it the question of the personal religious life or of the Christianization of culture and society. It is the question of a reality in which the self-estrangement of our existence is overcome, a reality of reconciliation and reunion, of creativity, meaning, and hope. We shall call such a reality the "New Being," a term whose presuppositions and implications can be explained only through the whole system. It is based on what Paul calls the "new creation" and refers to its power of overcoming the demonic cleavages of the "old reality" in soul, society, and universe. If the Christian message is understood as the message of the "New Being," an answer is given to the question implied in our present situation and in every human situation.

But this answer is not sufficient. It leads immediately to the further question, "Where is this New Being manifest?" Systematic theology answers this question by saying: "In Jesus the Christ." This answer also has presuppositions and implications which it is the main purpose of the whole system to develop. Only this must be said here-that this formula accepts the ancient Christian baptismal confession of Jesus as the Christ. He who is the Christ is he who brings the new eon, the new reality. And



it is the man Jesus who in a paradoxical assertion is called the Christ. Without this paradox the New Being would be an ideal, not a reality, and consequently not an answer to the question implied in our human situation.

The material norm of systematic theology, used in the present system and considered the most adequate to the present apologetic situation, is the "New Being in Jesus as the Christ." If this is combined with the critical principle of all theology, one can say that the material norm of systematic theology today is the New Being in Jesus as the Christ as our ultimate concern. This norm is the criterion for the use of all the sources of systematic theology.

The most important question is how this norm is related to the basic source, the Bible. If the Bible *itself* is called the norm of systematic theology, nothing concrete is said, for the Bible is a collection of religious literature written, collected, and edited through the centuries. Luther was aware of this situation in a way which elevates him above most Protestant theologians. He gave a material norm according to which the biblical books should be interpreted and evaluated, namely, the message of Christ or of justification through faith. In the light of this norm he interpreted and judged all the biblical books. Their normative value is identical with the degree to which they express the norm, although, on the other hand, the norm is derived from them. The Bible can be called the norm of systematic theology only because the norm is derived from the Bible. But it is derived from it in an encounter of the church with the biblical message. The norm derived from the Bible is, at the same time, the criterion for the use of the Bible by systematic theology. Practically, this always has been the attitude of theology. The Old Testament was never directly normative. It was measured by the New Testament, and the New Testament was never equally influential in all its parts. Paul's influence almost disappeared in the post-apostolic period. John took his place. The more the gospel was understood as the "new law," the more the Catholic letters and the corresponding synoptic passages became decisive. Pauline reactions occurred again and again, in a conservative way in Augustine and in a revolutionary way in the Reformers. The predominance of the Synoptic Gospels over against Paul and John characterizes modern Protestantism; and in recent times the Old Testament in a prophetic interpretation has overshadowed even the New Testament.[13] The Bible as such never has been the norm of systematic theology. The norm has been a principle derived from the Bible in an encounter between Bible and church.

13. The biblical foundation of the present system is indicated by the wording of the material norm: the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. This refers above all to Paul's doctrine of the Spirit. While Barth's Pauline protest against liberal theology agrees with that of the Reformers and is dependent on Paul's protective doctrine of justification through faith, the Paulinism of the present system is dependent on Paul's constructive doctrine of the New Creation in Christ which included the prophetic-cxhatological message of the "new con."

This gives a point of view for the question of the canonicity of the biblical books. The church closed the canon rather late, and there is no agreement among the Christian churches about the number of books belonging to the biblical canon. When the Roman church accepted and the Protestant churches rejected the Old Testament apocrypha as canonical books, the reason for both judgments was their respective norms of systematic theology. Luther even wanted to exclude more than the apocrypha. This situation shows that there is an element of indefiniteness in the composition of the biblical canon. This confirms very strongly the distinction between the theological norm and the Bible as the basic source from which the norm is derived. The norm decides the canonicity of books. It posits some of them on the boundary line (*antilegomena* in the early church). It is the Spirit which has created the canon, and, like all things Spiritual, the canon cannot be fixed legally in a definite way. The partial openness of the canon is a safeguard of the Spirituality of the Christian church.

This relation of the Bible as the basic source of systematic theology to the norm derived from it suggests a new approach to the question of the normative character of church history. A way must be found which lies between the Roman Catholic practice of making ecclesiastical decisions not only a source but also the actual norm of systematic theology and the radical Protestant practice of depriving church history not only of its normative character but also of its function as a source. The latter already has been discussed. The normative character of church history is implied in the fact that the norm, although derived from the Bible, is produced in an encounter between the church and the biblical message. Every period of church history, this is the implication, unconsciously or consciously contributes through its special situation to the establishment of a theological norm. Beyond this, however, church decisions have no directly normative character. The systematic theologian cannot claim validity for the norm he uses by pointing to Church Fathers, councils, creeds, etc. The possibility that all these have fallen into error must be maintained by Protestant theology as radically as Rome maintains the opposite in its doctrine of papal infallibility. The indirectly normative

character of ecclesiastical decisions consists in their function as signposts, pointing to dangers for the Christian message which once have been overcome by such decisions. They offer a very serious warning and a constructive help to the theologian. But they do not determine authoritatively the direction of his work. He applies his norm to the church-historical material, irrespective of whether it has been affirmed by the most important or the least important authorities.

Even more indirect is the contribution of the history of religion and culture to the norm of systematic theology. An influence of religion and culture on the norm of systematic theology is noticeable only in so far as the encounter of the church with the biblical message is partly conditioned by the religious and cultural situation in which the church lives. There is no reason to deny or to reject such an influence. Systematic theology is not the message itself; and, while the message itself is beyond our grasp and never at our disposal (though it might grasp us and dispose of us), its theological interpretation is an act of the church and of individuals within the church. It is, therefore, religiously and culturally conditioned, and even its norm and criterion cannot claim independence of man's existential situation. The attempts of biblicism and orthodoxy to create an "unconditioned" theology contradict the correct and indispensable first principle of the neo-orthodox movement that "God is in heaven and man is on earth"-even if man is a systematic theologian. And "being on earth" not only means having personal shortcomings; it also means being historically conditioned. The attempt of neo-orthodox theologians to escape this mark of finitude is a symptom of that religious arrogance against which these very same theologians are fighting.

Since the norm of systematic theology is the result of an encounter of the church with the biblical message, it can be called a product of the collective experience of the church. But such an expression is dangerously ambiguous. It could be understood to mean that the collective experience produces the content of the norm. However, the content of the norm is the biblical message. Collective as well as individual experiences are the mediums through which the message is received, colored, and interpreted. The norm grows within the medium of experience. But it is, at the same time, the criterion of any experience. The norm judges the medium in which it grows; it judges the weak, interrupted, distorted character of all religious experience, although it is only through this feeble medium that a norm can come into existence at all.

11. The Rational Character of Systematic Theology

The questions of the source, the medium, and the norm of systematic theology are related to its concrete-historical foundation. But systematic theology is not a historical discipline (as Schleiermacher wrongly asserted);[14] it is a constructive task. It does not tell us what people have thought the Christian message to be in the past; rather it tries to give us an interpretation of the Christian message which is relevant to the present situation. This raises the question, "To what extent does systematic theology have a rational character?" Certainly reason must be used constructively in building a theological system. Nevertheless, there have been and still are many doubts and controversies concerning the role of reason in systematic theology.

The first problem is an adequate definition of "rational" in the present context. Providing such a definition would, however, involve an extensive discussion of reason in its various structures and functions (Part I, Sec. I). Since such a discussion is impossible in this Introduction, we must make the following anticipatory statements. There is a kind of cognition implied in faith which is qualitatively different from the cognition involved in the technical, scholarly work of the theologian. It has a completely existential, selfdetermining, and self-surrendering character and belongs to the faith of even the intellectually most primitive believer. Whoever participates in the New Being participates also in its truth. The theologian, in addition, is supposed not only to participate in the New Being but also to express its truth in a methodical way. We shall call the organ with which we receive the contents of faith "self-transcending," or ecstatic, reason, and we shall call the organ of the theological scholar "technical," or formal, reason. In both cases reason is not a source of theology. It does not produce its contents. Ecstatic reason is reason grasped by an ultimate concern. Reason is overpowered, invaded, shaken by the ultimate concern. Reason does not produce an object of ultimate concern by logical procedures, as a mistaken theology tried to do in its "arguments for the existence of God." The contents of faith grasp reason. Nor does the technical or formal reason of the theologian produce its content, as has been shown in the discussion of his sources and his medium.

But the situation is not so simple as it would be if the act of reception were merely a formal act without any influence on what is received. This

14. *Kurtze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums zum Gebrauche für Vorlesungen* (2d ed., 1830).

is not the case. Content and form, giving and receiving, have a more dialectical relationship than the words seem to connote. At this point a difficulty arises. The difficulty is obvious in the formulation of the theological norm. This formulation is a matter of personal and communal religious experience and, at the same time, a matter of the methodological judgment of the theologian. It is simultaneously received by ecstatic reason and conceived through technical reason. Traditional and neo-orthodox theologies do not differ at this point. The ambiguity cannot be avoided so long as there is theology, and it is one of the factors which make theology a "questionable" enterprise. The problem could be solved only if man's formal reason were in complete harmony with his ecstatic reason, if man were living in a complete theonomy, that is, in the fulness of the Kingdom of God. One of the basic Christian truths to which theology must witness is that theology itself, like every human activity, is subject to the contradictions of man's existential situation.

Although the problem of the rational character of systematic theology finally must remain unsolved, some directing principles can be stated.

The first principle determining the rational character of systematic theology is a semantic one. There are words which are used in philosophical, scientific, and popular language. If the theologian uses these words, he often can assume that the content indicates the realm of discourse within which the term stands. But this is not always the case. There are terms which for centuries have been adopted by theology, although, at the same time, they have retained religious, philosophical, and other meanings. In this situation the theologian must apply ***semantic rationality.*** The glory of scholasticism was that it had become a semantic clearing-house for theology as well as for philosophy. And it is almost always a shortcoming and sometimes the shame of modern theology that its concepts remain unclarified and ambiguous. It may be added, however, that the chaotic state of the philosophical and the scientific terminologies makes this situation more or less inevitable.

The principle of semantic rationality must not be confused with the attempt to construct a pan-mathematical formalism. In the realm of spiritual life words cannot be reduced to mathematical signs, nor can sentences be reduced to mathematical equations. The power of words denoting spiritual realities lies in their connotations. The removal of these connotations leaves dead bones which have no meaning in any realm. In such instances the logical positivists are right in rejecting them. When theology employs a term like "Spirit," connotations are present

which point to philosophical and psychological concepts of spirit, to the magic world view in which breath and spirit are identical, to the mystic-ascetic experience of Spirit in opposition to matter or flesh, to the religious experience of the divine power grasping the human mind. The principle of semantic rationality does not demand that these connotations should be excluded but that the main emphasis should be elaborated by relating it to the connotations. Thus "Spirit," for example, must be related to "spirit" (with a lower-case *s*); the primitive magic sense must be excluded, the mystical connotations must be discussed in relation to the personalistic connotations, etc.

Another example is the term "New Being." Being carries connotations of a metaphysical and logical character; it has mystical implications when used in relation to God as being-itself. "New" in connection with "Being" has connotations of creativity, regeneration, eschatology. These elements of meaning always are present when a term like "New Being" appears. The principle of semantic rationality involves the demand that all connotations of a word should consciously be related to each other and centered around a controlling meaning. If the word "history" is used, the different levels of the scientific meaning of history are more in the foreground than in the two preceding examples. But the specific modern emphasis on history as progressive, the specific prophetic emphasis on God as acting through history, and the specific Christian emphasis on the historical character of revelation are united with the scientific meanings whenever history is discussed in a theological context. These examples illustrate the immense importance of the principle of semantic rationality for the systematic theologian. They also suggest how difficult it is to apply this principle-a difficulty which is rooted in the fact that every significant theological term cuts through several levels of meaning and that all of them contribute to the theological meaning.

The semantic situation makes it evident that the language of the theologian cannot be a sacred or revealed language. He cannot restrict himself to the biblical terminology or to the language of classical theology. He could not avoid philosophical concepts even if he used only biblical words; and even less could he avoid them if he used only the words of the Reformers. Therefore, he should use philosophical and scientific terms whenever he deems them helpful for his task of explaining the contents of the Christian faith. The two things he must watch in doing so are semantic clarity and existential purity. He must avoid conceptual ambiguity and a possible distortion of the Christian message by the intrusion

of anti-Christian ideas in the cloak of a philosophical, scientific, or poetic terminology.

The second principle determining the rational character of theology is ***logical rationality.*** This principle refers first of all to the structures which determine any meaningful discourse and which are formulated in the discipline of logic. Theology is as dependent on formal logic as any other science. This must be maintained against both philosophical and theological protests.

The philosophical protest against the all-controlling position of formal logic has been made in the name of dialectical thinking. In dialectics yes and no, affirmation and negation, demand each other. But in formal logic they exclude each other. However, there is no real conflict between dialectics and formal logic. Dialectics follows the movement of thought or the movement of reality through yes and no, but it describes it in logically correct terms. The same concept always is used in the same sense; and, if the meaning of the concept changes, the dialectician describes in a logically correct way the intrinsic necessity which drives the old into the new. Formal logic is not contradicted when Hegel describes the identity of being and nonbeing by showing the absolute emptiness of pure being in reflective thought. Nor is formal logic contradicted when, in the dogma of the trinity, the divine life is described as a trinity within a unity. The doctrine of the Trinity does not affirm the logical nonsense that three is one and one is three; it describes in dialectical terms the inner movement of the divine life as an eternal separation from itself and return to itself. Theology is not expected to accept a senseless combination of words, that is, genuine logical contradictions. Dialectical thinking is not in conflict with the structure of thinking. It transforms the static ontology behind the logical system of Aristotle and his followers into a dynamic ontology, largely under the influence of voluntaristic and historical motives rooted in the Christian interpretation of existence. This change in ontology opens new vistas for the task of logic in describing and interpreting the structure of thought. It posits in a new way the question of the relation of the structure of thought to the structure of being.

Theological dialectics does not violate the principle of logical rationality. The same is true of the paradoxical statements in religion and theology. When Paul points to his situation as an apostle and to that of Christians generally in a series of *paradoxa* (II Corinthians), he does not intend to say something illogical; he intends to give the adequate, understandable, and therefore logical expression of the infinite tensions of Christian existence. When he speaks about the paradox of the justification of the sinner (in Luther's formula, ***simul peccator et iustus***), and when John speaks about the Logos becoming flesh (later expressed in the *paradoxa* of the creed of Chalcedon), neither of them wishes to indulge in logical contradictions.[15] They want to express the conviction that God's acting transcends all possible human expectations and all necessary human preparations. It transcends, but it does not destroy, finite reason; for God acts through the Logos which is the transcendent and transcending source of the logos structure of thought and being. God does not annihilate the expressions of his own Logos. The term "paradox" should be defined carefully, and paradoxical language should be used with discrimination. Paradoxical means "against the opinion," namely, the opinion of finite reason. Paradox points to the fact that in God's acting finite reason is superseded but not annihilated; it expresses this fact in terms which are not logically contradictory but which are supposed to point beyond the realm in which finite reason is applicable. This is indicated by the ecstatic state in which all biblical and classical theological *paradoxa* appear. The confusion begins when these *paradoxa* are brought down to the level of genuine logical contradictions and people are asked to sacrifice reason in order to accept senseless combinations of words as divine wisdom. But Christianity does not demand such intellectual "good works" from anyone, just as it does not ask artificial "works" of practical asceticism. There is, in the last analysis, only *one* genuine paradox in the Christian message-the appearance of that which conquers existence under the conditions of existence. Incarnation, redemption, justification, etc., are implied in this paradoxical event. It is not a logical contradiction which makes it a paradox but the fact that it transcends all human expectations and possibilities. It breaks into the context of experience or reality, but it cannot be derived from it. The acceptance of this paradox is not the acceptance of the absurd, but it is the state of being grasped by the power of that which breaks into our experience from above it. Paradox in religion and theology does not conflict with the principle of logical rationality. Paradox has its logical place.

The third principle determining the rational character of systematic theology is the principle of ***methodological rationality.*** It implies that

15. It is the mistake of Brunner in ***The Mediator*** that he makes the offense of logical rationality the criterion of Christian truth. This "offense" is neither that of Kierkegaard nor that of the New Testament.

theology follows a method, that is, a definite way of deriving and stating its propositions. The character of this method is dependent on many nonrational factors (see chap. i), but, once it has been established, it must be carried through rationally and consistently. The final expression of consistency in applying methodological rationality is the theological system. If the title "Systematic Theology" has any justification, the systematic theologian should not be afraid of the system. It is the function of the systematic form to guarantee the consistency of cognitive assertions in all realms of methodological knowledge. In this sense some of the most passionate foes of the system are most systematic in the totality of their utterances. And it often happens that those who attack the systematic form are very impatient when they discover an inconsistency in someone else's thought. On the other hand, it is easy to discover gaps in the most balanced system, because life continuously breaks through the systematic shell. One could say that in each system an experienced fragment of life and vision is drawn out constructively even to cover areas where life and vision are missing. And, conversely, one could say that in each fragment a system is implied which is not yet explicated. Hegel's imposing system was built on his early fragmentary paragraphs on the dialectics of life, including the dialectics of religion and the state. The "blood" of his system, as well as its immense historical consequences, were rooted in this fragmentary vision of existence. The lines he later drew with the help of his logical tools soon became obsolete. Nietzsche's many fragments seem to be permanently contradictory. But in all of them a system is implicit, the demonic strength of which has become manifest in the twentieth century. A fragment is an implicit system; a system is an explicit fragment.

The systematic form frequently has been attacked from three points of view. The first attack is based on a confusion between "system" and "deductive system." The history of science, philosophy, and theology shows that a deductive system has very rarely even been attempted except in the field of mathematics. Spinoza made the attempt in his ***Ethics,*** which he elaborated *more geometrico;* it was envisaged, though not executed, by Leibniz when he suggested a ***mathesis universalis*** which would describe the cosmos in mathematical terms. Classical physicists, having reached their principles inductively, tried to be deductively systematic, but again in mathematical terms. With the exception of Raimundus Lullus, theology never has attempted to construct a deductive system of Christian truth. Because of the existential character of the Christian truth, such an attempt would have been a contradiction in terms. A system is a totality made up of consistent, but not of deduced, assertions.

The second criticism of the system is that it seems to close the doors to further research. Behind this feeling lies the violent reaction of science since the second half of the nineteenth century against the Romantic philosophy of nature. This reaction has now spent its power and should determine neither our attitude to the scientific achievements of the philosophy of nature (for instance, in the doctrine of man and the psychology of the unconscious) nor our attitude to the systematic form in all realms of cognition. It is a historical fact that the great systems have stimulated research at least as much as they have inhibited it. The system gives meaning to a whole of factual or rational statements, showing their implications and consequences. Out of such a total view, and out of the difficulties involved in carrying it through, new questions arise. The balance sheet of positive and negative consequences of "the system" for empirical research is at least equal.

The third reason for enmity against the system is largely emotional. It seems like a prison in which the creativity of spiritual life is stifled. Acceptance of a system seems to imply that "adventures in ideas" are prohibited. History shows that this is not the case. The great schools of Greek philosophy produced many creative pupils who remained in the school, accepted the system on which it was based, and, at the same time, transformed the ideas of the founder. The same was true of the theological schools of the nineteenth century. The history of human thought has been, and still is, identical with the history of the great systems.

The distinction between three terms may conclude the discussion of the systematic character of systematic theology and of its methodological rationality. System stands between ***summa*** and essay. The summa deals explicitly with ***all actual*** and many potential problems. The essay deals explicitly with one ***actual*** problem. The system deals with a group of ***actual*** problems which demand a solution in a special situation. In the Middle Ages the ***summa*** was predominant, though by no means exclusively so. At the beginning of the modern period the essay became predominant, although the systematic trend never ceased to exist. Today a need for systematic form has arisen in view of the chaos of our spiritual life and the impossibility of creating a summa.

12. The Method of Correlation

The principle of methodological rationality implies that, like all scientific approaches to reality, systematic theology follows a method. A

method is a tool, literally a way around, which must be adequate to its subject matter. Whether or not a method is adequate cannot be decided a priori; it is continually being decided in the cognitive process itself. Method and system determine each other. Therefore, no method can claim to be adequate for every subject. Methodological imperialism is as dangerous as political imperialism; like the latter, it breaks down when the independent elements'of reality revolt against it. A method is not an "indifferent net" in which reality is caught, but the method is an element of the reality itself. In at least one respect the description of a method is a description of a decisive aspect of the object to which it is applied. The cognitive relation itself, quite apart from any special act of cognition, reveals something about the object, as well as about the subject, in the relation. The cognitive relation in physics reveals the mathematical character of objects in space (and time). The cognitive relation in biology reveals the structure (Gestalt) and spontaneous character of objects in space and time. The cognitive relation in historiography reveals the individual and value-related character of objects in time (and space). The cognitive relation in theology reveals the existential and transcending character of the ground of objects in time and space. Therefore, no method can be developed without a prior knowledge of the object to which it is applied. For systematic theology this means that its method is derived from a prior knowledge of the system which is to be built by the method.

Systematic theology uses the method of correlation. It has always done so, sometimes more, sometimes less, consciously, and must do so consciously and outspokenly, especially if the apologetic point of view is to prevail. The method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence.

The term "correlation" may be used in three ways. It can designate the correspondence of different series of data, as in statistical charts; it can designate the logical interdependence of concepts, as in polar relations; and it can designate the real interdependence of things or events in structural wholes. If the term is used in theology, all three meanings have important applications. There is a correlation in the sense of correspondence between religious symbols and that which is symbolized by them. There is a correlation in the logical sense between concepts denoting the human and those denoting the divine. There is a correlation in the factual sense between man's ultimate concern and that about which he is ultimately concerned. The first meaning of correlation refers to the

central problem of religious knowledge (Part I, Sec. I). The second meaning of correlation determines the statements about God and the world; for example, the correlation of the infinite and the finite (Part II, Sec. I). The third meaning of correlation qualifies the divine-human relationship within religious experience.[16] The third use of correlative thinking in theology has evoked the protest of theologians such as Karl Barth, who are afraid that any kind of divine-human correlation makes God partly dependent on man. But although God in his abysmal nature[17] is in no way dependent on man, God in his self-manifestation to man is dependent on the way man receives his manifestation. This is true even if the doctrine of predestination, namely, that this way is foreordained by God and entirely independent of human freedom, is maintained. The divine-human relation, and therefore God as well as man within this relation, changes with the stages of the history of revelation and with the stages of every personal development. There is a mutual interdependence between "God for us" and "we for God." God's wrath and God's grace are not contrasts in the "heart" of God (Luther), in the depth of his being; but they are contrasts in the divine-human relationship. The divine-human relation is a correlation. The "divine-human encounter" (Emil Brunner) means something real for both sides. It is an actual correlation, in the third sense of the term.

The divine-human relationship is a correlation also in its cognitive side. Symbolically speaking, God answers man's questions, and under the impact of God's answers man asks them. Theology formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence. This is a circle which drives man to a point where question and answer are not separated. This point, however, is not a moment in time. It belongs to man's essential being, to the unity of his finitude with the infinity in which he was created (see Part II) and from which he is separated (see Part III). A symptom of both the essential unity and the existential separation of finite man from his infinity is his ability to ask about the infinite to which he belongs : the fact that he must ask about it indicates that he is separated from it.

The answers implied in the event of revelation are meaningful only in so far as they are in correlation with questions concerning the whole of our existence, with existential questions. Only those who have experi-

16. Luther: "As you believe him so you have him."
17. Calvin: "In his essence."

enced the shock of transitoriness, the anxiety in which they are aware of their finitude, the threat of nonbeing, can understand what the notion of God means. Only those who have experienced the tragic ambiguities of our historical existence and have totally questioned the meaning of existence can understand what the symbol of the Kingdom of God means. Revelation answers questions which have been asked and always will be asked because they are "we ourselves." Man is the question he asks about himself, before any question has been formulated. It is, therefore, not surprising that the basic questions were formulated very early in the history of mankind. Every analysis of the mythological material shows this.[18] Nor is it surprising that the same questions appear in early childhood, as every observation of children shows. Being human means asking the questions of one's own being and living under the impact of the answers given to this question. And, conversely, being human means receiving answers to the question of one's own being and asking questions under the impact of the answers.

In using the method of correlation, systematic theology proceeds in the following way: it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions., The analysis of the human situation is done in terms which today are called "existential." Such analyses are much older than existentialism; they are, indeed, as old as man's thinking about himself, and they have been expressed in various kinds of conceptualization since the beginning of philosophy. Whenever man has looked at his world, he has found himself in it as a part of it. But he also has realized that he is a stranger in the world of objects, unable to penetrate it beyond a certain level of scientific analysis. And then he has become aware of the fact that he himself is the door to the deeper levels of reality, that in his own existence he has the only possible approach to existence itself.[19] This does not mean that man is more approachable than other objects as material for scientific research. The opposite is the case! It does mean that the immediate experience of one's own existing reveals something of the nature of existence generally. Whoever has penetrated into the nature of his

18. Cf. H. Gunkel, ***The Legends of Genesis*** (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1901).

19. Cf. Augustine's doctrine of truth dwelling in the soul and transcending it at the same time: the mystical identification of the ground of being with the ground of self; the use of psychological categories for ontological purposes in Paracelsus, Böhme, Schelling, and in the "philosophy of life" from Schopenhauer to Bergson; Heidegger's notion of "Dasein" (being there) as the form of human existence and the entrance to ontology.

own finitude can find the traces of finitude in everything that exists. And he can ask the question implied in his finitude as the question implied in finitude universally. In doing so, he does not formulate a doctrine of man; he expresses a doctrine of existence as experienced in him as man. When Calvin in the opening sentences of the *Institutes* correlates our knowledge of God with our knowledge of man, he does not speak of the doctrine of man as such and of the doctrine of God as such. He speaks of man's misery, which gives the existential basis for his understanding of God's glory, and of God's glory, which gives the essential basis for man's understanding of his misery. Man as existing, representing existence generally and asking the question implied in his existence, is one side of the cognitive correlation to which Calvin points, the other side being the divine majesty. In the initial sentences of his theological system Calvin expresses the essence of the method of correlation.[20]

The analysis of the human situation employs materials made available by man's creative self-interpretation in all realms of culture. Philosophy contributes, but so do poetry, drama, the novel, therapeutic psychology, and sociology. The theologian organizes these materials in relation to the answer given by the Christian message. In the light of this message he may make an analysis of existence which is more penetrating than that of most philosophers. Nevertheless, it remains a philosophical analysis. The analysis of existence, including the development of the questions implicit in existence, is a philosophical task, even if it is performed by a theologian, and even if the theologian is a reformer like Calvin. The difference between the philosopher who is not a theologian and the theologian who works as a philosopher in analyzing human existence is only that the former tries to give an analysis which will be part of a broader philosophical work, while the latter tries to correlate the material of his analysis with the theological concepts he derives from the Christian faith. This does not make the philosophical work of the theologian heteronomous. As a theologian he does not tell himself what is philosophically true. As a philosopher he does not tell himself what is theologically true. But he cannot help seeing human existence and existence generally in such a way that the Christian symbols appear meaningful and understandable to him. His eyes are partially focused by his ulti-

20. "The knowledge of ourselves is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance towards finding him. On the other hand, it is plain that no man can arrive at the true knowledge of himself, without having first contemplated the divine character, and then descended to the consideration of his own" (John Calvin, *Institutes*, I, 48).

mate concern, which is true of every philosopher. Nevertheless, his act of seeing is autonomous, for it is determined only by the object as it is given in his experience. If he sees something he did not expect to see in the light of his theological answer, he holds fast to what he has seen and reformulates the theological answer. He is certain that nothing he sees can change the substance of his answer, because this substance is the logos of being, manifest in Jesus as the Christ. If this were not his presupposition, he would have to sacrifice either his philosophical honesty or his theological concern.

The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence. These answers are contained in the revelatory events on which Christianity is based and are taken by systematic theology from the sources, *through* the medium, ***under the*** norm. Their content cannot be derived from the questions, that is, from an analysis of human existence. They are "spoken" to human existence from beyond it. Otherwise they would not be answers, for the question is human existence itself, But the relation is more involved than this, since it is correlation. There is a mutual dependence between question and answer. In respect to content the Christian answers are dependent on the revelatory events in which they appear; in respect to form they are dependent on the structure of the questions which they answer. God is the answer to the question implied in human finitude. This answer cannot be derived from the analysis of existence. However, if the notion of God appears in systematic theology in correlation with the threat of nonbeing which is implied in existence, God must be called the infinite power of being which resists' the threat of nonbeing. In classical theology this is being-itself. If anxiety is defined as the awareness of being finite, God must be called the infinite ground of courage. In classical theology this is universal providence. If the notion of the Kingdom of God appears in correlation with the riddle of our historical existence, it must be called the meaning, fulfilment, and unity of history. In this way an interpretation of the traditional symbols of Christianity is achieved which preserves the power of these symbols and which opens them to the questions elaborated by our present analysis of human existence.

The method of correlation replaces three inadequate methods of relating the contents of the Christian faith to man's spiritual existence. The first method can be called supranaturalistic, in that it takes the Christian message to be a sum of revealed truths which have fallen into the human situation like strange bodies from a strange world. No mediation to the

human situation is possible. These truths themselves create a new situation before they can be received. Man must become something else than human in order to receive divinity. In terms of the classical heresies one could say that the supranaturalistic method has docetic-monophysitic traits, especially in its valuation of the Bible as a book of supranatural "oracles" in which human receptivity is completely overlooked. But man cannot receive answers to questions he never has asked. Furthermore, man has asked and is asking in his very existence and in every one of his spiritual creations questions which Christianity answers.

The second method to be rejected can be called "naturalistic" or "humanistic." It derives the Christian message from man's natural state. It develops its answer out of human existence, unaware that human existence itself ***is the*** question. Much of liberal theology in the last two centuries was "humanistic" in this sense. It identified man's existential with his essential state, overlooking the break between them which is reflected in the universal human condition of self-estrangement and self-contradiction. Theologically this meant that the contents of the Christian faith were explained as creations of man's religious self-realization in the progressive process of religious history. Questions and answers were put on the same level of human creativity. Everything was said by man, nothing to man. But revelation is "spoken" to man, not by man to himself.

The third method to be rejected can be called "dualistic," inasmuch as it builds a supranatural structure on a natural substructure. This method, more than others, is aware of the problem which the method of correlation tries to meet. It realizes that, in spite of the infinite gap between man's spirit and God's spirit, there must be a positive relation between them. It tries to express this relation by positing a body of theological truth which man can reach through his own efforts or, in terms of a self-contradictory expression, through "natural revelation." The so-called arguments for "the existence of God," which itself is another self-contradictory term, are the most important section of natural theology. These arguments are true (see Part II, Sec. I) in so far as they analyze human finitude and the question involved in it. They are false in so far as they derive an answer from the form of the question. This mixture of truth and falsehood in natural theology explains why there always have been great philosophers and theologians who have attacked natural theology, especially the arguments for the existence of God, and why others equally great have defended it. The method of correlation solves this historical

and systematic riddle by resolving natural theology into the analysis of existence and by resolving supranatural theology into the answers given to the questions implied in existence.

13. The Theological System

The structure of the theological system follows from the method of correlation. The method of correlation requires that every part of the system should include one section in which the question is developed by an analysis of human existence and existence generally, and one section in which the theological answer is given on the basis of the sources, the medium, and the norm of systematic theology. This division must be maintained. It is the backbone of the structure of the present system.

One could think of a section which mediates between the two main sections by interpreting historical, sociological, and psychological materials in the light of both the existential questions and the theological answers.[21] Since these materials from the sources of systematic theology are used not as they appear in their historical, sociological, or psychological setting but in terms of their significance for the systematic solution, they belong to the theological answer and do not constitute a section of their own.

In each of the five parts of the system which are derived from the structure of existence in correlation with the structure of the Christian message, the two sections are correlated in the following ways. In so far as man's existence has the character of self-contradiction or estrangement, a double consideration is demanded, one side dealing with man as he essentially is (and ought to be) and the other dealing with what he is in his self-estranged existence (and should not be). These correspond to the Christian distinction between the realm of creation and the realm of salvation. Therefore, one part of the system must give an analysis of man's essential nature (in unity with the essential nature of everything that has being), and of the question implied in man's finitude and finitude generally; and it must give the answer which is God. This part, therefore, is called "Being and God." A second part of the system must give an analysis of man's existential self-estrangement (in unity with the self-destructive aspects of existence generally) and the question implied in this situation; and it must give the answer which is the Christ. This part, therefore, is called "Existence and Christ." A third part is based on

21. **In former outlines, especially in the "Propositions" prepared for my lectures, such a section always was inserted.**

the fact that the essential as well as the existential characteristics are abstractions and that in reality they appear in the complex and dynamic unity which is called "life." The power of essential being is ambiguously present in all existential distortions. Life, that is, being in its actuality, displays such a character in all its processes. Therefore, this part of the system must give an analysis of man as living (in unity with life generally) and of the question implied in the ambiguities of life; and it must give the answer which is the Spirit. This part, therefore, is called "Life and the Spirit." These three parts represent the main body of systematic theology. They embrace the Christian answers to the questions of existence. But for practical reasons it is necessary to "split off" some of the material from each part and combine it to form an epistemological part. This part of the system must give an analysis of man's rationality, especially his cognitive rationality (in unity with the rational structure of reality as a whole), and of the questions implied in the finitude, the self-estrangement, and the ambiguities of reason; and it must give the answer which is Revelation. This part, therefore, is called "Reason and Revelation."

Finally, life has a dimension which is called "history." And it is helpful to separate the material dealing with the historical aspect of life from the part dealing with life generally. This corresponds to the fact that the symbol "Kingdom of God" is independent of the trinitarian structure which determines the central parts. This part of the system must give an analysis of man's historical existence (in unity with the nature of the historical generally) and of the questions implied in the ambiguities of history; and it must give an answer which is the Kingdom of God. This part is called "History and the Kingdom of God."

It would be most advantageous to begin with "Being and God," because this part outlines the basic structure of being and gives the answer to the questions implied in this structure-an answer which determines all other answers-for theology is first of all doctrine of God. But several considerations make it necessary to begin with the epistemological part, "Reason and Revelation." First, every theologian is asked, "On what do you base your assertions; what criteria, what verification, do you have?" This necessitates an epistemological answer from the very start. Second, the concept of reason (and Reason) must be clarified before statements can be made in which there is the assumption that reason transcends itself. Third, the doctrine of revelation must be dealt with at the very beginning, because revelation is presupposed in all parts of the system as

the ultimate source of the contents of the Christian faith. For these reasons "Reason and Revelation" must open the system, just as for obvious reasons "History and the Kingdom of God" must close it. One cannot avoid the fact that in each part elements of the other parts are anticipated or repeated. In a way each part contains the whole from a different perspective, for the present system is by no means deductive. The very fact that in each part the question is developed anew makes any possible continuity of deduction impossible. Revelation is not given as a system. But revelation is not inconsistent either. The systematic theologian, therefore, can interpret that which transcends all possible systems, the self-manifestation of the divine mystery, in a systematic form.

PART I
REASON AND REVELATION

I

REASON AND THE QUEST FOR REVELATION

A. THE STRUCTURE OF REASON

1. THE TWO CONCEPTS OF REASON

Epistemology, the "knowledge" of knowing, is a part of ontology, the knowledge of being, for knowing is an event within the totality of events. Every epistemological assertion is implicitly ontological. Therefore, it is more adequate to begin an analysis of existence with the question of being rather than with the problem of knowledge. Moreover, it is in line with the predominant classical tradition. But there are situations in which the opposite order ought to be followed, namely, when an ontological tradition has become doubtful and the question arises whether the tools used in the creation of this tradition are responsible for its failure. This was the situation of ancient probabilism and skepticism in relation to the struggle between the philosophical schools. It was the situation of Descartes in the face of the disintegrating medieval traditions. It was the situation of Hume and Kant with respect to the traditional metaphysics. It is the perennial situation of theology, which always must give an account of its paths to knowledge because they seem to deviate radically from all ordinary ways. Although epistemology precedes ontology in these instances, it is an error to assume that epistemology is able to provide the foundation of the philosophical or theological system. Even if it precedes the other parts of the system, it is dependent on them in such a way that it can be elaborated only by anticipating them explicitly and implicitly. Recent Neo-Kantian philosophers recognized the dependence of epistemology on ontology and contributed to the fall of the epistemological tidal wave which arose in the second half of the nineteenth century. Classical theology always has been aware that a doctrine of revelation presupposes doctrines of God, man, Christ, etc. It has known that the epistemological "preamble" is dependent on the whole of the theological system. Recent attempts to make epistemological and methodological considerations an independent basis for theological

work have been futile.[1] Therefore, it is necessary that the systematic theologian, when he begins with the epistemological part (the doctrine of Reason and Revelation), should indicate clearly the anticipations he makes both with respect to Reason and with respect to Revelation.

One of the greatest weaknesss of much theological writing and of much religious talk is that the word "reason" is used in a loose and vague way, which is sometimes appreciative but usually depreciatory. While popular talk can be excused for such unpreciseness (although it has religious dangers), it is inexcusable if a theologian uses terms without having defined or exactly circumscribed them. Therefore, it is necessary to define from the very beginning the sense in which the term "reason" will be used.

We can distinguish between an ontological and a technical concept of reason. The former is predominant in the classical tradition from Parmenides to Hegel; the latter, though always present in pre-philosophical and philosophical thought, has become predominant since the breakdown of German classical idealism and in the wake of English empiricism.[2] According to the classical philosophical tradition, reason is the structure of the mind which enables the mind to grasp and to transform reality. It is effective in the cognitive, aesthetic, practical, and technical functions of the human mind. Even emotional life is not irrational in itself. *Erōs* drives the mind toward the true (Plato). Love for the perfect form moves all things (Aristotle). In the "apathy" of the soul the *logos* manifests its presence (Stoics). The longing for its origin elevates soul and mind toward the ineffable source of all meaning **(Plotinus)** . The *appetitus* of everything finite drives it toward the good-itself (Aquinas). "Intellectual love" unites intellect and emotion in the most rational state of the mind (Spinoza). Philosophy is "service of God"; it is a thinking which is at the same time life and joy in the "absolute truth" (Hegel), etc. Classical reason is Logos, whether it is understood in a more intuitive or in a more critical way. Its cognitive nature is one element in addition to others; it is cognitive and aesthetic, theoretical and practical, detached and passionate, subjective and objective. The denial of reason in the classical sense is antihuman because it is antidivine.

But this ontological concept of reason always is accompanied and sometimes replaced by the technical concept of reason. Reason is reduced

1. See the Introduction.
2. See Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917).

to the capacity for "reasoning." Only the cognitive side of the classical concept of reason remains, and within the cognitive realm only those cognitive acts which deal with the discovery of means for ends. While reason in the sense of Logos determines the ends and only in the second place the means, reason in the technical sense determines the means while accepting the ends from "somewhere else." There is no danger in this situation as long as technical reason is the companion of ontological reason and "reasoning" is used to fulfil the demands of reason. This situation prevailed in most pre-philosophical as well as philosophical periods of human history, although there always was the threat that "reasoning" might separate itself from reason. Since the middle of the nineteenth century this threat has become a dominating reality. The consequence is that the ends are provided by nonrational forces, either by positive traditions or by arbitrary decisions serving the will to power. Critical reason has ceased to exercise its controlling function over norms and ends. At the same time the noncognitive sides of reason have been consigned to the irrelevance of pure subjectivity. In some forms of logical positivism the philosopher even refuses to "understand" anything that transcends technical reason, thus making his philosophy completely irrelevant for questions of existential concern. Technical reason, however refined in logical and methodological respects, dehumanizes man if it is separated from ontological reason. And, beyond this, technical reason itself is impoverished and corrupted if it is not continually nourished by ontological reason. Even in the means-ends structure of "reasoning" assertions about the nature of things are presupposed which themselves are not based on technical reason. Neither structures, Gestalt processes, values, nor meanings can be grasped without ontological reason. Technical reason can reduce them to something less than their true reality. But, by reducing them to this status, it has deprived itself of insights which are decisive for the means-ends relationship. Of course one knows many aspects of human nature by analyzing physiological and psychological processes and by using the elements provided by this analysis for physicotechnical or psychotechnical purposes. But if one claims to know man in this way, one misses not only the nature of man but even decisive truths about man within a means-ends relationship. This is true of every realm of reality. Technical reason always has an important function, even in systematic theology. But technical reason is adequate and meaningful only as an expression of ontological reason and as its companion. Theology need not make a decision for or against one of these two con-

cepts of reason. It uses the methods of technical reason, the means-ends relation, in establishing a consistent, logical, and correctly derived organism of thought. It accepts the refinements of the cognitive methods applied by technical reason. But it rejects the confusion of technical with ontological reason. For instance, theology cannot accept the support of technical reason in "reasoning" the existence of a God. Such a God would belong to the means-ends relationship. He would be less than God. On the other hand, theology is not perturbed by the attack on the Christian message made by technical reason, for these attacks do not reach the level on which religion stands. They may destroy superstitions, but they do not even touch faith. Theology is (or should be) grateful for the critical function of the type of technical reason which shows that there is no such "thing" as a God within the context of means-ends relationships. Religious objects, seen in terms of the universe of discourse constituted by technical reason, are objects of superstition subject to destructive criticism. Wherever technical reason dominates, religion is superstition and is either foolishly supported by reason or rightly removed by it.

Although theology invariably uses technical reason in its systematic work, it cannot escape the question of its relation to ontological reason. The traditional question of the relation of reason to revelation should not be discussed on the level of technical reason, where it constitutes no genuine problem, but on the level of ontological reason, of reason in the sense of *logos.* Technical reason is an instrument, and, like every instrument, it can be more or less perfect and can be used more or less skillfully. But no existential problem is involved in its use. The situation is quite different with respect to ontological reason. It was the mistake of idealistic philosophy that it identified revelation with ontological reason while rejecting the claims of technical reason. This is the very essence of the idealistic philosophy of religion. In opposition to idealism, theology must show that, although the essence of ontological reason, the universal logos of being, is identical with the content of revelation, still reason, if actualized in self and world, is dependent on the destructive structures of existence and the saving structures of life (Parts III and IV); it is subjected to finitude and separation, and it can participate in the "New Being." Its actualization is not a matter of technique but of "fall" and "salvation." It follows that the theologian must consider reason from several different perspectives. In theology one must distinguish not only ontological from technical reason but also ontological reason in its essential perfection from its predicament in the different stages of its actualization in existence, life, and history. The religious judgment that reason is "blind," for instance, neither refers to technical reason, which can see most things in its own realm quite well, nor to ontological reason in its essential perfection, namely, in unity with being-itself.[3] The judgment that reason is blind refers to reason under the conditions of existence; and the judgment that reason is weak-partly liberated from blindness, partly held in it-refers to reason within life and history. If these distinctions are not ma&, every statement about reason is incorrect or dangerously ambiguous.

2. Subjective and Objective Reason

Ontological reason can be defined as the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to shape reality. From the time of Parmenides it has been a common assumption of all philosophers that the logos, the word which grasps and shapes reality, can do so only because reality itself has a *logos* character. There have been widely differing explanations of the relation between the logos structure of the grasping-and-shaping-self and the logos structure of the grasped-and-shaped-world. But the necessity of an explanation has been acknowledged almost unanimously. In the classical descriptions of the way in which subjective reason and objective reason-the rational structure of the mind and the rational structure of reality-are related, four main types appear. The first type considers subjective reason as an effect of the whole of reality on a part of it, namely, on the mind. It presupposes that reality has the power of producing a reasonable mind through which it can grasp and shape itself. Realism, whether naïve, critical, or dogmatic (materialism), takes this stand, often without recognizing its basic presupposition. The second type considers objective reason as a creation of subjective reason on the basis of an unstructured matter in which it actualizes itself. Idealism, whether in the restricted forms of ancient philosophy or in the unrestricted forms of modern philosophy, makes this assertion, often without any explanation of the fact that matter is receptive to the structural power of reason. The third type affirms the ontological independence and the functional interdependence of subjective and objective reason, pointing to the mutual fulfilment of the one in the other. Dualism or pluralism, whether metaphysical or epistemological, takes this position, often without asking the question of an

3. Cf. Plato's myth of the soul in its original state seeing the "ideas" or eternal essences.

underlying unity of subjective and objective reason. The fourth type affirms an underlying identity which expresses itself in the rational structure of reality. Monism, whether it describes the identity in terms of being or in terms of experience (pragmatism), takes this position, often without explaining the difference between subjective and objective reason.

The theologian is not obligated to make a decision about the degree of truth of these four types. However, he must consider their common presuppositions when he uses the concept of reason. Implicitly theologians always have done this. They have spoken of creation through the Logos or of the spiritual presence of God in everything real. They have called man the image of God because of his rational structure and have charged him with the task of grasping and shaping the world.

Subjective reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to shape reality on the basis of a corresponding structure of reality (in whatever way this correspondence may be explained). The description of "grasping" and "shaping" in this definition is based on the fact that subjective reason always is actualized in an individual self which is related to its environment and to its world in terms of reception and reaction. The mind receives and reacts. In receiving reasonably, the mind grasps its world; in reacting reasonably, the mind shapes its world. "Grasping," in this context, has the connotation of penetrating into the depth, into the essential nature of a thing or an event, of understanding and expressing it. "Shaping," in this context, has the connotation of transforming a given material into a Gestalt, a living structure which has the power of being.

The division between the grasping and the shaping character of reason is not exclusive. In every act of reasonable reception an act of shaping is involved, and in every act of reasonable reaction an act of grasping is involved. We transform reality according to the way we see it, and we see reality according to the way we transform it. Grasping and shaping the world are interdependent. In the cognitive realm this has been clearly expressed in the Fourth Gospel, which speaks of knowing the truth by doing the truth.' Only in the active realization of the true does truth become manifest. In a similar way Karl Marx called every theory which is not based on the will to transform reality an "ideology," that is, an attempt to preserve existing evils by a theoretical construction which justifies them. Some of the impact of instrumentalist thinking on

4. John 3:21.

our contemporaries stems from its emphasis on the unity of action and knowledge.

While the cognitive side of "receiving rationality" demands special discussion, what has been said makes it possible to survey the entire field of ontological reason. In both types of rational acts, the grasping and the shaping, a basic polarity is visible. This is due to the fact that an emotional element is present in every rational act. On the receptive side of reason we find a polarity between the cognitive and the aesthetic elements. On the reactive side of reason we find a polarity between the organizational and the organic elements. But this description of the "field of reason" is only preliminary. Each of the four functions mentioned includes transitional stages on the path to its opposite pole. Music is further removed from the cognitive function than the novel, and technical science is further removed from the aesthetic realm than biography or ontology; Personal communion is further removed from organization than national community, and commercial law is further removed from the organic realm than government. One should not try to construe a static system of the rational functions of the human mind. There are no sharp limits between them, and there is much historical change in their growth and in their relationships. But all of them are functions of ontological reason, and the fact that in some of them the emotional element is more decisive than in others does not make them less rational. Music is no less rational than mathematics. The emotional element in music opens a dimension of reality which is closed to mathematics. Communion is no less rational than law. The emotional element in communion opens a dimension of reality which is closed to law. There is, of course, an implicit mathematical quality in music and a potential legal quality in all communal relations. But this is not their essence. They have their own rational structures. This is the meaning of Pascal's sentence about the "reasons of the heart which reason cannot comprehend."[5] Here "reason" is used in a double sense. The "reasons of the heart" are the structures of aesthetic and communal experience (beauty and love); the reason "which cannot comprehend them" is technical reason.

Subjective reason is the rational structure of the mind, while objective reason is the rational structure of reality which the mind can grasp and according to which it can shape reality. Reason in the philosopher grasps the reason in nature. Reason in the artist grasps the meaning of things. Reason in the legislator shapes society according to the structures of

5. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, Selection 277.

social balance. Reason in the leaders of a community shapes communal life according to the structure of organic interdependence. Subjective reason is rational if, in the twofold process of reception and reaction, it expresses the rational structure of reality. This relation, whether it is described in ontological or epistemological terms, is not static. Like being itself, reason unites a dynamic with a static element in an indissoluble amalgamation. This refers not only to subjective but also to objective reason. Both the rational structure of reality and the rational structure of the mind possess duration within change and change in duration. The problem of actual reason, therefore, is not only to avoid errors and failures in the grasping and shaping of reality but also to make the dynamics of reason effective in every act of subjective reason and in every moment of objective reason. The danger involved in this situation is that the dynamics of rational creativity may be confused with the distortions of reason in existence. The dynamic element of reason forces the mind to take this risk. In every rational act three elements inhere: the static clement of reason, the dynamic element of reason, and the existential distortion of both of them. Therefore, it is possible for the mind to defend something as a static element of reason which is a distortion of it or for the mind to attack something as distorted which is a dynamic element of reason. Academic art defends the static element of aesthetic reason, but in much academic art there is a distortion of something which was creative and new when it first arose and which was attacked at its inception as a distortion of former academic ideals. Social conservatism is a distortion of something which once was a dynamic creation,.attacked at the time of its appearance as a distortion of former conservative ideals. These risks are unavoidable in all processes of actual reason, in mind as well as in reality.

One must ask what the dynamic element in objective reason means. It is a problem whether one can speak about a changing element within the structure of reality. Nobody doubts that reality changes, but many people believe that change is possible only because the structure of reality is unchangeable. If this were so, the rational structure of the mind itself would be unchangeable, and the rational process would have only two elements-the static element and the failure to grasp and to shape it adequately. One would have to dismiss the dynamic element of reason altogether if subjective reason alone were dynamic. Reality itself creates structural possibilities within itself. Life, as well as mind, is creative. Only those things can live which embody a rational structure. Living

beings are successful attempts of nature to actualize itself in accordance with the demands of objective reason. If nature does not follow these demands, its products arc unsuccessful trials. The same is true of legal forms and social relations. New products of the historical process are attempts which can succeed only if they follow the demands of objective reason. Neither nature nor history can create anything that contradicts reason. The new and the old in history and nature are bound together in an overwhelming rational unity which is static and dynamic at the same time, The new does not break this unity; it cannot because objective reason is the structural possibility, the logos of being.

3. The Depth of Reason

The depth of reason is the expression of something that is not reason but which precedes reason and is manifest through it, Reason in both its objective and its subjective structures points to something which appears in these structures but which transcends them in power and meaning. This is not another field of reason which could progressively be discovered and expressed, but it is that which is expressed through every rational expression. It could be called the "substance" which appears in the rational structure, or "being-itself" which is manifest in the *logos* of being, or the "ground" which is creative in every rational creation, or the "abyss" which cannot be exhausted by any creation or by any totality of them, or the "infinite potentiality of being and meaning" which pours into the rational structures of mind and reality, actualizing and transforming them. All these terms which point to that which "precedes" reason have a metaphorical character. "Preceding" is itself metaphorical. This is necessarily so, because if the terms were used in their proper sense, they would belong to reason and would not precede it.

While only a metaphorical description of the depth of reason is possible, the metaphors may be applied to the various fields in which reason is actualized. In the cognitive realm the depth of reason is its quality of pointing to truth-itself, namely, to the infinite power of being and of the ultimately real, through the relative truths in every field of knowledge. In the aesthetic realm the depth of reason is its quality of pointing to "beauty-itself," namely, to an infinite meaning and an ultimate significance, through the creations in every field of aesthetic intuition. In the legal realm the depth of reason is its quality of pointing to "justice-itself," namely, to an infinite seriousness and an ultimate dignity, through every structure of actualized justice. In the communal realm the depth

of reason is its quality of pointing to "love-itself," namely, to an infinite richness and an ultimate unity, through every form of actualized love. This dimension of reason, the dimension of depth, is an essential quality of all rational functions. It is their own depth, making them inexhaustible and giving them greatness.

The depth of reason is that characteristic of reason which explains two functions of the human mind, the rational character of which can neither be aflirmed nor denied because they demonstrate an independent structure which can neither be reduced to other functions of reason nor be derived from prerational psychological or sociological elements. Myth is not primitive science, nor is cult primitive morality. Their content, as well as the attitude of people toward them, disclose elements which transcend science as well as morality-lements of infinity which express ultimate concern. These elements are essentially implicit in every rational act and process, so that in principle they do not require separate expression. In every act of grasping truth, truth-itself is grasped implicitly, and in every act of transforming love, love-itself transforms implicitly, etc. The depth of reason is essentially manifest in reason. But it is hidden in reason under the conditions of existence. Because of these conditions reason in existence expresses itself in myth and cult as well as in its proper functions. There should be neither myth nor cult. They contradict essential reason; they betray by their very existence the "fallen" state of a reason which has lost immediate unity with its own depth. It has become "superficial," cutting itself off from its ground and abyss. Christianity and the Enlightenment agree in the judgment that there should be neither myth nor cult, but from different presuppositions. Christianity envisages a state without myth and cult, potentially in the "beginning," actually in the "end," fragmentarily and by anticipation in the flux of time. Enlightenment sees the end of myth and cult in a new future when rational knowledge has vanquished myth and rational morals have conquered cult. Enlightenment and rationalism confuse the essential nature of reason with the predicament of reason in existence. Essentially reason is transparent toward its depth in each of its acts and processes. In existence this transparency is opaque and is replaced by myth and cult. Therefore, both of these are utterly ambiguous from the point of view of existential reason. Innumerable theories defining them, explaining them, and explaining them away are a token of this situation. If we ignore the merely negative theories, most of which are based on psychological and sociological explanations and which are consequences

of the rationalistic understanding of reason, we are driven to the following alternative: either myth and cult are special realms of reason along with the others, or they represent the depth of reason in symbolic form. If they are considered to be special rational functions in addition to the others, they are in a never ending and insoluble conflict with the other functions. They are swallowed by them, placed into the category of irrational feelings, or maintained as strange bodies, heteronomous and destructive, within the structure of reason. If, however, myth and cult are considered to be the expressions of the depth of reason in symbolic form, they lie in a dimension where no interference with the proper functions of reason is possible. Wherever the ontological concept of reason is accepted and the depth of reason is understood no conflicts between myth and knowledge, between cult and morals, are necessary. Revelation does not destroy reason, but reason raises the question of revelation.[6]

B. REASON IN EXISTENCE

4. The Finitude and the Ambiguities of Actual Reason

Reason as the structure of mind and reality is actual in the processes of being, existence, and life. Being is finite, existence is self-contradictory, and life is ambiguous (see Parts II-IV). Actual reason participates in these characteristics of reality. Actual reason moves through finite categories, through self-destructive conflicts, through ambiguities, and through the quest for what is unambiguous, beyond conflict, and beyond bondage to the categories.

The nature of finite reason is described in classical form by Nicolaus Cusanus and Immanuel Kant. The former speaks of the *docta ignorantia,* the "learned ignorance," which acknowledges the finitude of man's cognitive reason and its inability to grasp its own infinite ground. But, in recognizing this situation, man is at the same time aware of the infinite which is present in everything finite, though infinitely transcending it. This presence of the inexhaustible ground in all beings is called by Cusanus the "coincidence of the opposites." In spite of its finitude, reason is aware of its infinite depth. It cannot express it in terms of rational knowledge (ignorance), but the knowledge that this is impossible is real knowledge (learned). The finitude of reason does not lie in the fact that it lacks perfection in grasping and shaping reality. Such imperfection is accidental to reason. Finitude is essential for reason, as it is for

6. For extensive discussion of symbolic forms see pp. 238-47.

everything that participates in being. The structure of this finitude is described in the most profound and comprehensive way in Kant's "critiques."[7] The categories of experience are categories of finitude. They do not enable human reason to grasp reality-in-itself; but they do enable man to grasp his world, the totality of the phenomena which appear to him and which constitute his actual experience. The main category of finitude is time. Being finite means being temporal. Reason cannot break through the limits of temporality and reach the eternal, just as it cannot break through the limits of causality, space, substance, in order to reach the first cause, absolute space, universal substance. At this point the situation is exactly the same as it is in Nicolaus Cusanus: by analyzing the categorical structure of reason, man discovers the finitude in which he is imprisoned. He also discovers that his reason does not accept this bondage and tries to grasp the infinite with the categories of finitude, the really real with the categories of experience, and that it necessarily fails. The only point at which the prison of finitude is open is the realm of moral experience, because in it something unconditional breaks into the whole of temporal and causal conditions. But this point which Kant reaches is nothing more than a point, an unconditional command, a mere awareness of the depth of reason.

Kant's "critical ignorance" describes the finitude of reason as clearly as the "learned ignorance" of Nicolaus Cusanus. The difference, however, is that, in Cusanus, Catholic mysticism points to an intuitive union with the ground and abyss of reason, while, in Kant, Protestant Criticism restricts reason to the acceptance of the unconditional imperative as the only approach to reality-itself. In post-Kantian metaphysics reason forgot its bondage to the categories of finitude. But this self-elevation to divine dignity brought on dethronement and contempt of reason and made the victory of one of its functions over all the others possible. The fate of reason after Hegel contributed decisively to the enthronement of technical reason in our time and to the loss of the universality and the depth of ontological reason.

But reason is not merely finite. It is true that reason, along with all things and events, is subject to the conditions of existence. It contradicts

7. It is unfortunate that Kant often is interpreted only as an episiemological idealist and an ethical formalist--and consequently rejected. Kant is more than this. His doctrine of the categories is a doctrine of human finitude. His doctrine of the categorical imperative is a doctrine of the unconditional element in the depth of practical reason. His doctrine of the teleological principle in art and nature enlarges the concept of reason beyond its cognitive-technical sense toward what we have called "ontological reason."

itself and is threatened with disruption and selfdestruction. Its elements move against each other. But this is only the one side of the picture. In the actual life of reason its basic structure is never completely lost. If it were lost, mind as well as reality would have been destroyed in the very moment of their coming into existence. In the actual life of reason essential and existential forces, forces of creation and forces of destruction, are united and disunited at the same time. These conflicts in actual reason supply the content for a justifiable theological criticism of reason. But an accusation of reason ***as such*** is a symptom either of theological ignorance or of theological arrogance. On the other hand, an attack on theology as ***such*** in the name of reason is a symptom of rationalistic shallowness or rationalistic *hybris*. An adequate description of the inner conflicts of ontological reason should replace the popular religious and half-popular theological lamentations about reason as such. And it should, at the same time, force reason to acknowledge its own existential predicament out of which the quest for revelation arises.

5. The Conflict within Actual Reason and the Quest for Revelation

a) Autonomy against heteronomy.—Under the conditions of existence the structural elements of reason move against each other. Although never completely separated, they fall into self-destructive conflicts which cannot be solved on the basis of actual reason. A description of these conflicts must replace the popular religious or theological attacks on the weakness or blindness of reason. The self-criticism of reason in the light of revelation penetrates much deeper and is considerably more rational than these inarticulate and often merely emotional attacks. The polarity of structure and depth within reason produces a conflict between autonomous and heteronomous reason under the conditions of existence. Out of this conflict arises the quest for theonomy. The polarity of the static and the dynamic elements of reason produces a conflict between absolutism and relativism of reason under the conditions of existence. This conflict leads to the quest for the concrete-absolute. The polarity of the formal and the emotional elements of reason produces the conflict between formalism and irrationalism of reason under the conditions of existence. Out of this conflict arises the quest for the union of form and mystery. In all three cases reason is driven to the quest for revelation.

Reason which affirms and actualizes its structure without regarding its depth is autonomous. Autonomy does not mean the freedom of the individual to be a law to himself, as theological writers often have as-

serted, establishing in this way an easy scapegoat for their attacks on an independent culture. Autonomy means the obedience of the individual to the law of reason, which he finds in himself as a rational being. The *nomos* ("law") of autos ("self") is not the law of one's personality structure. It is the law of subjective-objective reason; it is the law implied in the logos structure of mind and reality. Autonomous reason, in affirming itself in its different functions and their structural demands, uses or rejects that which is merely an expression of an individual's situation within him and around him. It resists the danger of being conditioned by the situation of self and world in existence. It considers these conditions as the material which reason has to grasp and to shape according to its structural laws. Therefore, autonomous reason tries to keep itself free from "ungrasped impressions" and "unshaped strivings." Its independence is the opposite of wilfulness; it is obedience to its own essential structure, the law of reason which is the law of nature within mind and reality, and which is divine law, rooted in the ground of being itself. This is true' of all functions of ontological reason.

Historically, autonomous reason has liberated and maintained itself in a never ending fight with heteronomy. Heteronomy imposes a strange (*heteros*) law (nomos) on one or all of the functions of reason. It issues commands from "outside" on how reason should grasp and shape reality. But this "outside" is not merely outside. It represents, at the same time, an element in reason itself, namely, the depth of reason. This makes the fight between autonomy and heteronomy dangerous and tragic. It is, finally, a conflict in reason itself. As long as reason is prerational, a confusing mass of sense impressions, a chaotic mass of instincts, strivings, compulsions, no genuine heteronomy has appeared. All this is outside reason, but it is not a law to which reason is asked to subject itself; it is not law in any rational sense. The problem of heteronomy is the problem of an authority which claims to represent reason, namely, the depth of reason, against its autonomous actualization. The basis of such a claim is not the superiority in rational power which many traditions, institutions, or personalities obviously have. The basis of a genuine heteronomy is the claim to speak in the name of the ground of being and therefore in an unconditional and ultimate way. A heteronomous authority usually expresses itself in terms of myth and cult because these are the direct and intentional expressions of the depth of reason. It is also possible for nonmythical and nonritual forms to gain power over the mind (e.g., political ideas). Heteronomy in this sense is usually

a reaction against an autonomy which has lost its depth and has become empty and powerless. But as a reaction it is destructive, denying to reason the right of autonomy and destroying its structural laws from outside.

Autonomy and heteronomy are rooted in theonomy, and each goes astray when their theonomous unity is broken. Theonomy does not mean the acceptance of a divine law imposed on reason by a highest authority; it means autonomous reason united with its own depth. In a theonomous situation reason actualizes itself in obedience to its structural laws and in the power of its own inexhaustible ground. Since God (*theos*) is the law (nomos) for both the structure and the ground of reason, they are united in him, and their unity is manifest in a theonomous situation. But there is no complete theonomy under the conditions of existence. Both elements which essentially are united in it struggle with each other under the conditions of existence and try to destroy each other. In this struggle they tend to destroy reason itself. Therefore, the quest for a reunion of what is always split in time and space arises *out* of reason and not in opposition to reason. This quest is the quest for revelation.

Seen in a world historical perspective the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy is the key to any theological understanding of the Greek as well as of the modern development and of many other problems of the spiritual history of mankind. The history of Greek philosophy, for example, can be written as a curve which starts with the still theonomous pre-philosophical period (mythology and cosmology), the slow elaboration of the autonomous structures of reason (pre-Socratic), the classical synthesis of structure and depth (Plato), the rationalization of this synthesis in the different schools (after Aristotle), the despair of reason in trying autonomously to create a world to live in (skepticism), the mystical transcending of reason (Neo-Platonism), the questioning of authorities in past and present (philosophical schools and religious sects), the creation of a new theonomy under Christian influence (Clement and Origen), and the intrusion of heteronomous elements (Athanasius and Augustine). During the high Middle Ages a theonomy (Bonaventura) was realized under the preponderance of heteronomous elements (Thomas). Toward the end of the medieval period heteronomy became all-powerful (Inquisition), partly as a reaction against autonomous tendencies in culture and religion (nominalism), and destroyed the medieval theonomy. In the period of Renaissance and Reformation the conflict grew to new intensity. The Renaissance, which

showed a theonomous character in its Neo-Platonic beginnings (Cusanus, Ficino), became increasingly autonomous in its later development (Erasmus, Galileo). Conversely, the Reformation, which in its early years united a religious with a cultural emphasis on autonomy (Luther's reliance on his conscience, and Luther and Zwingli's connection with the humanists), very soon developed a heteronomy which surpassed even that of the later Middle Ages in some respects (Protestant orthodoxy). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in spite of some heteronomous remnants and reactions, autonomy won an almost complete victory. Orthodoxy and fundamentalism were pushed into the corners of cultural life, sterile and ineffective. Classical and Romantic attempts to reestablish theonomy with autonomous means (Hegel, Schelling) did not succeed, producing radical autonomous reactions (post-Hegelians), on the one hand, and strong heteronomous reactions (revivalism), on the other hand. Under the guidance of technical reason autonomy conquered all reactions but completely lost the dimension of depth. It became shallow, empty, without ultimate meaning, and produced conscious or unconscious despair. In this situation powerful heteronomies of a quasi-political character entered the vacuum created by an autonomy which lacked the dimension of depth. The double fight against an empty autonomy and a destructive heteronomy makes the quest for a new theonomy as urgent today as it was at the end of the ancient world. The catastrophe of autonomous reason is complete. Neither autonomy nor heteronomy, isolated and in conflict, can give the answer.

b) ***Relativism against absolutism.***-Essentially, reason unites a static and a dynamic element. The static element preserves reason from losing its identity within the life-process. The dynamic element is the power of reason to actualize itself rationally in the process of life, while without the static element reason could not be the structure of life. Under the conditions of existence the two elements are torn from each other and move against each other.

The static element of reason appears in two forms of absolutism-the absolutism of tradition and the absolutism of revolution. The dynamic element of reason appears in two forms of relativism-positivistic relativism and cynical relativism. The absolutism of tradition identifies the static element of reason with special traditions, such as socially accepted morals, established political forms, "academic" aesthetics, and unquestioned philosophical principles. This attitude is usually called "conservative." But conservatism can mean two things. It can mean the readiness to defend the static side of reason against an exclusive emphasis on the dynamic side, and it can mean the fanaticism which considers dynamic structures of reason as static and elevates them to absolute validity. However, in any special case it is impossible to separate the static from the dynamic element, and every attempt to do so leads finally to a destruction of the absolutized forms through the attack of other forms which emerge in the process of actual reason. Such attacks are made in the power of another type of absolutism, the revolutionary. But after one absolutism is destroyed by a revolutionary attack, the victor establishes itself in equally absolute terms. This is almost unavoidable, because the attack was victorious through the strength of an absolute claim, often of a utopian character. Revolutionary reason believes just as deeply as traditionalism that it represents unchangeable truth, but it is being more inconsistent in this belief. The absolutism of tradition can point to past ages, with the claim that it is saying what always has been said. Revolutionary absolutism, however, has experienced at least in one case the breakdown of such a claim, namely, the breaching of tradition involved in its own victory; and it should envisage the possibility of its own end. But it does not.[8] This shows that the two types of absolutism are not exclusive; they elicit each other.

Both are contradicted by different forms of relativism. Relativism denies a static element in the structure of reason or emphasizes the dynamic element so much that no definite place is left for actual reason. Relativism can be positivistic or cynical, the former parallel to the absolutism of tradition, the second to the absolutism of revolution. Positivistic relativism takes what is "given" (posited) without applying absolute criteria to its valuation. In practice, therefore, it can become as conservative as any kind of absolutism of tradition, but on another basis and with other implications. For instance, the positivism of law in the middle of the nineteenth century was a reaction against the revolutionary abso-

8. Protestant orthodox absolutism is less consistent than Catholic ecclesiastical absolutism. Schleiermacher's statement that "the Reformation continues" is the only consistent Protestant attitude. It is an astonishing, though anthropologically rather revealing, fact that in America groups representing a most radical absolutism of tradition call themselves "Daughters" or "Sons" of the American Revolution. Russian communism not only has maintained the absolutism of its revolutionary attack but has developed partially into an absolutism of tradition by relating itself consciously to the traditions of the pre-revolutionary past. Marx himself in his emphasis on the transitory character of every stage of the revolutionary process was much more consistent in this respect. He could have said: "The revolution continues."

lutism of the eighteenth century. But it was not absolutistic itself. It accepted the positive law of different nations and periods as "merely given," but it did not allow critical attacks from the side of the natural law, nor did it establish current positive law as eternal law. Similarly, the aesthetic relativism of this period placed all previous styles on the same level without giving any of them preference in terms of a classical ideal. In the sphere of social relations local traditions were praised and their divergent developments were accepted without a critical norm. More important than all these is philosophical positivism. From the time of David Hume it has developed in many directions and has replaced absolute norms and criteria in all realms of life by pragmatic tests. Truth is relative to a group, to a concrete situation, or to an existential predicament. In this respect the recent forms of existentialism agree with the principles of pragmatic relativism and with some forms of the European *Lebensphilosophie* ("philosophy of life") to a surprising degree. It is the tragedy of this positivism that it either transforms itself into a conservative absolutism or into the cynical type of relativism. Only in countries where the remnants of former absolutisms are still powerful enough to delay such developments are the self-destructive implications of positivism hidden (England, the United States).

Cynical relativism usually is a result of a disappointment over utopian absolutism. It employs skeptical arguments against absolute principles, but it does not draw either of the two possible consequences of radical skepticism. It neither turns to revelation nor leaves the realm of thought and action altogether as ancient skepticism often did. Cynicism is an attitude of superiority over, or indifference toward, any rational structure, whether static or dynamic. Cynical relativism uses reason only for the sake of denying reason-a self-contradiction which is "cynically" accepted. Rational criticism, which presupposes some valid structures, is not the basis of cynical relativism. Its basis is disbelief in the validity of any rational act, even if it is merely critical. Cynical relativism is not wrecked by its self-contradictions. Its nemesis is the empty space it produces, the complete vacuum into which new absolutisms pour.

"Criticism" is an attempt to overcome the conflict between absolutism and relativism. It is an attitude which is not restricted to so-called critical philosophy. It is present in the whole history of philosophy, nor is it restricted to philosophy. It is effective in all spheres of ontological reason. It is the attempt to unite the static and the dynamic elements of reason by depriving the static element of content and by reducing it to a pure

form. An example is the "categorical imperative," which denies special demands and which surrenders concrete details to the contingencies of the situation. Criticism combines a positivistic with a revolutionary element, excluding traditionalism as well as cynicism. Socrates and Kant are representative of the critical attitude in philosophy. But the development of their schools proves that the critical attitude is more a demand than a possibility. In both schools either the static or the dynamic element prevailed, frustrating the critical attempt. Although Plato's earlier dialogues were critical, Platonism grew in the direction of absolutism. In spite of their acceptance of the rationalism of Socrates, hedonism and cynicism grew in the direction of absolutism. Kant's classical followers became pure absolutists, while the Neo-Kantian school emphasized the relativism of an infinite process. This is not accidental. The critical attitude, by establishing absolute though assumedly empty criteria, deceived itself about their emptiness. These criteria always mirrored a special situation, for example, the situation of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, or the victory of the bourgeois mind in western Europe. The principles established by critical philosophy were too concrete and consequently too relative for their absolute claim. But their application was too absolutistic; it represented a special form of life which claimed more than relative validity. Therefore, in the ancient as well as in the modern world, criticism was unable to overcome the conflict between absolutism and relativism. Only that which is absolute and concrete at the same time can overcome this conflict. Only revelation can do it.

c) ***Formalism against emotionalism.***—In its essential structure reason unites formal and emotional elements. There is a predominance of the formal element in the cognitive and the legal functions of reason and of the emotional element in its aesthetic and communal functions. But in all its activities essential reason unites both elements. Under the conditions of existence the unity is disrupted. The elements move against each other and produce conflicts as deep and destructive as are the conflicts already discussed.

Formalism appears in the exclusive emphasis on the formal side of every rational function and in the separation of the functions from each other. Controlling knowledge and the corresponding formalized logic, if taken as the pattern of all knowledge, represent formalism in the cognitive realm. Controlling knowledge is one side of cognitive reason and an essential element in every cognitive act. But its attempt to monopolize the whole cognitive function and to deny that any other avenue is

knowledge and can attain truth shows its existential disruption. It keeps cognitive reason from digging into those strata of things and events which can be grasped only with *amor intellectualis* ("intellectual love"). Formalism in the cognitive realm is intellectualism, the use of the cognitive intellect without *erōs*. Emotional reactions against intellectualism forget the obligation of strict, serious, and technically correct thinking in all matters of knowledge. But they are right in demanding a knowledge which not only controls but also unites.'

In the aesthetic realm formalism is an attitude, expressed in the phrase "art for art's sake," which disregards the content and meaning of artistic creations for the sake of their form. Aestheticism deprives art of its existential character by substituting detached judgments of taste and a refined connoisseurship for emotional union. No artistic expression is possible without the creative rational form, but the form, even in its greatest refinement, is empty if it does not express a spiritual substance. Even the richest and most profound artistic creation can be destructive for spiritual life if it is received in terms of formalism and aestheticism.[10] The emotional reactions of most people against aestheticism are wrong in their aesthetic judgment but right in their fundamental intention.

Formalism in the realm of legal reason places exclusive emphasis on the structural necessities of justice without asking the question of the adequacy of a legal form to the human reality which it is supposed to shape. The tragic alienation between law and life which is a subject of complaint in all periods is not caused by bad will on the part of those who make and enforce the law; it is a consequence of the separation of form from emotional participation. Legalism in the sense of legal formalism can become, like certain types of logic, a kind of play with pure forms, consistent in itself, detached from life. If applied to life, this play can turn into a destructive reality. Form armed with power can become a terrible organ of suppression in a social group. From our point of view, legal formalism and totalitarian suppression are intimately related. Emotional reactions against legal formalism misunderstand the structural necessities of law, but they realize instinctively the inadequacy of legal formalism for meeting the demands of life.

In the communal function of reason, formalism preserves, applies, and defends the conventional forms which have shaped social and personal

9. See the following sections.

10. Every public performance of Bach's *Passion* of St. Matthew carries with it the risk of making the gospel story more meaningless for people who atlmirc the great art of Uach's music without being grasped by its infinite meaning.

life. Conventionalism, as this attitude can be called, must not be confused with traditionalism. The latter makes an absolute claim for special traditions or conventions because of their content and meaning. Conventionalism makes no absolute claim for the conventions it defends, nor does it value them because of their content and meaning. Conventionalism affirms the social and personal forms as forms. Automatic obedience to the accepted ways of behavior is demanded by conventional formalism. Its tremendous power in social relations, in education, and in self-discipline makes it a tragic force in all human history. It tends to destroy the inborn vitality and creativity of every new being and of every new generation. It cripples life and replaces love by rule. It shapes personalities and communities by suppressing the spiritual and emotional substance which it is supposed to shape. The form destroys the meaning. Emotional reactions against conventional formalism are especially explosive and catastrophic. They have a "blind spot" with regard to the supporting, preserving, and directing power of convention and habit; but they are right in opposing its formalistic distortion with passion and sacrifice.

Formalism appears not only in every function of ontological reason but also in the relation of the functions to each other. The unity of reason is disrupted by its division into departments each of which is controlled by a special set of structural forms. This refers to the grasping and to the shaping functions of reason as well as to their interrelationship. The cognitive function, deprived of its aesthetic element, is separated from the aesthetic function, deprived of its cognitive element. In essential reason these two elements are united in various degrees, as reflected in functions like historical and ontological intuition, on the one hand, psychological novels and metaphysical poetry, on the other hand. The union of the cognitive and aesthetic functions is fully expressed in mythology, the womb out of which both of them were born and came to independence and to which they tend to return. The Romanticists of the early nineteenth century, philosophers and artists, tried to reestablish the unity of the cognitive and the aesthetic functions (this attempt has been continued by many recent artists and philosophers-expressionism, new realism, existentialism). They turned away from cognitive and aesthetic formalism and consequently from the separation of the two functions. They even tried to unite both in a new myth. But in this they failed. No myth can be created, no unity of the rational functions can be reached, on the basis of reason in conflict. A new myth is the expression

of the reuniting power of a new revelation, not a product of formalized reason.

The shaping functions of reason also are separated from each other by the formalization of reason and its separation from emotion. The organizational function, deprived of an organic basis, is separated from the organic function,' deprived of an organizational structure. In essential reason these two.elements are united in various degrees and with various transitions, in a way analogous to the life of free organizations within an embracing legal structure. The union of legal and communal functions is fully expressed in the cult community which is the mother of both of them and to which they try to return. Old and new romanticists long for a state which represents the Christian "body" of the idealized Middle Ages, or, if this cannot be reestablished, national or racial bodies, or the "body" of mankind. They look for an organism which can become the bearer of a nonformalized law.[11] But neither mankind as an organism nor a common cult as the function of a religious world community can unite in itself law and communion. This unity can be created neither by a formalized constitution nor by unorganized sympathies, desires, and movements. The quest for a new and universal communion, in which organization and organism are united, is the quest for revelation.

Finally, the formalization of reason separates its grasping from its shaping functions. This conflict is usually described as the conflict between theory and practice. A grasping which has lost the element of shaping and a shaping which has lost the element of grasping are in conflict with each other. In essential reason the two elements are united. The much-abused word "experience" has one connotation which points to this unity : experience unites insight with action. In the relation of myth and cult no separation is even imaginable. Cult includes the myth on the basis of which it acts out the divine-human drama, and myth includes the cult of which it is the imaginary expression. It is, therefore, understandable that there is a continuous struggle for the reunion of theory and practice. In his description of the "poverty of philosophy" Marx challenged a philosophy which interprets the world without changing it. Nietzsche in his attack on historism challenged a historiography which is not related to our historical existence. Religious socialism took over the insight of the Fourth Gospel that truth must be done,

II. This is the real problem of the world organization toward which mankind is striving today and which is prematurely anticipated by the movement for a world government.

and it took over the insight of the whole biblical tradition that without active participation in the "new reality" its nature cannot be known. Instrumentalism points to the intimate relation between action and knowledge, though it remains predominantly on the level of technical reason. Nevertheless, the conflicts remain. Practice resists theory, which it considers inferior to itself; it demands an activism which cuts off every theoretical investigation before it has come to its end. In practice one cannot do otherwise, for one must act before one has finished thinking. On the other hand, the infinite horizons of thinking cannot supply the basis for any concrete decision with certainty. Except in the technical realm where an existential decision is not involved, one must make decisions on the basis of limited or distorted or incomplete insights. Neither theory nor practice in isolation can solve the problem of their conflict with each other. Only a truth which is present in spite of the infinity of theoretical possibilities and only a good which is present in spite of the infinite risk implied in every action can overcome the disruption between the grasping and the shaping functions of reason. The quest for such a truth and such a good is the quest for revelation.

The functional splits of reason are consequences of the formalization of reason, of the conflict between formalism and emotionalism. The consequences of the formalization of reason are manifest. Emotion reacts against them and against formal reason in all realms. But this reaction is futile because it is merely "emotional," that is, minus structural elements. Emotion is powerless against intellectualism and aestheticism, against legalism and conventionalism, if it remains mere emotion. But, although powerless over reason, it can have great power of destruction over the mind, personally and socially. Emotion without rational structure (in the sense, of course, of ontological reason) becomes irrationalism. And irrationalism is destructive in two respects. If it attacks formalized reason, it must have some rational content. This content, however, is not subjected to rational criticism and gets its power from the strength of the emotion which carries it. It is still reason, but irrationally promoted reason, and therefore blind and fanatical. It has all the qualities of the demonic, whether it is expressed in religious or secular terms. If, on the other hand, irrationalism empties itself of any content and becomes mere subjective feeling, a vacuum is produced, into which distorted reason can break without a rational check.[12] If reason sacrifices its formal structures, and with them its critical power, the re-

12. The empty irrationalism of the German youth movement was fertile soil for the rational it-rationalism of the Nazis.

sult is not an empty sentimentality but the demonic rise of antirational forces, which often are supported by all the tools of technical reason. This experience drives men to the quest for the reunion of form and emotion. This is a quest for revelation. Reason does not resist revelation. It asks for revelation, for revelation means the reintegration of reason.

C. THE COGNITIVE FUNCTION OF REASON AND THE QUEST FOR REVELATION

6. The Ontological Structure of Knowledge

Systematic theology must give special consideration to the cognitive function of ontological reason in developing the concept of revelation, for revelation is the manifestation of the ground of being for human knowledge. While theology as such cannot produce an epistemology of its own, it must refer to those characteristics of cognitive reason which are relevant for the cognitive character of revelation. In particular, theology must give a description of cognitive reason under the conditions of existence. But a description of the conflicts of existential cognition presupposes an understanding of its ontological structure, for it is the polar structure of cognitive reason which makes its existential conflicts possible and drives it to the quest for revelation.

Knowing is a form of union. In every act of knowledge the knower and that which is known are united; the gap between subject and object is overcome. The subject "grasps" the object, adapts it to itself, and, at the same time, adapts itself to the object. But the union of knowledge is a peculiar one; it is a union through separation. Detachment is the condition of cognitive union. In order to know, one must "look" at a thing, and, in order to look at a thing, one must be "at a distance." Cognitive distance is the presupposition of cognitive union. Most philosophers have seen both sides. The old dispute whether the equal recognizes the equal or whether the unequal recognizes the unequal is a classical expression of the insight that union (which presupposes some equality) and distance (which presupposes some inequality) are polar elements in the process of cognition. The unity of distance and union is the ontological problem of knowledge. It drove Plato to the myth of an original union of the soul with the essences (ideas), of the separation of soul from the truly real in temporal existence, of the recollection of the essences, and of reunion with them through the different degrees of cognitive elevation. The unity is never completely destroyed; but there is also estrangement. The particular object is strange as such, but it **con-**

tains essential structures with which the cognitive subject is essentially united and which it can remember when looking at things. This motif runs through the whole history of philosophy. It explains the titanic attempts of human thought in all periods to make the cognitive relation understandable-the strangeness of subject and object and, in spite of it, their cognitive union. While skepticism despaired of the possibility of uniting the object with the subject, criticism removed the object as a thing-in-itself from the realm of actual knowledge without explaining how knowledge can grasp reality and not only appearance. While positivism completely removed the difference between subject and object, and idealism decreed their identity, both of them failed to explain the estrangement of subject and object and the possibility of error. Dualism postulated a transcendent unity of subject and object in a divine mind or substance, without explaining man's participation in it. Yet each of these attempts was aware of the ontological problem of knowledge: the unity of separation and union.

The epistemological situation is confirmed existentially by certain aspects of personal and social life as they are related to knowledge. The passion of knowing for the sake of knowing, which frequently can be found in primitive as well as in refined forms, indicates that a want, a vacuum, is filled by successful cognition. Something which was strange, but which nevertheless belongs to us, has become familiar, a part of us. According to Plato, the cognitive *erōs* is born out of poverty and abundance. It drives us toward reunion with that to which we belong and which belongs to us. In every act of knowledge want and estrangement are conquered.

But knowledge is more than a fulfilling; it also transforms and heals; this would be impossible if the knowing subject were only a mirror of the object, remaining in unconquered distance from it. Socrates was aware of this situation when he made the assertion that out of the knowing of the good the doing of the good follows. It is, of course, as easy as it is cheap to state that one may know the good without doing it, without being able to do it. One should not confront Socrates with Paul in order to show how much more realistic Paul was. It is at least probable that Socrates knew what every schoolboy knows-that some people act against their better knowledge. But he also knew something of which even philosophers and theologians are ignorant-that true knowledge includes union and, therefore, openness to receive that with which one unites. This is the knowledge of which Paul also speaks,

the *gnosis* which in New Testament Greek means cognitive, sexual, and mystical union at the same time. In this respect there is no contrast between Socrates and Paul. He who knows God or the Christ in the sense of being grasped by him and being united with him does the good. He who knows the essential structure of things in the sense of having received their meaning and power acts according to them; he does the good, even if he has to die for it.

Recently the term "insight" has been given connotations of *gnosis,* namely, of a knowledge which transforms and heals. Depth psychology attributes healing powers to insight, meaning not a detached knowledge of psychoanalytic theory or of one's own past in the light of this theory but a repetition of one's actual experiences with all the pains and horrors of such a return. Insight in this sense is a reunion with one's own past and especially with those moments in it which influence the present destructively. Such a cognitive union produces a transformation just as radical and as difficult as that presupposed and demanded by Socrates and Paul. For most of the Asiatic philosophies and religions the uniting, healing, and transforming power of knowledge is a matter of course. Their problem-never completely solved-is the element of distance, not that of union.

Another existential confirmation of the interpretation of knowledge as a unity between distance and union is the social valuation of knowledge in all integrated human groups. Insight into the principles on which the life of the group is based, and acceptance of them, is considered an absolute precondition for the life of the group. There is no difference in this respect between religious or secular, democratic or totalitarian, groups. It is impossible to understand the emphasis in all social groups on the knowledge of the dominating principles, if the uniting character of knowledge is not recognized. Much criticism of so-called dogmatism, often made by people who are unaware of their own dogmatic assumptions, is rooted in the misinterpretation of knowledge as a detached cognizance of objects separated from the subject. Dogmatism with respect to such knowledge is indeed meaningless. But if knowledge unites, much depends on the object with which it unites. Error becomes dangerous if it means union with distorted and deceiving elements of reality, with that which is not really real but which only claims to be. Anxiety about falling into error or about the error into which others might fall or have fallen, the tremendous reactions against error in all cohesive social groups, the interpretation of error as demonic

possession-all this is understandable only if knowledge includes union. Liberalism, the protest against dogmatism, is based on the authentic element of detachment which belongs to knowledge and which demands openness for questions, inquiries, and new answers, even to the point of the possible disintegration of a social group. Under the conditions of existence no final solution for this conflict can be found. As reason generally is drawn into the conflict between absolutism and relativism, so cognitive reason is subject to the conflict between union and detachment in every act of knowledge. Out of this conflict the quest arises for a knowledge which unites the certainty of existential union with the openness of cognitive detachment. This quest is the quest for the knowledge of revelation.

7. Cognitive Relations

The element of union and the. element of detachment appear in different proportions in the different realms of knowledge. But there is no knowledge without the presence of both elements. Statistical indexes are material for physical or sociological knowledge, but they are not themselves knowledge. Devotional meditations imply cognitive elements, but they are not themselves knowledge.

The type of knowledge which is predominantly determined by the element of detachment can be called "controlling knowledge."[13] Controlling knowledge is the outstanding, though not the only, example of technical reason. It unites subject and object for the sake of the control of the object by the subject. It transforms the object into a completely conditioned and calculable "thing." It deprives it of any subjective quality. Controlling knowledge looks upon its object as something which cannot return its look. Certainly, in every type of knowledge subject and object are logically distinguished. There is always an object, even in our knowledge of God. But controlling knowledge "objectifies" not only logically (which is unavoidable) but also ontologically and ethically. No thing, however, is merely a thing. Since everything that is participates in the self-world structure of being, elements of self-relatedness are universal. This makes union with everything possible. Nothing is absolutely strange. Speaking in a metaphorical manner, one could say that as we look at things so things looks at us with the expectation of being received and the offer of enriching us in cognitive union. Things indicate that they might be "interesting" if we enter their deeper levels and ex-

13. Cf. Max Schclcr, *Versuche zu einer Soziologie des Wissens* (Munich, 1924).

perience their special power of being.[14] At the same time, this does not exclude the fact that they are objects in the technical sense, things to be used and formed, means for ends which are strange to their inner meaning (*telos*). A metal is "interesting"; it has elements of subjectivity and self-relatedness. It is, on the other hand, material for innumerable tools and purposes. While the nature of metals admits of an overwhelming amount of objectifying knowledge and technical use, the nature of man does not. Man resists objectification, and if his resistance to it is broken, man himself is broken. A truly objective relation to man is determined by the element of union; the element of detachment is secondary. It is not absent; there are levels in man's bodily, psychic, and mental constitution which can and must be grasped by controlling knowledge. But this is neither the way of knowing human nature nor is it the way of knowing any individual personality in past or present, including one's self. Without union there is no cognitive approach to man. In contrast to controlling knowledge this cognitive attitude can be called "receiving knowledge." Neither actually nor potentially is it determined by the means-ends relationship. Receiving knowledge takes the object into itself, into union with the subject. This includes the emotional element, from which controlling knowledge tries to detach itself as much as possible. Emotion is the vehicle for receiving cognition. But the vehicle is far from making the content itself emotional. The content is rational, something to be verified, to be looked at with critical caution. Nevertheless, nothing can be received cognitively without emotion. No union of subject and object is possible without emotional participation.

The unity of union and detachment is precisely described by the term "understanding." Its literal meaning, to stand under the place where the object of knowledge stands, implies intimate participation. In ordinary use it points to the ability to grasp the logical meaning of something. Understanding another person or a historical figure, the life of an animal or a religious text, involves an amalgamation of controlling and receiving knowledge, of union and detachment, of participation and analysis.

Most cognitive distortions are rooted in a disregard of the polarity which is in cognitive reason. This disregard is not simply an avoidable mistake; it is a genuine conflict under the conditions of existence. One side of this conflict is the tension between dogmatism and criticism

14. Goethe asks us to consider how "being" (*seiend*) things are, pointing to the unique structure which is their power of being.

within social groups. But there are other sides to it. Controlling knowledge claims control of every level of reality. Life, spirit, personality, community, meanings, values, even one's ultimate concern, should be treated in terms of detachment, analysis, calculation, technical use. The power behind this claim is the preciseness, verifiability, the public approachability of controlling knowledge, and, above all, the tremendous success of its application to certain levels of reality. It is impossible to disregard or even to restrain this claim. The public mind is so impregnated with its methodological demands and its astonishing results that every cognitive attempt in which reception and union are presupposed encounters utter distrust. A consequence of this attitude is a rapid decay of spiritual (not only of the Spiritual) life, an estrangement from nature, and, most dangerous of all, a dealing with human beings as with things. In psychology and sociology, in medicine and philosophy, man has been dissolved into elements out of which he is composed and which determine him. Treasures of empirical knowledge have been produced in this way, and new research projects augment those treasures daily. But man has been lost in this enterprise. That which can be known only by participation and union, that which is the object of receiving knowledge, is disregarded. Man actually has become what controlling knowledge considers him to be, a thing among things, a cog in the dominating machine of production and consumption, a dehumanized object of tyranny or a normalized object of public communications. Cognitive dehumanization has produced actual dehumanization.

Three main movements have tried to resist the tidal wave of controlling knowledge: romanticism, philosophy of life, and existentialism. They all have had instantaneous success, but they have lost out in the long run because they could not solve the problem of the criterion of the false and the true. The Romantic philosophy of nature confused poetry and symbolic intuition with knowledge. It ignored the strangeness of the world of objects, the strangeness not only of the lower but also of the higher levels of nature toward man. If Hegel called nature "estranged spirit," his emphasis was not on "estranged" but on "spirit," which gave him the possibility of approaching nature with receiving knowledge, with attempts to participate in it and to unite with it. But Hegel's philosophy of nature was a failure of world-wide significance. A Romantic philosophy of nature cannot escape this defeat. Neither can a philosophy of life which tries to create cognitive union with the dynamic process of life. Such a philosophy recognizes that life is not an

object of controlling knowledge; that life must be killed in order to be subjected to the means-ends structure; that life in its dynamic creativity, in its *élan vital* (Bergson), is open only to receiving knowledge, to intuitive participation and mystical union. This, however, raises the question which life-philosophy never was able to answer: How can the intuitive union in which life is aware of itself be verified? If it is unexpressible, it is not knowledge. If it can be expressed, it falls under the criterion of cognitive reason, and its application demands detachment, analysis, and objectification. The relation between receiving and controlling knowledge is not explained by Bergson or by any other of the life-philosophers. Existentialism tries to save the freedom of the individual self from the domination of controlling knowledge. But this freedom is described in terms which not only lack any criterion but also any content. Existentialism is the most desperate attempt to escape the power of controlling knowledge and of the objectified world which technical reason has produced. It says "No" to this world, but, in order to say "Yes" to something else, it has either to use controlling knowledge or to turn to revelation. Existentialism, like romanticism and philosophy of life, must either surrender to technical reason or ask the question of revelation. Revelation claims to create complete union with that which appears in revelation. It is receiving knowledge in its fulfilment. But, at the same time, it claims to satisfy the demands of controlling knowledge, of detachment and analysis.

8. Truth and Verification

Every cognitive act strives for truth. Since theology claims to be true, it must discuss the meaning of the term "truth," the nature of revealed truth, and its relation to other forms of truth. In the absence of such a discussion the theological claim can be dismissed by a simple semantic device, often used by naturalists and positivists. According to them, the use of the term "truth" is restricted to empirically verifiable statements. The predicate "true" should be reserved either for analytic sentences or for experimentally confirmed propositions. Such a terminological limitation of the terms "true" and "truth" is possible and is a matter of convention. But, whenever it is accepted, it means a break with the whole Western tradition and necessitates the creation of another term for what has been called *alēthēs* or *verum* in classical, ancient, medieval, and modern literature. Is such a break necessary? The answer ultimately depends not on reasons of expediency but on the nature of cognitive reason.

Modern philosophy usually speaks of true and false as qualities of judgments. Judgments can grasp or fail to grasp reality and can, accordingly, be true or false. But reality in itself is what it is, and it can neither be true nor false. This certainly is a possible line of arguing, but it is also possible to go beyond it. If the question is asked, "What makes a judgment true?" something must be said about reality itself. There must be an explanation of the fact that reality can give itself to the cognitive act in such a way that a false judgment can occur and in such a way that many processes of observation and thought are necessary in order to reach true judgments. The reason is that things hide their true being; it must be discovered under the surface of sense impressions, changing appearances, and unfounded opinions. This discovery is made through a process of preliminary affirmations, consequent negations, and final affirmations. It is made through "yes and no" or dialectically. The surface must be penetrated, the appearance undercut, the "depth" must be reached, namely, the *ousia,* the "essence" of things, that which gives them the power of being. This is their truth, the "really real" in difference from the seemingly real. It would not be called "true," however, if it were not true for someone, namely, for the mind which in the power of the rational word, the logos, grasps the level of reality in which the really real "dwells." This notion of truth is not bound to its Socratic-Platonic birthplace. In whatever way the terminology may be changed, in whatever way the relation between true and seeming reality may be described, in whatever way the relation of mind and reality may be understood, the problem of the "truly real" cannot be avoided. The seemingly real is not unreal, but it is deceptive if it is taken to be really real.

One could say that the concept of true being is the result of disappointed expectations in our encounter with reality. For instance, we meet a person, and the impressions we receive of him produce expectations in us about his future behavior. Some of these expectations will be deceptive and will provoke the desire for a "deeper" understanding of his personality, in comparison with which the first understanding was "superficial." New expectations arise and prove again to be partially deceptive, driving us to the question of a still deeper level of his personality. Finally we may succeed in discovering his real, true personality structure, the essence and power of his being, and we will not be de-

ceived any longer. We may still be surprised; but such surprises are to be expected if a personality is the object of knowledge. The truth of something is that level of its being the knowledge of which prevents wrong expectations and consequent disappointments. Truth, therefore, is the essence of things as well as the cognitive act in which their essence is grasped. The term "truth" is, like the term "reason," subjective-objective. A judgment is true because it grasps and expresses true being; and the really real becomes truth if it is grasped and expressed in a true judgment.

The resistance of recent philosophy against the ontological use of the term has been aroused by the assumption that truth can be verified only within the realm of empirical science. Statements which cannot be verified by experiment are considered tautologies, emotional self-expressions, or meaningless propositions. There is an important truth in this attitude. Statements which have neither intrinsic evidence nor a way of being verified have no cognitive value. "Verification" means a method of deciding the truth or falsehood of a judgment. Without such a method, judgments are expressions of the subjective state of a person but not acts of cognitive reason. The verifying test belongs to the nature of truth; in this positivism is right. Every cognitive assumption (hypothesis) must be tested. The safest test is the repeatable experiment. A cognitive realm in which it can be used has the advantage of methodological strictness and the possibility of testing an assertion in every moment. But it is not permissible to make the experimental method of verification the exclusive pattern of all verification. Verification can occur within the life-process itself. Verification of this type (experiential in contradistinction to experimental) has the advantage that it need not halt and disrupt the totality of a life-process in order to distil calculable elements out of it (which experimental verification must do). The verifying experiences of a nonexperimental character are truer to life, though less exact and definite. By far the largest part of all cognitive verification is experiential. In some cases experimental and experiential verification work together. In other cases the experimental element is completely absent.

It is obvious that these two methods of verification correspond to the two cognitive attitudes, the controlling and the receiving. Controlling knowledge is verified by the success of controlling actions. The technical use of scientific knowledge is its greatest and most impressive verification. Every working machine is a continuously repeated test of the truth of the scientific assumptions on the basis of which it has been constructed.

Receiving knowledge is verified by the creative union of two natures, that of knowing and that of the known. This test, of course, is neither repeatable, precise, nor final at any particular moment. The life-process itself makes the test. Therefore, the test is indefinite and preliminary; there is an element of risk connected with it. Future stages of the same life-process may prove that what seemed to be a bad risk was a good one and vice versa. Nevertheless, the risk must be taken, receiving knowledge must be applied, experiential verification must go on continually, whether it is supported by experimental tests or not.

Life-processes are the object of biological, psychological, and sociological research. A large amount of controlling knowledge and experimental verification is possible and actual in these disciplines; and, in dealing with life-processes, scientists are justified in striving to extend the experimental method as far as possible. But there are limits to these attempts which are imposed not by impotence but by definition. Life-processes have the character of totality, spontaneity, and individuality. Experiments presuppose isolation, regularity, generality. Therefore, only separable elements of life-processes are open to experimental verification, while the processes themselves must be received in a creative union in order to be known. Physicians, psychotherapists, educators, social reformers, and political leaders deal with that side of a life-process which is individual, spontaneous, and total. They can work only on the basis of a knowledge which unites controlling and receiving elements. The truth of their knowledge is verified partly by experimental test, partly by a participation in the individual life with which they deal. If this "knowledge by participation" is called "intuition," the cognitive approach to every individual life-process is intuitive. Intuition in this sense is not irrational, and neither does it by-pass a full consciousness of experimentally verified knowledge.

Verification in the realm of historical knowledge also unites an experimental with an experiential element. The factual side of historical research is based on sources, traditions, and documents which test one another in a way comparable to experimental methods (although no historical event can be repeated). The selective and interpretative side, however, without which no historiography ever has been written, is based on participation in terms of understanding and explanation. Without a union of the nature of the historian with that of his object, no significant history is possible. But *with* this union the same period and the same historical figure have received many different historically sig-

nificant interpretations on the basis of the same verified material. Verification in this respect means to illuminate, to make understandable, to give a meaningful and consistent picture. The historian's task is to "make alive" what has "passed away." The test of his cognitive success, of the truth of his picture, is whether or not he is able to do this. This test is not final, and every historical work is a risk. But it is a test, an experiential, though not an experimental, verification.

Principles and norms, which constitute the structure of subjective and objective reason, are the cognitive object of philosophy. Rationalism and pragmatism discuss the question of their verification in such a way that both of them by-pass the element of cognitive union and receiving knowledge. Rationalism tries to develop principles and norms in terms of self-evidence, universality, and necessity. Categories of being and thinking, principles of aesthetic expression, norms of law and communion, are open to critical analysis and to a priori knowledge. The analogy of mathematical evidence, which needs neither the tests of controlling nor those of receiving knowedge, is used for the derivation of the rational principles, categories, and norms. Analytic thought can make decisions about the rational structure of mind and reality.

Pragmatism asserts just the opposite. It takes the so-called principles of reason, the categories and norms, to be results of accumulated and tested experience, open for radical changes by future experience and subject to ever repeated tests. They must prove their power of explaining and judging a given material of empirical knowledge, of aesthetic expression, of legal structures and communal forms. If they are able to do this, they are pragmatically verified.

Neither rationalism nor pragmatism sees the element of participation in knowledge. Neither of them distinguishes receiving from controlling knowledge. Both are largely determined by the attitude of controlling knowledge and tied up with the alternatives implied in it. Against both of them it must be said that the verification of the principles of ontological reason has the character neither of rational self-evidence nor of a pragmatic test. Rational self-evidence cannot be attributed to a principle which contains more than the mere form of rationality, as, for instance, Kant's categorical imperative. Every concrete principle, every category and norm, which expresses more than pure rationality is subject to experimental or experiential verification. It is not self-evident, even if it contains a self-evident element (which, however, cannot be abstracted from it). Pragmatism is in no better position. It lacks a criterion. If the successful working of the principles is called the "criterion," the question arises, "What is the criterion of success?" This question cannot be answered again in terms of success, that is, pragmatically. Neither can it be answered rationally except in a completely formalistic way.

The way in which philosophical systems have been accepted, experienced, and verified points to a method of verification beyond rationalism and pragmatism. These systems have forced themselves upon the mind of many human beings in terms of receptive knowledge and cognitive union. In terms of controlling knowledge, rational criticism, or pragmatic tests, they have been refuted innumerable times. But they live. Their verification is their efficacy in the life-process of mankind. They prove to be inexhaustible in meaning and creative in power. This method of verification is certainly not precise and not definite, but it is permanent and effective. It throws out of the historical process what is exhausted and powerless and what cannot stand in the light of pure rationality. Somehow it combines the pragmatic and the rational elements without falling into the fallacies of either pragmatism or rationalism. Nevertheless, even this way of verification is threatened by the possibility of final meaninglessness. It is more true to life than the competing methods. But it carries with it the radical risk of life. It is significant in what it tries to verify, but it is not secure in its verification.

This situation mirrors a basic conflict in cognitive reason. Knowledge stands in a dilemma; controlling knowledge is safe but not ultimately significant, while receiving knowledge can be ultimately significant, but it cannot give certainty. The threatening character of this dilemma is rarely recognized and understood. But if it is realized and not covered up by preliminary and incomplete verifications, it must lead either to a desperate resignation of truth or to the quest for revelation, for revelation claims to give a truth which is both certain and of ultimate concern-a truth which includes and accepts the risk and uncertainty of every significant cognitive act, yet transcends it in accepting it.

II

THE REALITY OF REVELATION

A. THE MEANING OF REVELATION

1. The Marks of Revelation

a) *Methodological* remarks.-It is the aim of the so-called phenomenological method to describe "meanings," disregarding, for the time being, the question of the reality to which they refer.[1] The significance of this methodological approach lies in its demand that the meaning of a notion must be clarified and circumscribed before its validity can be determined, before it can be approved or rejected. In too many cases, especially in the realm of religion, an idea has been taken in its undistilled, vague, or popular sense and made the victim of an easy and unfair rejection. Theology must apply the phenomenological approach to all its basic concepts, forcing its critics first of all to see what the criticized concepts mean and also forcing itself to make careful descriptions of its concepts and to use them with logical consistency, thus avoiding the danger of trying to fill in logical gaps with devotional material. The present system, therefore, begins each of its five parts with a description of the meaning of the determining ideas, before asserting and discussing their truth and actuality.

The test of a phenomenological description is that the picture given by it is convincing, that it can be seen by anyone who is willing to look in the same direction, that the description illuminates other related ideas, and that it makes the reality which these ideas are supposed to reflect understandable. Phenomenology is a way of pointing to phenomena as they "give themselves," without the interference of negative or positive prejudices and explanations.

However, the phenomenological method leaves one question unanswered which is decisive for its validity. Where, and to whom, is an idea revealed? The phenomenologist answers: Take as an example a typical revelatory event and see within it and through it the universal meaning of revelation. This answer proves insufficient as soon as different and

1. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931).

perhaps contradictory examples of revelation are encountered by phenomenological intuition. What criterion is to govern the choice of an example? Phenomenology cannot answer this question. This points to the fact that while phenomenology is competent in the realm of logical meanings, which was the object of the original inquiries made by Husserl, the inventor of the phenomenological method, it is only partially competent in the realm of spiritual realities like religion.[2]

The question of the choice of an example can be answered only if a critical element is introduced into "pure'* phenomenology. The decision about the example cannot be left to accident. If the example were nothing more than an exemplar of a species, as is the case in the realm of nature, there would be no problem. But spiritual life creates more than exemplars; it creates unique embodiments of something universal. Therefore, the decision about the example to be used for a phenomenological description of the meaning of a concept like revelation is of the utmost importance. Such a decision is critical in form, existential in matter. Actually, it is dependent on a revelation which has been received and which is considered final, and it is critical with respect to other revelations. Nevertheless, the phenomenological approach is preserved. This is "critical phenomenology," uniting an intuitive-descriptive element with an existential-critical element.

The existential-critical element is the criterion according to which the example is selected; the intuitive-descriptive element is the technique by means of which the meaning which is manifest in the example is portrayed. The concrete and unique character of the example (e.g., the revelatory vision of Isaiah) is in tension with the universal claim of the phenomenological description of the meaning of this example to be valid for every example. This tension is unavoidable. It can be reduced in two ways: either by a comparison of different examples or by the choice of an example in which absolute concreteness and absolute universality are united. The first way, however, leads to the method of abstraction, which deprives the examples of their concreteness and reduces their meaning to an empty generality (e.g., a revelation which is neither Jewish nor Christian, neither prophetic nor mystical). This is precisely what phenomenology is designed to overcome. The second way is dependent on the conviction that a special revelation (e.g., the reception of Jesus as

2. Cf. Max Scheler's phenomenological justification of the whole Roman Catholic system in his book, *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (Leipzig: Neue Geist, 1923). Husserl rightly rejected this attempt.

the Christ by Peter) is the final revelation and that it is, consequently, universally valid. The meaning of revelation is derived from the "classical" example, but the idea derived in this way is valid of every revelation, however imperfect and distorted the revelatory event actually may be. Each example of revelation is judged in terms of this phenomenological concept, and this concept can be employed as a criterion because it expresses the essential nature of every revelation.

Critical phenomenology is the method best fitted to supply a normative description of spiritual (and also Spiritual) meanings. Theology must use it in dealing with each of its basic concepts.

b) Revelation and mystery.—The word "revelation" ("removing the veil") has been used traditionally to mean the manifestation of something hidden which cannot be approached through ordinary ways of gaining knowledge. There is a wider use of the word in the language of everyday life which is quite vague: someone reveals a hidden thought to a friend, a witness reveals the circumstances of a crime, a scientist reveals a new method which he has been testing for a long time, an insight comes to someone "like a revelation." In all these cases, however, the strength of the words "reveal" or "revelation" is derived from their proper and narrower sense. A revelation is a special and extraordinary manifestation which removes the veil from something which is hidden in a special and extraordinary way. This hiddenness is often called "mystery," a word which also has a narrower and a wider sense. In the wider sense it covers mystery stories as well as the mystery of higher mathematics and the mystery of success. In the narrower sense, from which the incisiveness of these phrases is derived, it points to something which is essentially a mystery, something which would lose its very nature if it lost its mysterious character. "Mystery," in this proper sense, is derived from *muein,* "closing the eyes" or "closing the mouth." In gaining ordinary knowledge it is necessary to open one's eyes in order to grasp the object and to open one's mouth in order to communicate with other persons and to have one's insights tested. A genuine mystery, however, is experienced in an attitude which contradicts the attitude of ordinary cognition. The eyes are "closed" because the genuine mystery transcends the act of seeing, of confronting objects whose structures and relations present themselves to a subject for his knowledge. Mystery characterizes a dimension which "precedes" the subject-object relationship. The same dimension is indicated in the "closing of the mouth." It is impossible to express the experience of mystery in ordinary language, because this language has grown out of, and is bound to, the subject-object scheme. If mystery is expressed in ordinary language, it necessarily is misunderstood, reduced to another dimension, desecrated. This is the reason why betrayal of the content of the mystery cults was a blasphemy which had to be expiated by death.

Whatever is essentially mysterious cannot lose its mysteriousness even when it is revealed. Otherwise something which only seemed to be mysterious would be revealed, and not that which is essentially mysterious. But is it not a contradiction in terms to speak of the revelation of something which remains a mystery in its very revelation? It is just this seeming paradox which is asserted by religion and theology. Wherever the two propositions are maintained, that God has revealed himself and that God is an infinite mystery for those to whom he has revealed himself, the paradox is stated implicitly. But this is not a real paradox, for revelation includes cognitive elements. Revelation of that which is essentially and necessarily mysterious means the manifestation of something within the context of ordinary experience which transcends the ordinary context of experience. Something more is known of the mystery after it has become manifest in revelation. First, its reality has become a matter of experience. Second, our relation to it has become a matter of experience. Both of these are cognitive elements. But revelation does not dissolve the mystery into knowledge. Nor does it add anything directly to the totality of our ordinary knowledge, namely, to our knowledge about the subject-object structure of reality.

In order to safeguard the proper use of the word "mystery," uses which are wrong or confusing must be avoided. "Mystery" should not be applied to something which ceases to be a mystery after it has been revealed. Nothing which can be discovered by a methodical cognitive approach should be called a "mystery." What is not known today, but which might possibly be known tomorrow, is not a mystery. Another inaccurate and confusing use of the word is connected with the difference between controlling and receiving knowledge. Those elements of reality which cannot be reached by controlling knowledge, like qualities, ***Gestalten,*** meanings, ideas, values, are called "mysterious." But the fact that they involve a different cognitive approach does not make them mysterious. The quality of a color, or the meaning of an idea, or the nature of a living being is a mystery only if the method of quantitative analysis is the pattern of all knowledge. There is no justification for such a reduction of the cognitive power of reason. The knowledge of

these elements of reality is rational, although it is not controlling knowledge.

The genuine mystery appears when reason is driven beyond itself to its "ground and abyss," to that which "precedes" reason, to the fact that "being is and nonbeing is not" (Parmenides), to the original fact (*Ur-Tatsache*) that there is *something* and not *nothing*. We can call this the "negative side" of the mystery. This side of the mystery is present in all the functions of reason; it becomes manifest in subjective as well as in objective reason. The "stigma" of finitude (see pp. 189 ff.) which appears in all things and in the whole of reality and the "shock" which grasps the mind when it encounters the threat of nonbeing (see pp. 186 ff.) reveal the negative side of the mystery, the abysmal element in the ground of being. This negative side is always potentially present, and it can be realized in cognitive as well as in communal experiences. It is a necessary element in revelation. Without it the mystery would not be mystery. Without the "I am undone" of Isaiah in his vocational vision, God cannot be experienced (Isa. 6:5). Without the "dark night of the soul," the mystic cannot experience the mystery of the ground.

The positive side of the mystery-which includes the negative side—becomes manifest in actual revelation. Here the mystery appears as ground and not only as abyss. It appears as the power of being, conquering nonbeing. It appears as our ultimate concern. And it expresses itself in symbols and myths which point to the depth of reason and its mystery.

Revelation is the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately. The mystery which is revealed is of ultimate concern to us because it is the ground of our being. In the history of religion revelatory events always have been described as shaking, transforming, demanding, significant in an ultimate way. They derive from divine sources, from the power of that which is holy and which therefore has an unconditional claim on us. Only that mystery which is of ultimate concern for us appears in revelation. A large proportion of the ideas which are derived from assumed revelations concerning objects and events within the subject-object structure of reality neither are genuine mysteries nor are they based on genuine revelation. Knowledge about nature and history, about individuals, their future and their past, about hidden things and happenings-all this is not a matter of revelation but of observations, intuitions, and conclusions. If such knowledge pretends to come from revelation, it must be subjected to the verifying tests of scholarly methods and accepted

or rejected on the basis of these tests. It lies outside revelation because it is a matter neither of ultimate concern nor of essential mystery.

Revelation, as revelation of the mystery which is our ultimate concern, is invariably revelation for someone in a concrete situation of concern. This is clearly indicated in all events which traditionally have been characterized as revelatory. There is no revelation "in general" (*Offenbarung ueberhaupt*). Revelation grasps an individual or a group, usually a group through an individual; it has revealing power only in this correlation. Revelations received outside the concrete situation can be apprehended only as reports about revelations which other groups assert that they have received. The knowledge of such reports, and even a keen understanding of them, does not make them revelatory for anyone who does not belong to the group which is grasped by the revelation. There is no revelation if there is no one who receives it as his ultimate concern.

Revelation always is a subjective and an objective event in strict interdependence. Someone is grasped by the manifestation of the mystery; this is the subjective side of the event. Something occurs through which the mystery of revelation grasps someone; this is the objective side. These two sides cannot be separated. If nothing happens objectively, nothing is revealed. If no one receives what happens subjectively, the event fails to reveal anything. The objective occurrence and the subjective reception belong to the whole event of revelation. Revelation is not real without the receiving side, and it is not real without the giving side. The mystery appears objectively in terms of what traditionally has been called "miracle." It appears subjectively in terms of what has sometimes been called "ecstasy." Both terms must be given a radical reinterpretation.

c) ***Revelation and ecstacy.***-The use of the word "ecstasy" in a theological explanation involves an even greater risk than the use of the word "mystery," for, in spite of many distortions of the meaning of mystery, very few people would hesitate to speak of the divine mystery-if they speak of God at all. It is different with "ecstasy." The so-called "ecstatic" movements have saddled this term with unfortunate connotations, in spite of the fact that prophets and apostles have spoken of their own ecstatic experiences again and again, using a variety of terms. "Ecstasy" must be rescued from its distorted connotations and restored to a sober theological function. If this proves to be impossible, the reality which is described by the word will disappear from our sight unless another word can be found.

"Ecstasy" ("standing outside one's self") points to a state of mind

which is extraordinary in the sense that the mind transcends its ordinary situation. Ecstasy is not a negation of reason; it is the state of mind in which reason is beyond itself, that is, beyond its subject-object structure. In being beyond itself reason does not deny itself. "Ecstatic reason" remains reason; it does not receive anything irrational or antirational—which it could not do without self-destruction-but it transcends the basic condition of finite rationality, the subject-object structure. This is the state mystics try to reach by ascetic and meditative activities. But mystics know that these activities are only preparations and that the experience of ecstasy is due exclusively to the manifestation of the mystery in a revelatory situation. Ecstasy occurs only if the mind is grasped by the mystery, namely, by the ground of being and meaning. And, conversely, there is no revelation without ecstasy. At best there is information which can be tested scientifically. The "prophet's 'ecstasy," of which the hymn sings and of which the prophetic literature is full, indicates that the experience of ecstasy has universal significance.

The term "ecstasy" often is confused with enthusiasm. This confusion is easily understood. The word "enthusiasm" means the state of having the god within one's self or of being within the god. In both senses the enthusiastic state of mind has ecstatic qualities, and there is no basic difference in the original meaning of the two words.[3] But "enthusiasm" has lost these religious connotations and has been applied to the passionate support of an idea, a value, a tendency, a human being, etc. "Enthusiasm" no longer carries the connotation of a relation to the divine, while "ecstasy," at least to some degree, still has this connotation.

Today the meaning of "ecstasy" is determined largely by those religious groups who claim to have special religious experiences, personal inspirations, extraordinary Spiritual gifts, individual revelations, knowledge of esoteric mysteries. Such claims are as old as religion and always have'been an object of astonishment and of critical evaluation. It would be wrong to reject these claims a priori and to deny that genuine ecstasy has been experienced in these groups. But one should not allow them to usurp this term. "Ecstasy" has a legitimate use in theology, especially in apologetic theology.

The so-called ecstatic movements are in continuous danger-to which they succumb more often than not-of confusing overexcitement with the presence of the divine Spirit or with the occurrence of revelation.

3. During the Reformation period those groups who claimed to be guided by special Spiritual revelations were called "Enthusiasts."

Something happens objectively as well as subjectively in every genuine manifestation of the mystery. Only something subjective happens in a state of religious overexcitement, often artificially produced. Therefore, it has no revelatory power. No new practical or theoretical interpretation of what concerns us ultimately can be derived from such subjective experiences. Overexcitement is a state of mind which can be comprised completely in psychological terms. Ecstasy transcends the psychological level, although it has a psychological side. It reveals something valid about the relation between the mystery of our being and ourselves. Ecstasy is the form in which that which concerns us unconditionally manifests itself within the whole of our psychological conditions. It appears through them. But it cannot be derived from them.

The threat of nonbeing, grasping the mind, produces the "ontological shock" in which the negative side of the mystery of being-its abysmal element-is experienced. "Shock" points to a state of mind in which the mind is thrown out of its normal balance, shaken in its structure. Reason reaches its boundary line, is thrown back upon itself, and then is driven again to its extreme situation. This experience of ontological shock is expressed in the cognitive function by the basic philosophical question, the question of being and nonbeing. It is, of course, misleading if one asks with some philosophers: "Why is there something? Why not nothing?" For this form of the question points to something that precedes being, from which being can be derived. But being can only be derived from being. The meaning of this question can be expressed in the statement that being is the original fact which cannot be derived from anything else. Taken in this sense, the question is a paradoxical expression of the ontological shock and, as such, the beginning of all genuine philosophy.

In revelation and in the ecstatic experience in which it is received, the ontological shock is preserved and overcome at the same time. It is preserved in the annihilating power of the divine presence (*mysterium tremendum*) and is overcome in the elevating power of the divine presence (*mysterium fascinosum*). Ecstasy unites the experience of the abyss to which reason in all its functions is driven with the experience of the ground in which reason is grasped by the mystery of its own depth and of the depth of being generally.

The ecstatic state in which revelation occurs does not destroy the rational structure of the mind. The reports about ecstatic experiences in the classical literature of the great religions agree on this point-that,

while demonic possession destroys the rational structure of the mind, divine ecstacy preserves and elevates it, although transcending it. Demonic possession destroys the ethical and logical principles of reason; divine ecstasy affirms them. Demonic “revelations” are exposed and rejected in many religious sources, especially in the Old Testament. An assumed revelation in which justice as the principle of practical reason is violated is antidivine, and it is therefore judged a lie. The demonic blinds; it does not reveal. In the state of demonic possession the mind is not really “beside itself,” but rather it is in the power of elements of itself which aspire to be the whole mind which grasp the center of the rational self and destroy it. There is, however, a point of identity between ecstasy and possession. In both cases the ordinary subject-object structure of the mind is put out of action. But divine ecstasy does not violate the wholeness of the rational mind, while demonic possession weakens or destroys it. This indicates that, although ecstasy is not a product of reason, it does not destroy reason.

It is obvious that ecstasy has a strong emotional side. But it would be a mistake to reduce ecstasy to emotion. In every ecstatic experience all the grasping and shaping functions of reason are driven beyond themselves, and so is emotion. Feeling is no nearer to the mystery of revelation and its ecstatic reception than are the cognitive and the ethical functions.

With respect to its cognitive element, ecstasy is often called “inspiration.” This word, which is derived from *spirare,* “to breathe,” emphasizes the pure receptivity of cognitive reason in an ecstatic experience. Confusions and distortions have made the term “inspiration” almost as useless as “ecstasy” and “miracle.” The vague use of the word in describing nonreflective acts of cognition is partly responsible for this situation. In this use of the word, being inspired means being in a creative mood, or being grasped by an idea, or reaching an understanding of something through a sudden intuition. The opposite abuse of the term is connected with certain forms of the doctrine of the inspiration of the biblical writings. Inspiration is described as a mechanical act of dictation or, in a more refined way, as an act of imparting information. In such ideas of inspiration reason is invaded by a strange body of knowledge with which it cannot unite, a body which would destroy the rational structure of the mind if it were to remain within it. In the last analysis, a mechanical or any other form of nonecstatic doctrine of inspiration is demonic. It destroys the rational structure which is supposed to receive inspiration. It is obvious that inspiration, if it is the name for the cognitive quality of

the ecstatic experience, cannot mediate knowledge of finite objects or relations. It does not add anything to the complex of knowledge which is determined by the subject-object structure of reason. Inspiration opens a new dimension of knowledge, the dimension of understanding in relation to our ultimate concern and to the mystery of being.

d) Revelation and miracle.-The word “miracle,” according to the ordinary definition, designates a happening that contradicts the laws of nature. This definition and the innumerable unverified miracle stories in all religions have rendered the term misleading and dangerous for theological use. But a word which expresses a genuine experience can only be dropped if a substitute is at hand, and it does not seem that such a substitute has been found. The New Testament often uses the Greek work *sēmeion,* “sign,” pointing to the religious meaning of the miracles. But the word “sign” without a qualifying addition cannot express this religious meaning. It would be more accurate to add the word “event” to “sign” and to speak of ***sign-events.*** The original meaning of miracle, “that which produces astonishment,” is quite adequate for describing the “giving side” of a revelatory experience. But this connotation has been swallowed by the bad connotation of a supranatural interference which destroys the natural structure of events. The bad connotation is avoided in the word “sign” and the phrase “sign-event.”

While the original naïve religious consciousness accepts astounding stories in connection with divine manifestations without elaborating a supranaturalistic theory of miracles, rationalistic periods make the negation of natural laws the main point in miracle stories. A kind of irrationalist rationalism develops in which the degree of absurdity in a miracle story becomes the measure of its religious value. The more impossible, the more revelatory! Already in the New Testament one can observe that, the later the tradition, the more the antinatural element is emphasized over against the sign element. In the post-apostolic period, when the apocryphal Gospels were produced, there were no checks against absurdity. Pagans and Christians alike were not so much interested in the presence of the divine in shaking and sign-giving events as they were in the sensation produced in their rationalistic minds by antirational bappenings. This rationalistic antirationalism infected later Christianity, and it is still a burden for the life of the church and for theology.

The manifestation of the mystery of being does not destroy the structure of being in which it becomes manifest. The ecstasy in which the

mystery is received does not destroy the rational structure of the mind by which it is received. The sign-event which gives the mystery of revelation does not destroy the rational structure of the reality in which it appears. If these criteria are applied, a meaningful doctrine of sign-events or miracles can be stated.

One should not use the word "miracle" for events which create astonishment for a certain time, such as scientific discoveries, technical creations, impressive works of art or politics, personal achievements, etc. These cease to produce astonishment after one has become accustomed to them, although a profound admiration of them may remain and even increase. Nor are the structures of reality, the ***Gestalten,*** the qualities, the inner ***teloi*** of things miracles, although they always will be objects of admiration. There is an element of astonishment in admiration, but it is not a numinous astonishment; it does not point to a miracle.

As ecstasy presupposes the shock of nonbeing in the mind, so sign-events presuppose the stigma of nonbeing in the reality. In shock and stigma, which are strictly correlated, the negative side of the mystery of being appears. The word "stigma" points to marks of disgrace, for example, in the case of a criminal, and to marks of grace, for example, in the case of a saint; in both instances, however, it indicates something negative. There is a stigma that appears on everything, the stigma of fmitude, or implicit and inescapable nonbeing. It is striking that in many miracle stories there is a description of the "numinous" dread which grasps those who participate in the miraculous events. There is the feeling that the solid ground of ordinary reality is taken "out from under" their feet. The correlative experience of the stigma of nonbeing in the reality and the shock of nonbeing in the mind produces this feeling, which, although not revelatory in itself, accompanies every genuine revelatory experience.

Miracles cannot be interpreted in terms of a supranatural interference in natural processes. If such an interpretation were true, the manifestation of the ground of being would destroy the structure of being; God would be split within himself, as religious dualism has asserted. It would be more adequate to call such a miracle "demonic," not because it is produced by "demons," but because it discloses a "structure of destruction" (see Part IV, Sec. I). It corresponds with the state of "being possessed" in the mind and could be called "sorcery." The supranaturalistic theory of miracles makes God a sorcerer and a cause of "possession"; it confuses God with demonic structures in the mind and in reality. There are such

structures, based on a distortion of genuine manifestations of the mystery of being. A supranaturalistic theology which employs patterns derived from the structure of possession and sorcery for the sake of describing the nature of revelation in terms of the destruction of the subjective as well as of objective reason is certainly intolerable.

The sign-events in which the mystery of being gives itself consist in special constellations of elements of reality in correlation with special constellations of elements of the mind. A genuine miracle is first of all an event which is astonishing, unusual, shaking, without contradicting the rational structure of reality. In the second place, it is an event which points to the mystery of being, expressing its relation to us in a definite way. In the third place, it is an occurrence which is received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience. Only if these three conditions are fulfilled can one speak of a genuine miracle. That which does not shake one by its astonishing character has no revelatory power. That which shakes one without pointing to the mystery of being is not miracle but sorcery. That which is not received in ecstasy is a report about the belief in a miracle, not an actual miracle. This is emphasized in the synoptic records of the miracles of Jesus. Miracles are given only to those for whom they are sign-events, to those who receive them in faith. Jesus refuses to perform "objective" miracles. They are a contradiction in terms. This strict correlation makes it possible to exchange the words describing miracles and those describing ecstasy. One can say that ecstasy is the miracle of the mind and that miracle is the ecstasy of reality.

Since neither ecstasy nor miracle destroys the structure of cognitive reason, scientific analysis, psychological and physical, as well as historical investigation are possible and necessary. Research can and must proceed without restriction. It can undercut the superstitions and demonic interpretations of revelation, ecstasy, and miracle. Science, psychology, and history are allies of theology in the fight against the supranaturalistic distortions of genuine revelation. Scientific explanation and historical criticism protect revelation; they cannot dissolve it, for revelation belongs to a dimension of reality for which scientific and historical analysis are inadequate. Revelation is the manifestation of the depth of reason and the ground of being. It points to the mystery of existence and to our ultimate concern. It is independent of what science and history say about the conditions in which it appears; and it cannot make science and history dependent on itself. No conflict between different dimensions of

reality is possible. Reason receives revelation in ecstasy and miracles; but reason is not destroyed by revelation, just as revelation is not emptied by reason.

2. The Mediums of Revelation

a) ***Nature as a medium of*** revelation.-There is no reality, thing, or event which cannot become a bearer of the mystery of being and enter into a revelatory correlation. Nothing is excluded from revelation in principle because nothing is included in it on the basis of special qualities. No person and no thing is worthy in itself to represent our ultimate concern. On the other hand, every person and every thing participates in being-itself, that is, in the ground and meaning of being. Without such participation it would not have the power of being. This is the reason why almost every type of reality has become a medium of revelation somewhere.

Although nothing has become the bearer of revelation by its outstanding qualities, these qualities determine the direction in which a thing or event expresses our ultimate concern and our relation to the mystery of being. There is no difference between a stone and a person in their potentiality of becoming bearers of revelation by entering a revelatory constellation. But there is a great difference between them with respect to the significance and truth of the revelations mediated through them. The stone represents a rather limited number of qualities which are able to point to the ground of being and meaning. The person represents the central qualities, and by implication all qualities, which can point to the mystery of existence. There are, however, qualities in the stone for which the person is not explicitly representative (the power of enduring, resisting, etc.). Such qualities can make the stone a supporting element in the revelation through a person, for instance, the metaphor "rock of ages" applied to God. Sacramental elements (water, wine, oil, etc.) must be seen in this light. Their original character as independent bearers of revelation has been transformed into a supporting function. But even in this function their original independent power is still noticeable.

The mediums of revelation taken from nature are as innumerable as natural objects. Ocean and stars, plants and animals, human bodies and souls, are natural mediums of revelation. Equally numerous are natural events which can enter a constellation of revelatory character: the movements of the sky, the change of day and night, growth and decay, birth and death, natural catastrophes, psychosomatic experiences, such as

maturing, illness, sex, danger. In all these cases it is not the thing or the event as such which has revelatory character; they reveal that which uses them as a medium and bearer of revelation."

While everyday life is an ambiguous mixture of the regular and the irregular, in revelatory constellations the one or the other is experienced in its radical form. If the "extraordinarily regular" is the medium of revelation, the mystery of being becomes manifest in its relation to the rational character of mind and reality; the divine discloses its logos quality without ceasing to be the divine ***mystery.*** If the "extraordinarily irregular" is the medium of revelation, the mystery of being becomes manifest in its relation to the prerational character of mind and reality, the divine shows its ***abyss*** character without ceasing to be the ***divine*** mystery. The extraordinarily regular as a medium of revelation determines the social and ethical type of religion. Kant's co-ordination of the moral law with the starry sky as expressions of the unconditionally sublime is the classical formulation of the mutual interdependence of the experience of the social and the natural law and the relation of both to the ultimate meaning of existence. The extraordinarily irregular as a medium of revelation determines the individualistic and paradoxical type of religion. Kierkegaard's symbol of his continual suspension as a swimmer over the depth of the ocean and his emphasis on the "leap" which leaves everything regular and rational behind are classical expressions of this type of religion. The same difference underlies the present conflict between Ritschlian and neo-orthodox theology.

Revelation through natural mediums is not natural revelation. "Natural revelation," if distinguished from revelation through nature, is a contradiction in terms, for if it is natural knowledge it is not revelation, and if it is revelation it makes nature ecstatic and miraculous. Natural knowledge about self and world cannot lead to the revelation of the ground of being. It can lead to the question of the ground of being, and that is what so-called natural theology can do and must do. But this

4. In judging the sexual rites and symbols of many religions, one should remember that it is not the sexual in itself which is revealing but the mystery of being which through the medium of the sexual manifests its relation to us in a special way. This explains and justifies the rich use of sexual symbols in classical Christianity. Protestantism, rightly aware of the danger of a demonization of these symbols, has developed an extreme distrust of them, often forgetting the mediating character of sex in revelatory experiences. But the goddesses of love are in the first place goddesses, displaying divine power and dignity, and only in the second place do they represent the sexual realm in its ultimate meaning. Protestantism, in rejecting sexual symbolism, is in danger not only of losing much symbolic wealth but also of cutting off the sexual realm from the ground of being and meaning in which it is rooted and from which it gets its consecration.

question is asked neither by natural revelation nor by natural theology. It is the question of reason about its own ground and abyss. It is asked by reason, but reason cannot answer it. Revelation can answer it. And this answer is based neither on a so-called natural revelation nor on a so-called natural theology. It is based on real revelation, on ecstasy and sign-events. Natural theology and, even more definitely, natural revelation are misnomers for the negative side of the revelation of the mystery, for an interpretation of the shock and stigma of nonbeing.

Cognitive reason can go as far as this. It can develop the question of the mystery in the ground of reason. But every step beyond the analysis of this situation is either inconclusive arguing or a remnant of traditional beliefs or both. When Paul speaks of the idolatrous perversion of a potential knowledge of God through nature, he does not challenge the nations because of their questionable arguing but because of their distortion of revelations through nature. Nature in special sections or nature as a whole can be a medium of revelation in an ecstatic experience. But nature cannot be an argumentative basis for conclusions about the mystery of being. Even if it could be this, it should not be called natural theology and, even less, natural revelation.

b) History, groups, and individuals as mediums of revelation.— Historical events, groups, or individuals as such are not mediums of revelation. It is the revelatory constellation into which they enter under special conditions that make them revelatory, not their historical significance or their social or personal greatness. If history points beyond itself in a correlation of ecstasy and sign-event, revelation occurs. If groups of persons become transparent for the ground of being and meaning, revelation occurs. But its occurrence cannot be foreseen or derived from the qualities of persons, groups, and events. It is historical, social, and personal destiny. It stands under the "directing creativity" of the divine life (see below, pp. 263 ff.).

Historical revelation is not revelation ***in*** history but ***through*** history. Since man is essentially historical, every revelation, even if it is mediated through a rock or a tree, occurs ***in*** history. But history itself is revelatory only if a special event or a series of events is experienced ecstatically as miracle. Such experiences can be connected with great creative or destructive events in a national history. The political events then are interpreted as divine gifts, judgments, promises, and therefore as a matter of ultimate concern and a manifestation of the mystery of being.

History is the history of groups, represented and interpreted by personalities. Both groups and personalities can become mediums of revelation in connection with historical events of a revelatory character. The group which has an ecstatic experience in relation to its historical destiny can become a medium of revelation for other groups. That is what Jewish prophetism anticipated when it included all nations in the blessing of Abraham and foresaw all nations coming to Mount Zion to adore the God of Israel. The Christian church always has been conscious of its vocation to be the bearer of revelation for nations and individuals. In the same way, personalities connected with revelatory events can become mediums of revelation themselves, either as representatives or as interpreters of these events, and sometimes as both. Moses, David, and Peter are described as representatives as well as interpreters of revelatory events. Cyrus represents a revelatory happening, but Second Isaiah interprets it. Paul the missionary represents, while Paul the theologian interprets, a revelatory event. In both functions all these men are mediums of historical revelation. And all of them, as well as the events themselves, point to something that transcends them infinitely, to the self-manifestation of that which concerns us ultimately.

Revelation through personalities is not restricted to those who represent or interpret history. Revelation can occur through every personality which is transparent for the ground of being. The prophet, although a medium of historical revelation, does not exclude other personal mediums of revelation. The priest who administers the sphere of the holy, the saint who embodies holiness himself, the ordinary believer who is grasped by the divine Spirit, can be mediums of revelation for others and for a whole group. It is not the priestly function as such, however, which has revelatory character. A mechanized administration of religious rites can exclude any revelatory presence of the holy reality which it claims to mediate. Only under special conditions does the priestly function reveal the mystery of being. The same is true of the saint. The term "saint" has been misunderstood and distorted; saintliness has been identified with religious or moral perfection. Protestantism, for these reasons, has finally removed the concept of sainthood from theology and the reality of the saint from religion. But sainthood is not personal perfection. Saints are persons who are transparent for the ground of being which is revealed through them and who are able to enter a revelatory constellation as mediums. Their being can become a sign-event for others. This is the truth behind the Catholic practice of demanding miracles from every saint. Protestantism does not allow a difference between the saint and

the ordinary believer. Every believer is a saint in so far as he belongs to the communion of saints, the new reality which is holy in its foundation; and every saint is an ordinary believer, in so far as he belongs to those who need forgiveness of sins. On this basis, however, the believer can become a medium of revelation for others and in ***this*** sense a saint. His faith and his love can become sign-events for those who are grasped by their power and creativity. A rethinking of the problem of sainthood by Protestant theology is certainly needed.

Historical revelation can be, and usually is, accompanied and supported by revelation through nature, since nature is the basis on which history moves and without which history would have no reality. Therefore, myth and holy legend report the participation of natural constellations of revelatory character in historical revelation. The Synoptic Gospels are full of stories in which the presence of the Kingdom of God in Jesus as the Christ is witnessed to by natural events which enter the correlation of revelation.

c) ***The word as a medium of revelation and the question of the inner*** word.-The importance of the "word," not only for the idea of revelation, but for almost every theological doctrine, is so great that a "theological semantics" is urgently needed. Within the theological system there are several places where semantic questions must be asked and answered. Man's rational structure cannot be understood without the word in which he grasps the rational structure of reality. Revelation cannot be understood without the word as a medium of revelation. The knowledge of God cannot be described except through a semantic analysis of the symbolic word. The symbols "Word of God" and "Logos" cannot be understood in their various meanings without an insight into the general nature of the word. The biblical message cannot be interpreted without semantic and hermeneutic principles. The preaching of the church presupposes an understanding of the expressive and denotative functions of the word in addition to its communicative function. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that an attempt has been made to reduce the whole of theology to an enlarged doctrine of the "Word of God" (Barth). But if this is done, "word" must either be identified with revelation and the term "word" must be used with such a wide meaning that every divine self-manifestation can be subsumed under it, or revelation must be restricted to the spoken word and the "Word of God" taken literally instead of symbolically. In the first case the specific sense of the term "word" is lost; in the second case the specific sense is preserved, but God is prevented from any nonvocal self-manifestation. This, however, contradicts not only the meaning of God's power but also the religious symbolism inside and outside the biblical literature, which uses seeing, feeling, and tasting as often as hearing in describing the experience of the divine presence. Therefore, "word" can only be made the all-embracing symbol of the divine self-manifestation if the divine "Word" can be seen and tasted as well as heard. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos includes the paradox that the Word has become an object of vision and touch (see below, pp. 157 ff.).

Revelation through words must not be confused with "revealed words." Human words, whether in sacred or in secular language, are produced in the process of human history and are based on the experiential correlation between mind and reality. The ecstatic experience of revelation, like any other experience, can contribute to the formation and transformation of a language. But it cannot create a language of its own which must be learned as in the case of a foreign language. Revelation uses ordinary language, just as it uses nature and history, man's psychic and spiritual life, as mediums of revelation. Ordinary language, which expresses and denotes the ordinary experience of mind and reality in their categorical structure, is made a vehicle for expressing and denoting the extraordinary experience of mind and reality in ecstasy and sign-event.

The word communicates the self-related and unapproachable experience of an ego-self to another ego-self in two ways: by expression and by denotation. These two ways are largely united, but there is a pole of expression at which denotation is almost absent, and there is a pole of denotation where expression is almost absent. The denotative power of language is its ability to grasp and communicate general meanings. The expressive power of language is its ability to disclose and to communicate personal states. An algebraic equation has an almost exclusively denotative character, an outcry has an almost exclusively expressive character. But even in the case of an outcry a definite content of feeling is indicated, and even in the case of a mathematical equation a satisfaction about the evidence of the result and the adequacy of the method can be expressed. Most speaking moves between these two poles: the more scientific and technical, the nearer the denotative pole; the more poetic and communal, the nearer the expressive pole.

The word as a medium of revelation points beyond its ordinary sense

both in denotation and in expression. In the situation of revelation, language has a denotative power which points through the ordinary meanings of the words to their relation to us. In the situation of revelation, language has an expressive power which points through the ordinary expressive possibilities of language to the unexpressible and its relation to us. This does not mean that the logical structure of ordinary language is destroyed if the word becomes a medium of revelation. Nonsensical combinations of words do not indicate the presence of the divine, although they may have an expressive power without any denotative function. Ordinary language, on the other hand, even when dealing with matters of ultimate concern, is not a medium of revelation. It does not possess the "sound" and "voice" which makes the ultimate perceivable. When speaking of the ultimate, of being and meaning, ordinary language brings it down to the level of the preliminary, the conditioned, the finite, thus muffling its revelatory power. Language as a medium of revelation, on the contrary, has the "sound" and "voice" of the divine mystery in and through the sound and voice of human expression and denotation. Language with this power is the "Word of God." If it is possible to use an optical metaphor for the characterization of language, one could say that the Word of God as the word of revelation is transparent language. Something shines (more precisely, sounds) through ordinary language which is the self-manifestation of the depth of being and meaning.

It is obvious that the word as a medium of revelation, the "Word of God," is not a word of information about otherwise hidden truth. If it were this, if revelation were information, no "transparency" of language would be needed. Ordinary language, transmitting no "sound" of ultimacy, could give information about "divine matters." Such information would be of cognitive and perhaps of ethical interest, but it would lack all the characteristics of revelation. It would not have the power of grasping, shaking, and transforming, the power which is attributed to the "Word of God."

If the word as a medium of revelation is not information, it cannot be spoken apart from revelatory events in nature, history, and man. The word is not a medium of revelation in addition to the other mediums; it is a necessary element in all forms of revelation. Since man is man through the power of the word, nothing really human can be so without the word, whether it be spoken or silent. When the prophets spoke, they spoke about the "great deeds of God," the revelatory events in the history of Israel. When the apostles spoke, they spoke about the one great deed of God, the revelatory event which is called Jesus, the Christ. When the priests and seers and mystics in paganism gave holy oracles and created sacred writings, they were giving interpretations of a Spiritual reality which they had entered after having left ordinary reality. Being precedes speaking, and the revelatory reality precedes and determines the revelatory word. A collection of assumed divine revelations concerning "faith and morals" without a revelatory event which they interpret is a lawbook with divine authorization, but it is not the Word of God, and it has no revelatory power. Neither the Ten Commandments nor the great commandment is revelatory if separated from the divine covenant with Israel or from the presence of the Kingdom of God in the Christ. These commandments were meant and should be taken as interpretations of a new reality, not as orders directed against the old reality. They are descriptions and not laws. The same is true of the doctrines. There are no revealed doctrines, but there are revelatory events and situations which can be described in doctrinal terms. Ecclesiastical doctrines are meaningless if separated from the revelatory situation out of which they have grown. The "Word of God" contains neither revealed commandments nor revealed doctrines; it accompanies and interprets revelatory situations.

The phrase "inner word" is unfortunate. Words are means of communication. The "inner word" would be a kind of self-communication, a monologue of the soul with itself. But "inner word" is used in order to describe the speaking of God in the depth of the individual soul. Something is said to the soul, but it is said neither in spoken nor in silent words. It is not said in words at all. It is a movement of the soul in itself. The "inner word" is an expression of the negation of the word as a medium of revelation. A word is spoken to someone; the "inner word" is the awareness of what is already present and does not need to be said. The same is true of the phrase "inner revelation." An inner revelation must reveal something which is not yet a part of the inner man. Otherwise it would not be revelation but recollection; something potentially present would become actual and conscious. This, in fact, is the position of mystics, idealists, and spiritualists,[5] whether they notice it or not. But man in the state of existential separation cannot attain the message of

5. The word "spiritualists," which has received the connotation of occultists, should be used for the so-called Enthusiasts of the Reformation period and the early eighteenth century. Their characteristic was the belief in the inner word or the inner revelation within the soul of the individual Christian.

the New Being by recollection. It must come to him, it must be said to him; it is a matter of revelation. This criticism of the doctrine of the inner word is historically confirmed by the easy transition from spiritualism to rationalism. The inner word was more and more identified with the logical and ethical norms which constitute the rational structure of mind and reality. The voice of revelation was replaced by the voice of our moral conscience, reminding us of what we essentially know. Against the doctrine of the inner word Christian theology must maintain the doctrine of the word as a medium of revelation, symbolically the doctrine of the Word of God.

3. The Dynamics of Revelation: Original and Dependent Revelation

The history of revelation indicates that there is a difference between original and dependent revelations. This is a consequence of the correlative character of revelation. An original revelation is a revelation which occurs in a constellation that did not exist before. This miracle and this ecstasy are joined for the first time. Both sides are original. In a dependent revelation the miracle and its original reception together form the giving side, while the receiving side changes as new individuals and groups enter the same correlation of revelation. Jesus is the Christ, both because he could become the Christ and because he was received as the Christ. Without both these sides he would not have been the Christ. Not only was this true of those who first received him, but it is true of all the following generations which have entered into a revelatory correlation with him. There is, however, a difference between original and dependent revelation through him. While Peter encountered the man Jesus whom he called the Christ in an original revelatory ecstasy, following generations met the Jesus who had been received as the Christ by Peter and the other apostles. There is continuous revelation in the history of the church, but it is dependent revelation. The original miracle, together with its original reception, is the permanent point of reference, while the Spiritual reception by following generations changes continuously. But if one side of a correlation is changed, the whole correlation is transformed. It is true that "Jesus Christ ... the same yesterday, today, and forever" is the immovable point of reference in all periods of church history. But the act of referring is never the same, since new generations with new potentialities of reception enter the correlation and transform it. No ecclesiastical traditionalism and no orthodox biblicism can escape

this situation of "dependent revelation." This answers the much-discussed question whether the history of the church has revelatory power. The history of the church is not a locus of original revelations in addition to the one on which it is based (cf. the section on experience, pp. 40 ff.). Rather, it is the locus of continuous dependent revelations which are one side of the work of the divine Spirit in the church. This side often is called "illumination," referring to the church as a whole as well as to its individual members. The term "illumination" points to the cognitive element in the process of actualizing the New Being. It is the cognitive side of ecstasy. While "inspiration" traditionally has been used to designate an original revelation, "illumination" has been used to express what we call "dependent revelation." The divine Spirit, illuminating believers individually and as a group, brings their cognitive reason into revelatory correlation with the event on which Christianity is based.

This leads to a broader view of revelation in the life of the Christian. A dependent revelatory situation exists in every moment in which the divine Spirit grasps, shakes, and moves the human spirit. Every prayer and meditation, if it fulfils its meaning, namely, to reunite the creature with its creative ground, is revelatory in this sense. The marks of revelation-mystery, miracle, and ecstasy-are present in every true prayer. Speaking to God and receiving an answer is an ecstatic and miraculous experience; it transcends all ordinary structures of subjective and objective reason. It is the presence of the mystery of being and an actualization of our ultimate concern. If it is brought down to the level of a conversation between two beings, it is blasphemous and ridiculous. If, however, it is understood as the "elevation of the heart," namely, the center of the personality, to God, it is a revelatory event.

This consideration radically excludes a nonexistential concept of revelation. Propositions about a past revelation give theoretical information; they have no revelatory power. Only through an autonomous use of the intellect or through a heteronomous subjection of the will could they be accepted as truth. Such acceptance would be a human work, a meritorious deed of the type against which the Reformation fought a life-and-death struggle. Revelation, whether it is original or dependent, has revelatory power only for those who participate in it, who enter into the revelatory correlation.

Original revelation is given to a group through an individual. Revelation can be received originally only in the depth of a personal life, in its struggles, decisions, and self-surrender. No individual receives

revelation for himself. He receives it for his group, and implicitly for all groups, for mankind as a whole. This is obvious in prophetic revelation, which always is vocational. The prophet is the mediator of revelation for the group which follows him-often after it first has rejected him. Nor is this restricted to classical prophetism. We find the same situation in most religions, and even in mystical groups. A seer, a religious founder, a priest, a mystic—these are the individuals from whom original revelation is derived by groups which enter into the same correlation of revelation in a dependent way.

Since the correlation of revelation is transformed by every new group, and in an infinitesimal way by every new individual who enters it, the question must be asked whether this transformation can reach a point where the original revelation is exhausted and superseded. It is the question of the possible end of a revelatory correlation, either by a complete disappearance of the unchanging point of reference, or by a complete loss of its power to create new correlations. Both possibilities have been actualized innumerable times in the history of religion. Sectarian and Protestant movements in all the great religions have attacked given religious institutions as a complete betrayal of the meaning of the original revelation, although they still have kept it as their point of reference. On the other hand, most of the gods of the past have lost even this power; they have become poetic symbols and have ceased to create a revelatory situation. Apollo has no revelatory significance for Christians; the Virgin Mother Mary reveals nothing to Protestants. Revelation through these two figures has come to an end. Yet one might ask how a real revelation can come to an end. If it is God who stands behind every revelation, how can something divine come to an end? If it is not God who reveals himself, why should one use the term "revelation"? But this alternative does not exist! Every revelation is mediated by one or several of the mediums of revelation. None of these mediums possesses revelatory power in itself; but under the conditions of existence these mediums claim to have it. This claim makes them idols, and the breakdown of this claim deprives them of their power. The revelatory side is not lost if a revelation comes to an end; but its idolatrous side is destroyed. That which was revelatory in it is preserved as an element in more embracing and more purified revelations, and everything revelatory is potentially present in the final revelation, which cannot come to an end because the bearer of it does not claim anything for himself.

4. The Knowledge of Revelation

Revelation is the manifestation of the mystery of being for the cognitive function of human reason. It mediates knowledge-a knowledge, however, which can be received only in a revelatory situation, through ecstasy and miracle. This correlation indicates the special character of the "knowledge of revelation."[6] Since the knowledge of revelation cannot be separated from the situation of revelation, it cannot be introduced into the context of ordinary knowledge as an addition, provided in a peculiar way, yet independent of this way once it has been received. Knowledge of revel&ion does not increase our knowledge about the structures of nature, history, and man. Whenever a claim to knowledge is made on this level, it must be subjected to the experimental tests through which truth is established. If such a claim is made in the name of revelation or of any other authority, it must be disregarded, and the ordinary methods of research and verification must be applied. For the physicist the revelatory knowledge of creation neither adds to nor subtracts from his scientific description of the natural structure of things. For the historian the revelatory interpretation of history as the history of revelation neither confirms nor negates any of his statements about documents, traditions, and the interdependence of historical events. For the psychologist no revelatory truth about the destiny of man can influence his analysis of the dynamics of the human soul. If revealed knowledge did interfere with ordinary knowledge, it would destroy scientific honesty and methodological humility. It would exhibit demonic possession, not divine revelation. Knowledge of revelation is knowledge about the revelation of the mystery of being to us, not information about the nature of beings and their relation to one another. Therefore, the knowledge of revelation can be received only in the situation of revelation, and it can be communicated-in contrast to ordinary knowledge -only to those who participate in this situation. For those outside this situation the same words have a different sound. A reader of the New Testament, for example, a philologist for whom its contents are not a matter of ultimate concern, may be able to interpret the text exactly and

6. One should not speak of revealed knowledge because this term gives the impression that ordinary contents of knowledge are communicated in an extraordinary way, thus separating revealed knowledge from the revelatory situation. This is the basic fallacy in most of the popular and many of the theological interpretations of revelation and the knowledge mediated through it. The term "knowledge of revelation" (or revelatory knowledge) emphasizes the inseparable unity of knowledge and situation.

correctly; but he will miss the ecstatic-revelatory significance of the words and sentences. He may speak with scientific preciseness about them as reports concerning an assumed revelation, but he cannot speak of them as witnesses to an actual revelation. His knowledge of the documents of revelation is nonexistential. As such it may contribute much to the historical-philosophical understanding of the documents. It cannot contribute anything to the knowledge of revelation mediated through the documents.

Knowledge of revelation cannot interfere with ordinary knowledge. Likewise, ordinary knowledge cannot interfere with knowledge of revelation. There is no scientific theory which is more favorable to the truth of revelation than any other theory. It is disastrous for theology if theologians prefer one scientific view to others on theological grounds. And it was humiliating for theology when theologians were afraid of new theories for religious reasons, trying to resist them as long as possible, and finally giving in when resistance had become impossible. This ill-conceived resistance of theologians from the time of Galileo to the time of Darwin was one of the causes of the split between religion and secular culture in the past centuries.

The same situation prevails with regard to historical research. Theologians need not be afraid of any historical conjecture, for revealed truth lies in a dimension where it can neither be confirmed nor negated by historiography. Therefore, theologians should not prefer some results of historical research to others on theological grounds, and they should not resist results which finally have to be accepted if scientific honesty is not to be destroyed, even if they seem to undermine the knowledge of revelation. Historical investigations should neither comfort nor worry theologians. Knowledge of revelation, although it is mediated primarily through historical events, does not imply factual assertions, and it is therefore not exposed to critical analysis by historical research. Its truth is to be judged by criteria which lie within the dimension of revelatory knowledge.

Psychology, including depth psychology, psychosomatics, and social psychology, is equally unable to interfere with knowledge of revelation. There are many insights into the nature of man in revelation. But all of them refer to the relation of man to what concerns him ultimately, to the ground and meaning of his being. There is no revealed psychology just as there is no revealed historiography or revealed physics. It is not the

task of theology to protect the truth of revelation by attacking Freudian doctrines of libido, repression, and sublimation on religious grounds or by defending a Jungian doctrine of man in the name of revelatory knowledge.

There is, however, one limit to the indifference of the knowledge of revelation toward all forms of ordinary knowledge, namely, the presence of revelatory elements within assertions of ordinary knowledge. If, under the cover of ordinary knowledge; matters of ultimate concern are discussed, theology must protect the truth of revelation against attacks from distorted revelations, whether they appear as genuine religions or as metaphysically transformed ideas. This, however, is a religious struggle in the dimension of revelatory knowledge and not a conflict between knowledge of revelation and ordinary knowledge.

The truth of revelation is not dependent on criteria which are not themselves revelatory. Knowledge of revelation, like ordinary knowledge, must be judged by its own-implicit criteria. It is the task of the doctrine of the final revelation to make these criteria explicit (see the following sections).

The knowledge of revelation, directly or indirectly, is knowledge of God, and therefore it is analogous or symbolic. The nature of this kind of knowing is dependent on the nature of the relation between God and the world and can be discussed only in the context of the doctrine of God. But two possible misunderstandings must be mentioned and removed. If the knowledge of revelation is called "analogous," this certainly refers to the classical doctrine of the *analogia entis* between the finite and the infinite. Without such an analogy nothing could be said about God. But the *analogia entis* is in no way able to create a natural theology. It is not a method of discovering truth about God; it is the form in which every knowledge of revelation must be expressed. In this sense *analogia entis,* like "religious symbol," points to the necessity of using material taken from finite reality in order to give content to the cognitive function in revelation. This necessity, however, does not diminish the cognitive value of revelatory knowledge. The phrase "only a symbol" should be avoided, because nonanalogous or nonsymbolic knowledge of God has less truth than analogous or symbolic knowledge. The use of finite materials in their ordinary sense for the knowledge of revelation destroys the meaning of revelation and deprives God of his divinity.

B. ACTUAL REVELATION

5. Actual and Final Revelation

We have described the meaning of revelation in the light of the criteria of what Christianity considers to be revelation. The description of the meaning of revelation was supposed to cover all possible and actual revelations, but the criterion of revelation has not yet been developed. We now turn to the Christian affirmation, no longer indirectly as in the preceding chapters, but directly and dogmatically, in the genuine sense of dogma as the doctrinal basis of a special philosophical school or religious community.

From the point of view of the theological circle, actual revelation is necessarily final revelation, for the person who is grasped by a revelatory experience believes it to be the truth concerning the mystery of being and his relation to it. If he is open for other original revelations, he already has left the revelatory situation and looks at it in a detached way. His point of reference has ceased to be the original revelation by means of which he had entered an original correlation, or, more frequently, a dependent correlation. There is also the possibility that a person may believe that no concrete revelation concerns him ultimately, that the real ultimate is beyond all concreteness. In Hinduism the ecstatic experience of the Brahman power is the ultimate; in humanism it is heroic subjection to the moral principle. In both cases a concrete revelation, for example, a manifestation of Vishnu in Hinduism or the picture of Jesus as the moral ideal in Protestantism, has no finality. For the Hindu the final revelation is the mystical experience, and for the humanist there is neither actual nor final revelation but only moral autonomy, supported by the impression of the synoptic Jesus.

Christianity claims to be based on the revelation in Jesus as the Christ as the final revelation. This claim establishes a Christian church, and, where this claim is absent, Christianity has ceased to exist-at least manifestly though not always latently (see Part IV, Sec. II). The word "final" in the phrase "final revelation" means more than lust. Christianity often has affirmed, and certainly should affirm, that there is continuous revelation in the history of the church. In this sense the final revelation is not the last. Only if ***last*** means the last ***genuine*** revelation can final revelation be interpreted as the last revelation. There can be no revelation in the history of the church whose point of reference is not Jesus as the Christ. If another point of reference is sought or accepted,

the Christian church has lost its foundation. But final revelation means more than the last genuine revelation. It means the decisive, fulfilling, unsurpassable revelation, that which is the criterion of all the others. This is the Christian claim, and this is the basis of a Christian theology.

The question, however, is how such a claim can be justified, whether there are criteria within the revelation in Jesus as the Christ which make it final, Such criteria cannot be derived from anything outside the revelatory situation. But it is possible to discover them within this situation. And this is just what theology must do.

The first and basic answer theology must give to the question of the finality of the revelation in Jesus as the Christ is the following: a revelation is final if it has the power of negating itself without losing itself. This paradox is based on the fact that every revelation is conditioned by the medium in and through which it appears. The question of the final revelation is the question of a medium of revelation which overcomes its own finite conditions by sacrificing them, and itself with them. He who is the bearer of the final revelation must surrender his finitude -not only his life but also his finite power and knowledge and perfection. In doing so, he affirms that he is the bearer of final revelation (the "Son of God" in classical terms). He becomes completely transparent to the mystery he reveals. But, in order to be able to surrender himself completely, he must possess himself completely. And only he can possess— and therefore surrender-himself completely who is united with the ground of his being and meaning without separation and disruption. In the picture of Jesus as the Christ we have the picture of a man who possesses these qualities, a man who, therefore, can be called the medium of final revelation.

In the biblical records of Jesus as the Christ (there are no records besides the New Testament) Jesus became the Christ by conquering the demonic forces which tried to make him demonic by tempting him to claim ultimacy for his finite nature. These forces, often represented by his own disciples, tried to induce him to avoid sacrificing of himself as a medium of revelation. They wanted him to avoid the cross (cf. Matthew, chap. 16). They tried to make him an object of idolatry. Idolatry is the perversion of a genuine revelation; it is the elevation of the medium of revelation to the dignity of the revelation itself. The true prophets in Israel fought continuously against this idolatry, which was defended by the false prophets and their priestly supporters. This fight is the dynamic power in the history of revelation. Its classical document is the Old

Testament, and it is just for this reason that the Old Testament is an inseparable part of the revelation of Jesus as the Christ. But the New Testament and the history of the church show the same conflict. In the Reformation the prophetic spirit attacked a demonically perverted priestly system and produced the deepest split which has occurred in the development of Christianity.

According to Paul, the demonic-idolatrous powers which rule the world and distort religion have been conquered in the cross of Christ. In his cross Jesus sacrificed that medium of revelation which impressed itself on his followers as messianic in power and significance. For us this means that in following him we are liberated from the authority of everything finite in him, from his special traditions, from his individual piety, from his rather conditioned world view, from any legalistic understanding of his ethics. Only as the crucified is he "grace and truth" and not law. Only as he who has sacrificed his flesh, that is, his historical existence, is he Spirit or New Creature. These are the *paradoxa* in which the criterion of final revelation becomes manifest. Even the Christ is Christ only because he did not insist on his equality with God but renounced it as a personal possession (Philippians, chap. 2). Christian theology can affirm the finality of the revelation in Jesus as the Christ only on this basis. The claim of anything finite to be final in its own right is demonic. Jesus rejected this possibility as a satanic temptation, and in the words of the Fourth Gospel he emphasized that he had nothing himself but that he had received everything from his father. He remained transparent to the divine mystery until his death, which was the final manifestation of his transparency. This condemns a Jesus-centered religion and theology. Jesus is the religious and theological object as the Christ and only as the Christ. And he is the Christ as the one who sacrifices what is merely "Jesus" in him. The decisive trait in his picture is the continuous self-surrender of Jesus who is Jesus to Jesus who is the Christ.

Therefore, the final revelation is universal without being heteronomous. No finite being imposes itself in the name of God on other finite beings. The unconditional and universal claim of Christianity is not based on its own superiority over other religions. Christianity, without being final itself, witnesses to the final revelation. Christianity as Christianity is neither final nor universal. But that to which it witnesses is final and universal. This profound dialectics of Christianity must not be forgotten in favor of ecclesiastical or orthodox self-aflirmations. Against

them the so-called liberal theology is right in denying that one religion can claim finality, or even superiority. A Christianity which does not assert that Jesus of Nazareth is sacrificed to Jesus as the Christ is just one more religion among many others. It has no justifiable claim to finality.

6. The Final Revelation in Jesus as the Christ

In accord with the circular character of systematic theology, the criterion of final revelation is derived from what Christianity considers to be the final revelation, the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. Theologians should not be afraid to admit this circle. It is not a shortcoming; rather it is the necessary expression of the existential character of theology. It provides a description of final revelation in two ways, first in terms of an abstract principle which is the criterion of every assumed or real revelation and, second, in terms of a concrete picture which mirrors the occurrence of the final revelation. In the preceding chapter the abstract principle was elaborated with the concrete picture in view; the present chapter describes the actualization of the abstract principle in the concrete.

All reports and interpretations of the New Testament concerning Jesus as the Christ possess two outstanding characteristics: his maintenance of unity with God and his sacrifice of everything he could have gained for himself from this unity.

The first point is clear in the Gospel reports about the unbreakable unity of his being with that of the ground of all being, in spite of his participation in the ambiguities of human life. The being of Jesus as the Christ is determined in every moment by God. In all his utterances, words, deeds, and sufferings, he is transparent to that which he represents as the Christ, the divine mystery. While the Synoptic Gospels emphasize the active maintenance of this unity against demonic attacks, the Fourth Gospel emphasizes the basic unity between Jesus and the "Father." In the epistles the victory of the unity over against the powers of separation is presupposed, though sometimes the toil and burden of this battle is indicated. However, it is never a moral, intellectual, or emotional quality which makes him the bearer of the final revelation. According to the witness of the whole New Testament and, by anticipation, also of many passages of the Old Testament, it is the presence of God in him which makes him the Christ. His words, his deeds, and

his sufferings are consequences of this presence; they are expressions of the New Being which is his being.

Jesus' maintenance of unity with God includes the second emphasis of the biblical writers, his victory over every temptation to exploit his unity with God as a means of advantage for himself. He does not give in to the temptation to which he is exposed as the designated Messiah, the success of which would have deprived him of his messianic function. The acceptance of the cross, both during his life and at the end of it, is the decisive test of his unity with God, of his complete transparency to the ground of being. Only in view of the crucifixion can the Fourth Gospel have him say that "he who believes in me does not believe in ***me***" (John 12:44). Only through his continuous acceptance of the cross has he become the "Spirit" who has surrendered himself as flesh, namely, as a historical individual (II Corinthians). This sacrifice is the end of all attempts to impose him, as a finite being, on other finite beings. It is the end of Jesusology. Jesus of Nazareth is the medium of the final revelation because he sacrifices himself completely to Jesus as the Christ. He not only sacrifices his life, as many martyrs and many ordinary people have done, but he also sacrifices everything in him and of him which could bring people to him as an "overwhelming personality" instead of bringing them to that in him which is greater than he and they. This is the meaning of the symbol "Son of God" (see the christological part in Part III, Sec. II).

The final revelation, like every revelation, occurs in a correlation of ecstasy and miracle. The revelatory event is Jesus as the Christ. He is the miracle of the final revelation, and his reception is the ecstasy of the final revelation. His appearance is the decisive constellation of historical (and by participation, natural) forces. It is the ecstatic moment of human history and, therefore, its center, giving meaning to all possible and actual history. The Kairos (see Part V, Sec. II) which was fulfilled in him is the constellation of final revelation. But it is this only for those who received him as the final revelation, namely, as the Messiah, the Christ, the Man-from-above, the Son of God, the Spirit, the Logos-who-became-flesh-the New Being. All these terms are symbolic variations of the theme first enunciated by Peter when he said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ." In these words Peter accepted him as the medium of the final revelation. This acceptance, however, is a part of the revelation itself. It is a miracle of the mind which corresponds with the ecstasy of history. Or, in the opposite terminology (the terms are interchangeable; see above, p. 117), it is an ecstasy of the mind which corresponds with the miracle of history. Jesus as the Christ, the miracle of the final revelation, and the church, receiving him as the Christ or the final revelation, belong to each other. The Christ is not the Christ without the church, and the church is not the church without the Christ. The final revelation, like every revelation, is correlative.

The final revelation, the revelation in Jesus as the Christ, is universally valid, because it includes the criterion of every revelation and is the ***finis*** or ***telos*** (intrinsic aim) of all of them. The final revelation is the criterion of every revelation which precedes or follows. It is the criterion of every religion and of every culture, not only of the culture and religion in and through which it has appeared. It is valid for the social existence of every human group and for the personal existence of every human individual. It is valid for mankind as such, and, in an indescribable way, it has meaning for the universe also. Nothing less than this should be asserted by Christian theology. If some element is cut off from the universal validity of the message of Jesus as the Christ, if he is put into the sphere of personal achievement only, or into the sphere of history only, he is less than the final revelation and is neither the Christ nor the New Being. But Christian theology aflirms that he is all this because he stands the double test of finality: uninterrupted unity with the ground of his being and the continuous sacrifice of himself as Jesus to himself as the Christ.

7. The History of Revelation

The event which is called "final revelation" was not an isolated event. It presupposed a revelatory history which was a preparation for it and in which it was received. It could not have occurred without having been expected, and it could not have been expected if it had not been preceded by other revelations which had become distorted. It would not have been the final revelation if it had not been received as such, and it would lose its character as final revelation if it were not able to make itself available to every group in every place. The history of the preparation and reception of the final revelation can be called the "history of revelation."

The history of revelation is not the history of religion, not even the history of the Jewish and Christian religions. There is revelation outside the religious sphere, and there is much in religion which is not revelation. Revelation judges religion and nonreligion equally. Nor is the

history of revelation a history of all revelations which have taken place. There is no such history, for one can speak of a revelatory event only on the basis of an existential relation to it. The "historian of all revelations" would be merely a historian of all reports about revelations. The history of revelation is history interpreted in the light of the final revelation. The event of final revelation establishes itself as the center, aim, and origin of the revelatory events which occur in the period of preparation and in the period of reception. This, of course, is true only for the person who participates existentially in the final revelation. But for him it is a true and inescapable implication of his revelatory experience. While humanistic theology tends to identify the history of revelation with the history of religion and culture, thus removing the concept of final revelation, neo-orthodox theology and an allied liberal (e.g., Ritschlian) theology try to eliminate the history of revelation by identifying revelation with final revelation. The latter group says that there is only *one* revelation, namely, that in Jesus the Christ; to which the former group answers that there are revelations everywhere and that none of them is ultimate. Both contentions must be rejected. In the actual revelatory situation, a revelation which is not taken to be final is a detached reflection and not an involved experience. On the other hand, if a revelation whose historical preparation is denied as final, the necessity of its historical reception makes the unique revelatory event a strange body which has no relation whatsoever to human existence and history. Therefore, it cannot be assimilated by man's spiritual life. It either destroys this life or is thrown out by it. "The history of revelation" is a necessary correlate of final revelation. It should neither be leveled down to a history of religion nor be eliminated by a destructive supranaturalism.

The final revelation divides the history of revelation into a period of preparation and a period of reception. The revelation which occurs in the period of preparation is universal. "Universal" can be misunderstood in three ways. It can be confused with "general," in the sense of a general and necessary law abstracted from all special revelatory events. But there is no such general law. Revelation occurs or it does not occur; but it certainly does not occur "generally." It is not a structural element of reality. "Universal," as distinguished from "general," means (or can mean) a special event with an all-embracing claim. In this sense the Christian church is universal ("catholic" or for everyone) but not general (abstracted *from* everyone). The second misunderstanding of the

term "universal revelation" is its confusion with natural revelation. As we have seen, there is no natural revelation. Only revelation *through* nature can be asserted. And revelation through nature is special and concrete. The third misunderstanding of the term "universal" is the assumption that revelation is occurring always and everywhere. Nothing like this can be said in view of the marks of revelation and its existential character. But it is equally impossible to exclude the universal possibility of revelation. This also would deny its existential character, and, even more, it would make the final revelation impossible.

Only on the wide basis of universal revelation could the final revelation occur and be received. Without the symbols created by universal revelation the final revelation would not be understandable. Without the religious experiences created by universal revelation no categories and forms would exist to receive the final revelation. The biblical terminology is full of words whose meaning and connotations would be completely strange to listeners and readers if there had been no preceding revelations in Judaism as well as in paganism. Missions could not have reached anyone if there had not been a preparation for the Christian message in universal revelation. The question of the final revelation would not have been asked; therefore, the answer could not have been received. If someone, for example, a neo-orthodox theologian, should assert that with God everything is possible and that God in his revelation is not dependent on the stages of human maturity, it must be emphasized that God acts through men according to their nature and receptiveness. He does not replace man with another kind of being, and he does not replace childhood with maturity in order to reveal himself. He reveals himself to man and saves man, and, in doing so, he does not replace man with something else created for this purpose. This would be the method of a demon and not of God. To assert that a revelation is final revelation without pointing to a history of revelation in which there has been a preparation for it dehumanizes man and demonizes God.

The preparation for the final revelation in the history of revelation is threefold. The preparation is carried through by conservation, by criticism, and by anticipation. Any revelatory experience transforms the medium of revelation into a sacramental object, whether it is an object of nature, a human being, a historical event, or a sacred text. It is the function of the priest to conserve the sacramental object and to keep alive the power of original revelation by making new individuals, new

groups, and new generations enter the revelatory situation. The symbolic material used, transformed, and increased by every later revelation, and also by the final revelation, grows out of the priestly conservation and continuation of revelatory events. No prophet could speak in the power of a new revelation, no mystic could contemplate the depth of the divine ground, no meaning could be given over to the appearance of the Christ, if there were not this sacramental-priestly substance. But the sacramental-priestly element of the universal revelation is subject to a confusion between the medium and the content of revelation. It tends to make the medium and its excellencies into the content. It tends to become demonic, for the demonic is the elevation of something conditional to unconditional significance. Against this tendency the second stage of the preparatory revelation is directed, the critical approach. It has appeared in three forms: the mystical, the rational, and the prophetic. Mysticism has criticized the demonically distorted sacramental-priestly substance by devaluating every medium of revelation and by trying to unite the soul directly with the ground of being, to make it enter the mystery of existence without the help of a finite medium. Revelation occurs in the depth of the soul; the objective side is accidental. The impact of the antidemonic fight of mysticism on large sections of humanity has been, and still is, tremendous. But its power of preparing for the final revelation is ambiguous. Mysticism liberates one from the concrete-sacramental sphere and its demonic distortions, but it pays the price of removing the concrete character of revelation and of making it irrelevant to the actual human situation. It elevates man above everything that concerns him actually, and it implies an ultimate negation of his existence in time and space. In spite of these ambiguities it is the permanent function of mysticism to point to the abysmal character of the ground of being and to reject the demonic identification of anything finite with that which transcends everything finite. It is unfortunate that those in the Kant-Ritschl line and those in the neo-orthodox schools in theology have pointed only to the possible and actual abuses of the mystical approach without acknowledging its world historical function of transcending the concrete mediums of revelation toward the mystery which is mediated by them. Even the final revelation needs the corrective of mysticism in order to transcend its own finite symbols.

The rational approach seems to fall outside the revelatory situation and to be without any revelatory function. Indeed, reason is not revelatory. But in every creation of reason the depth of reason is present and

makes itself felt, in form as well as in content. Elements which contribute to the history of revelation are implicitly or explicitly present in the style of a cultural creation, in its basic principle, in its criticisms and demands. They presuppose revelatory events by expressing them either in terms of rational creations or in terms of rational criticisms directed against distorted revelations. Xenophanes' and Heraclitus' criticism of the Homeric gods and Plato's philosophical interpretation of the Apollonian-Dionysian substance of Greek culture are examples of the influence of a rational creation on the revelatory situation. In men like Plotinus, Eckhart, Cusanus, Spinoza, and Böhme, mystical and rational elements were united which criticized and transformed sacramental traditions and which elicited the quest for new revelatory constellations. But it is not only mystical elevation over the realm of concrete symbols which can be united with rational criticism; the prophetic criticism of a sacramental-priestly system also can ally itself with rational criticism. The social and political elements in the prophets, the Reformers, and the sectarian revolutionaries were amalgamated inseparably with the revelatory experience which drove them. And, conversely, the expectation of a new revelatory situation is often the hidden driving power in secular movements for political freedom and social justice. Universal revelation includes not only mystical (and prophetic) reactions against distorted sacramental forms and systems. It also includes rational reactions, separated from or united with mysticism and prophetism. In the light of this situation, any theology which in terms of a general proposition excludes the creations of reason, that is, man's cultural life, from an indirect participation in the history of revelation, must be rejected.

Decisive, however, for the development of universal preparatory revelation is the prophetic attack on distorted sacramentalism. It is not justifiable to restrict prophetism to the Old Testament prophets or to the prophetic Spirit which is present in most sections of the Old and New Testament. Prophetic criticism and promise are active in the whole history of the church, especially in the movements of monasticism, the Reformation, and evangelical radicalism. They are active in religious revolutions and foundations outside Christianity, as in the religion of Zoroaster, in some of the Greek mysteries, in Islam, and in many smaller reform movements. The common denominator in all of them, which distinguishes them from mysticism, is the concrete foundation of their attack on a given sacramental system. They do not devaluate it; they do not elevate themselves above it; they do not demand union with the

ground of being. They subject the concrete mediums of revelation and the concrete sacramental symbols and priestly systems to the judgment of the divine law, to that which ought to be because it is the law of God. Prophetism tries to shape reality in the power of the divine form. It does not transcend reality for the sake of the divine abyss. It promises fulfilment in the future (however transcendent the future may be understood to be), and it does not point to an eternity which is equally near to every moment of time, as mysticism does.

There is, however, something unique in the prophets of Israel, from Moses, who is called the greatest of the prophets, to John the Baptist, who is called the greatest in the old eon. The revelation through the prophets of Israel is the direct concrete preparation of the final revelation, and it cannot be separated from it. The universal revelation as such is not the immediate preparation for the final revelation; only the universal revelation criticized and transformed by the prophetism of the Old Testament is such preparation. The universal revelation as such could not have prepared the final revelation. Since the latter is concrete, only *one* concrete development could have been its immediate preparation. And since the final revelation is the criterion of every revelation, the criterion of finality must have been envisaged and applied, though fragmentarily and by anticipation. When the early church accepted Jesus as the Christ, it was guided by criteria such as those given by the Second Isaiah. Without a group of people who were indoctrinated by the paradoxes of Jewish prophetism, the paradox of the Cross could not have been understood and accepted. It is, therefore, not surprising that those who separated the New from the Old Testament-from early gnosticism to recent naziism-lost the christological paradox, the center of the New Testament. They considered the final revelation as one of the examples of universal revelation, and they denounced the religion of the Old Testament as one of the lower forms of paganism. They understood it as an expression of the religious nationalism of the Jews. But this is a complete misunderstanding. The Old Testament certainly is full of Jewish nationalism, but it appears over and over as that against which the Old Testament fights. Religious nationalism is the mark of the false prophets. The true prophets threaten Israel in the name of the God of justice who is able to reject his nation because of its injustice without losing his power, which is not the case in polytheism. As the god of justice he is universal, and, if justice is violated, he rejects any claim on the basis of a special relation to his nation. The term "elected nation" is by no means

an expression of national arrogance. To be elected includes the permanent threat of rejection and destruction and the demand to accept destruction in order to save the covenant of election. Election and destruction are bound together so that no finite being, group, or individual may consider himself as more than a medium of the mystery of being. If, however, a group or single individuals endure this tension, their destruction is their fulfilment. This is the meaning of the prophetic promise which transcends the prophetic threat. This promise is not a matter of a "happy ending." Empirically speaking, there is no happy ending for the elected nation-or for the elected one of the final revelation. But "empirically speaking" is not the prophetic form of speaking. Prophets speak in terms which express the "depth of reason" and its ecstatic experience.

In the process of the prophetic struggle with distorted sacramentalism, the revelatory elements of the universal revelation are received, developed, and transformed. Distorted expressions are either rejected or purified. This process occurs in all periods of the history of Israel and does not stop in the New Testament and in church history. It is the dynamic acceptance, rejection, and transformation of preparatory revelation by the final revelation. In the light of this process it is impossible to separate the Old Testament from universal revelation, as it is impossible and absurd to interpret the Old Testament not as the concrete and unique preparation of the final revelation but as a document of the final revelation itself, as a kind of anticipated New Testament. Reception, rejection, and transformation-that is the movement from the side of the Old Testament toward the universal revelation, and from the side of the New Testament toward the universal revelation and the Old Testament. The dynamics of the history of revelation exclude the mechanistic-supranatural theories of revelation and inspiration.

Neither the Jewish nation as a whole nor the small "remnant" groups to whom the prophets often referred were able to overcome the identification of the medium with the content of revelation. The history of Israel shows that no group can be the bearer of the final revelation, that it cannot perform a complete self-sacrifice. The breakthrough and the perfect self-surrender must happen in a personal life, or it cannot happen at all. Christianity claims that it has happened and that the moment in which it happened is the center of the history of revelation and indirectly the center of all history.

The center of the history of revelation divides the whole process into preparatory and receiving revelation. The bearer of the receiving revela-

tion is the Christian church. The period of receiving revelation has begun with the beginning of the church. All religions and cultures outside the church, according to the Christian judgment, are still in the period of preparation. And, even more, there are many groups and individuals within the Christian nations and the Christian churches who are definitely in the stage of preparation. They have never received the message of the final revelation in its meaning and power. And the Christian churches themselves, in their institutions and actions, are in permanent danger of relapsing into the preparatory stage-a danger which has become a reality again and again. Nevertheless, the Christian church is based on the final revelation and is supposed to receive it in a continuous process of reception, interpretation, and actualization. This is a revelatory process with all the marks of revelation. The presence of the divine Spirit in the church is revelatory. But it is a dependent revelation, possessing all the marks of dependent revelations. It is dependent on the event of the final revelation from which it takes meaning and power in all generations, although the kind of reception, interpretation, and transformation creates new correlations in all periods, groups, and individuals. Receiving revelation is revelation, although the Spirit through whom the revelation occurs is always the Spirit of Jesus as the Christ. The Christian church takes the "risk of faith" in affirming practically and theoretically that this revelation cannot come to an end, that it has the power of reformation within itself, and that no new original revelation could surpass the event of final revelation. On the basis of this faith Christianity asserts that the history of original revelation is finished in principle, although it may still continue indefinitely in places where the center of the history of revelation has not yet been acknowledged. But if the final revelation has been accepted, the revelatory process has not stopped; it continues to the end of history.

8. Revelation and Salvation

The history of revelation and the history of salvation are the same history. Revelation can be received only in the presence of salvation, and salvation can occur only within a correlation of revelation. These assertions can be contradicted on the basis of an intellectual, nonexistential concept of revelation or on the basis of an individualistic, nondynamic concept of salvation; but such concepts must be radically rejected by systematic theology, and with them any attempt to separate revelation and salvation also must be rejected.

If revelation is understood to mean information about "divine matters," which is supposed to be accepted partly through intellectual operations, partly through a subjection of the will to authorities, there can be revelation without salvation. Information is given which can be received without a transformation of the existence of the receiver. Neither ecstasy nor miracle belongs to this notion of a revelatory situation. The divine Spirit either is unnecessary or becomes a supranatural informer and teacher of objective, nonexistential truths. The biblical reports concerning revelatory situations directly contradict this notion; they give unambiguous support to the assertion that revelation and salvation cannot be separated. Moses must remove his shoes before he can walk on the holy ground of a revelatory situation; Isaiah must be touched by a burning coal for the sake of expiation before he can receive his vocational revelation; Peter must leave his environment and follow Jesus before he can make the ecstatic statement that Jesus is the Christ; Paul must experience a revolution of his whole being when he receives the revelation which makes him a Christian and an apostle.

But one might say that this is true only of great religious personalities who lead others into a revelatory situation after the breakthrough has occurred in them. For these other persons, revelation is a deposit of truths they take over which may or may not have saving consequences for them. If this interpretation is accepted, revelatory truth is independent of the receiving side, and the saving consequences for the individual are a matter of his personal destiny; they have no significance for the revelation itself. Obviously such an argument is very favorable to authoritarian systems, ecclesiastical or doctrinal, which handle the contents of revelation like property. In such systems revealed truths are administered by authorities and are presented to the people as ready-made commodities which they must accept. Authoritarian systems unavoidably intellectualize and voluntarize revelation; they dismember the existential correlation between the revelatory event and those who are asked to receive it. They are strongly opposed, therefore, to the identification of revelation and salvation, which implies an existential understanding of revelation, that is, a creative and transforming participation of every believer in the correlation of revelation.

Another argument against the identification of revelation and salvation is based on a concept of salvation which would separate salvation from revelation. If salvation is understood to mean the ultimate fulfilment of the individual beyond time and history, revelation which occurs

in history cannot be identified with it. In this view salvation is either complete, or it is not salvation at all. Since the reception of revelation under the conditions of existence is always fragmentary, revelation has no saving quality in itself, although it may become an instrument of salvation. This concept of salvation must be rejected as unambiguously as the intellectualistic concept of revelation. Salvation is derived from *salvus,* "healthy" or "whole," and it can be applied to every act of healing: to the healing of sickness, of demonic possession, and of servitude to sin and to the ultimate power of death. Salvation in this sense takes place in time and history, just as revelation takes place in time and history. Revelation has an unshakable objective foundation in the event of Jesus as the Christ, and salvation is based on the same event, for this event unites the final power of salvation with the final truth of revelation. Revelation as it is received by man living under the conditions of existence is always fragmentary; so is salvation. Revelation and salvation are final, complete, and unchangeable with respect to the revealing and saving event; they are preliminary, fragmentary, and changeable with respect to the persons who receive revelatory truth and saving power. In terms of classical theology one could say that no one can receive revelation except through the divine Spirit and that, if someone is grasped by the divine Spirit, the center of his personality is transformed; he has received saving power.

One further argument against this equation still remains to be discussed. It may be asked whether a person who has lost the saving power of the New Being in Christ cannot, at the same time, still accept its revelatory truth. He may experience the revelation at his own condemnation. In such a situation salvation and revelation seem to be distinctly separated from each other. But this is not the case. As Luther frequently emphasized, the feeling of being rejected is the first and decisive step toward salvation; it is a basic part of the process of salvation. This element is never completely absent. Nor should it be absent, even in the moments when one experiences the strongest feeling of being saved. As long as the condemning function of revelation is experienced, saving power is effective. Neither sin nor despair, as such, proves the absence of saving power. The absence of saving power is expressed in flight from an ultimate concern and in the type of complacency which resists both the shaking experience of revelation and the transforming experience of salvation.

The identity of revelation and salvation leads to a further considera-

tion. Salvation and revelation are ambiguous in the process of time and history. Therefore, the Christian message points to an ultimate salvation which cannot be lost because it is reunion with the ground of being. This ultimate salvation is also the ultimate revelation, often described as the "vision of God." The mystery of being is present without the *paradoxa* of every revelation in time and space and beyond anything fragmentary and preliminary. This does not refer to the individual in isolation. Fulfilment is universal. A limited fulfilment of separated individuals would not be fulfilment at all, not even for these individuals, for no person is separated from other persons and from the whole of reality in such a way that he could be saved apart from the salvation of everyone and everything. One can be saved only within the Kingdom of God which comprises the universe. But the Kingdom of God is also the place where there is complete transparency of everything for the divine to shine through it. In his fulfilled kingdom, God is everything for everything. This is the symbol of ultimate revelation and ultimate salvation in complete unity. The recognition or nonrecognition of this unity is a decisive test of the character of a theology.

C. REASON IN FINAL REVELATION

9. Final Revelation Overcoming the Conflict of Autonomy and Heteronomy

Revelation is the answer to the questions implied in the existential conflicts of reason. After describing the meaning and actuality of revelation generally and of final revelation especially, we must show how final revelation answers the questions and overcomes the conflicts of reason in existence.

Revelation overcomes the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy by reestablishing their essential unity. We have discussed the meaning of the three concepts-autonomy, heteronomy, and theonomy. The question now is how theonomy is created by final revelation. Final revelation includes two elements which are decisive for the reunion of autonomy and heteronomy, the complete transparency of the ground of being in him who is the bearer of the final revelation, and the complete self-sacrifice of the medium to the content of revelation. The first element keeps autonomous reason from losing its depth and from becoming empty and open for demonic intrusions. The presence of the divine ground as it is manifest in Jesus as the Christ gives a spiritual substance to all forms of rational creativity. It gives them the dimension of depth,

and it unites them under symbols expressing this depth in rites and myths. The other element of final revelation, the self-sacrifice of the finite medium, keeps heteronomous reason from establishing itself against rational autonomy. Heteronomy is the authority claimed or exercised by a finite being in the name of the infinite. Final revelation does not make such a claim and cannot exercise such a power. If it did, it would become demonic and cease to be final revelation. Far from being heteronomous and authoritarian, final revelation liberates. "He who believes-in me does not believe in me," says Jesus in the Fourth Gospel,[7] destroying any heteronomous interpretation of his divine authority.

The church as the community of the New Being is the place where the new theonomy is actual. But from there it pours into the whole of man's cultural life and gives a Spiritual center to man's spiritual life. In the church as it should be, nothing is heteronomous in contrast to autonomous. And in man's spiritual life nothing is autonomous, in contrast to heteronomous, whenever spiritual life has an ultimate integration. Yet this is not the human situation. The church is not only the community of the New Being; it is also a sociological group immersed in the conflicts of existence. Therefore, it is subject to the almost irresistible temptation of becoming heteronomous and of suppressing autonomous criticism, eliciting just by this method autonomous reactions which often are strong enough to secularize not only culture but also the church itself. A heteronomous tide may then start the vicious circle again. But the church is never completely bereft of theonomous forces. There have been periods in the history of the church in which theonomy, though limited and destructible, was realized more than in other periods. This does not mean that these periods were morally better or intellectually more profound or in a more radical way ultimately concerned. It does mean that they were more aware of the "depth of reason," of the ground of autonomy, and of the uniting center without which spiritual life becomes shallow, disintegrates, and produces a vacuum into which demonic forces may enter.

Theonomous periods are periods in which rational autonomy is preserved in law and knowledge, in community and art. Where there is theonomy nothing which is considered true and just is sacrificed. Theonomous periods do not feel split, but whole and centered. Their center is neither their autonomous freedom nor their heteronomous authority but the depth of reason ecstatically experienced and symbolically ex-

7. John 12:44.

pressed. Myth and cult give them a unity in which all spiritual functions are centered. Culture is not controlled from outside by the church, nor is it left alone so that the community of the New Being stands beside it. Culture receives its substance and integrating power from the community of the New Being, from its symbols and its life.

Where theonomy determines a religious and cultural situation-however fragmentarily and ambiguously, as, for instance, in the early and high Middle Ages-reason is neither subject to revelation nor independent of it. Aesthetic reason does not obey ecclesiastical or political prescripts, nor does it produce secular art cut off from the depth of aesthetic reason; through its autonomous artistic forms it points to the New Being which has appeared in final revelation. In theonomy cognitive reason does not develop authoritatively enforced doctrines, nor does it pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge; it seeks in everything true an expression of the truth which is of ultimate concern, the truth of being as being, the truth which is present in the final revelation. Legal reason does not establish a system of sacred and untouchable laws, nor does it interpret the meaning of the law in technical-utilitarian terms; it relates the special as well as the basic laws of a society to the "justice of the Kingdom of God" and to the Logos of being as manifest in the final revelation. Communal reason does not accept communal forms dictated by sacred ecclesiastical or political authorities, nor does it surrender human relations to their growth and decay through will to power and libido; it relates them to the ultimate and universal community, the community of love, transforming the will to power by creativity and the libido by *agapē*. In very general terms, this is the meaning of theonomy. It is the task of a constructive theology of culture to apply these principles to the concrete problems of our cultural existence. Systematic theology must restrict itself to a statement of principles.

There are numerous descriptions of theonomy in Romanticism, numerous attempts to re-establish a theonomy according to the pattern of an idealized Middle Ages. Catholicism, too, demands a new theonomy, but what it really wants is the reestablishment of ecclesiastical heteronomy. Protestantism cannot accept the medieval pattern either in Romantic or in Roman terms. It must look forward to a new theonomy. Yet, in order to do so, it must know what theonomy means, and this it can find in the Middle Ages. In contrast to Romanticism, however, Protestantism is aware that a new theonomy cannot be created intentionally by autonomous reason. Autonomous reason is one side in the conflict between

autonomy and heteronomy and cannot overcome this conflict. Therefore, the Romantic quest for theonomy cannot be fulfilled except through final revelation and in unity with the church. The breakdown of Romantic art and philosophy, of Romantic ethics and politics (in an especially conspicuous way in the middle of the nineteenth century), shows that a new theonomy is not a matter of intention and good will but that it is a matter of historical destiny and grace. It is an effect of the final revelation which no autonomy can produce and which no heteronomy can prevent.

10. The Final Revelation Overcoming the Conflict of Absolutism and Relativism

Final revelation does not destroy reason; it fulfils reason. It liberates reason from the conflict between heteronomy and autonomy by giving the basis for a new theonomy, and it liberates reason from the conflict between absolutism and relativism by appearing in the form of a concrete absolute. In the New Being which is manifest in Jesus as the Christ, the most concrete of all possible forms of concreteness, a personal life, is the bearer of that which is absolute without condition and restriction. This concrete personal life has achieved what neither criticism nor pragmatism is able to accomplish, namely, to unite the conflicting poles of existential reason. As criticism, with its emphasis on the merely formal character of its principle, deceives itself about its assumed lack of absolutistic elements, so pragmatism, with its emphasis on complete openness for everything, deceives itself about *its* assumed lack of absolutistic elements. Neither of them faces the problem radically enough, because neither of them can give the solution. The solution can come only out of the depth of reason, not from its structure. It can come only from final revelation.

The logical form in which the perfectly concrete and the perfectly absolute are united is the paradox. All biblical and ecclesiastical assertions about the final revelation have a paradoxical character. They transcend ordinary opinion, not only preliminarily but definitively; they cannot be expressed in terms of the structure of reason but must be expressed in terms of the depth of reason. If they are expressed in ordinary terms, logically contradictory statements appear. But these contradictions are not the paradox, and no one is asked to "swallow" them as contradictions. This is not only impossible but destructive. The paradox is the reality to which the contradicting form points; it is the surprising, miraculous, and ecstatic way in which that which is the mystery of

being universally is manifest in time, space, and under the conditions of existence, in complete historical concreteness. Final revelation is not logical nonsense; it is a concrete event which on the level of rationality must be expressed in contradictory terms.'

The concrete side of final revelation appears in the picture of Jesus as the Christ. The paradoxical Christian claim is that this picture has unconditional and universal validity, that it is not subject to the attacks of positivistic or cynical relativism, that it is not absolutistic, whether in the traditional or the revolutionary sense, and that it cannot be achieved either by the critical or by the pragmatic compromise. It is unique and beyond all these conflicting elements and methods of existential reason. This implies above all that no special trait of this picture can be used as an absolute law. The final revelation does not give us absolute ethics, absolute doctrines, or an absolute ideal of personal and communal life. It gives us examples which point to that which is absolute; but the examples are not absolute in themselves. It belongs to the tragic character of all life that the church, although it is based on the concrete absolute, continuously tends to distort its paradoxical meaning and to transform the paradox into absolutisms of a cognitive and moral character. This necessarily provokes relativistic reactions. If Jesus is understood as the divine teacher of absolute theoretical and practical truth, the paradoxical nature of his appearance is misunderstood. If, in opposition to this misunderstanding, he is understood as a religious founder, conditioned by the situation of his time and by the structure of his personality, he is equally misunderstood. In the first case the concreteness is sacrificed; in the second case, the absoluteness. In both cases the paradox has disappeared. The New Being in Jesus as the Christ is the paradox of the final revelation. The words of Jesus and the apostles point to this New Being; they make it visible through stories, legends, symbols, paradoxical descriptions, and theological interpretations. But none of these expressions of the experience of the final revelation is final and absolute in itself. They are all conditioned, relative, open to change and additions.

The absolute side of the final revelation, that in it which is unconditional and unchangeable, involves the complete transparency and the complete self-sacrifice of the medium in which it appears. Every con-

8. It is not only bad theology but also a kind of ascetic arrogance when some theologians —since Tertullian—indulge in nonsensical combinations of words, demanding of all true Christians that in an act of intellectual s&-destruction they accept nonsense as "divine sense." The "foolishness" of the cross (Paul) has nothing to do with the assumedly good but actually demonic "work" of the sacrifice of mason.

crete occurrence in the event Jesus as the Christ discloses these qualities, No situation which Jesus faced and no act through which he met it establishes an absolutism of dogmatic or moral character. Both situation and act are transparent and not binding in themselves. Although potentially absolute, they are sacrificed in the moment they occur. Whoever makes Jesus the Christ into a giver of absolute laws for thinking and acting opens the dike for revolutionary revolt, on the one hand, and relativistic undercutting, on the other hand, both of them justifiable. There is, however, an absolute law which can stand under the criterion of finality because it is not denied in the act of self-sacrifice but rather fulfilled. The law of love is the ultimate law because it is the negation of law; it is absolute because it concerns everything concrete. The paradox of final revelation, overcoming the conflict between absolutism and relativism, is love. The love of Jesus as the Christ, which is the manifestation of the divine love-and only this-embraces everything concrete in self and world. Love is always love; that is its static and absolute side. But love is always dependent on that which is loved, and therefore it is unable to force finite elements on finite existence in the name of an assumed absolute. The absoluteness of love is its power to go into the concrete situation, to discover what is demanded by the predicament of the concrete to which it turns. Therefore, love can never become fanatical in a fight for an absolute, or cynical under the impact of the relative. This refers to all realms of rational creativity. Where the paradox of final revelation is present, neither cognitive nor aesthetic, neither legal nor communal, absolutes can stand. Love conquers them without producing cognitive skepticism or aesthetic chaos or lawlessness or estrangement.

The final revelation makes action possible. There is something paradoxical in every action; it always contains a conflict of absolutism and relativism. It is based on decision; but to decide for something as true or as good means excluding countless other possibilities. Every decision is, in some respect, absolutistic, resisting the skeptical temptation of *epochē* (not judging and not acting). It is a risk, rooted in the courage of being, threatened by the excluded possibilities, many of which might have been better and truer than the chosen one. These possibilities take their revenge, often in a very destructive way; and escape into non-action becomes very tempting. Final revelation conquers the conflict between the absolutistic character and the relativistic fate of every decision and action. It shows that the right decision must sacrifice its claim to be the right decision. There are no right decisions; there are trials and

defeats and successes. But there are decisions which are rooted in love, which by resigning the absolute do not fall into the relative. They are not exposed to the revenge of the excluded possibilities because they were and still are open for them. No decision can be annihilated; no action can be undone. But love gives meaning even to those decisions and actions which prove to be failures. The failures of love do not lead to resignation but to new decisions beyond absolutism and relativism. The final revelation overcomes the conflict between absolutism and relativism in active decisions. Love conquers the revenge of the excluded possibilities. It is absolute as love and relative in every love relationship.

11. The Final Revelation Overcoming the Conflict between Formalism and Emotionalism

When the mystery of being appears in a revelatory experience, the whole of the person's life participates. This means that reason is present both structurally and emotionally and that there is no conflict between these two elements. That which is the mystery of being and meaning is, at the same time, the ground of its rational structure and the power of our emotional participation in it. This refers to all functions of reason. Here it will be applied to the cognitive function alone. The problem of cognitive reason lies in the conflict between the element of union and the element of detachment in every cognitive act. Technical reason has given a tremendous preponderance to the side of detachment. What cannot be grasped by analytic reasoning is relegated to emotion. All the relevant problems of existence are thrown out of the realm of knowledge into the formless realm of emotion. Assertions about the meaning of life and the depth of reason are denied any truth value. Not only myth and cult but also aesthetic intuitions and communal relations are excluded from reason and cognition. They are considered to be emotional effusions without validity and criteria. There are Protestant theologians who accept this separation of form and emotion; in terms of a misinterpretation of Schleiermacher they put religion into the realm of mere emotion. But, in doing so, they deny the power of final revelation to overcome the split between form and emotion, cognitive detachment and cognitive union.

Early classical theologians believed in the power of final revelation to overcome this split. They used the concept ***gnosis,*** which means cognitive as well as mystical and sexual union. ***Gnosis*** does not contradict *epistēmē,* detached scientific knowledge. There can be no conflict, be-

cause the same Logos who taught the philosophers and legislators is the source of final revelation and teaches the Christian theologians. This solution of the Alexandrian school appears again and again in the history of the Christian thought, either transformed or attacked. Whenever it is accepted, though in many variations, the final revelation is considered to be that which conquers the conflict between theological and scientific knowledge, and implicitly also the conflict between emotion and form. Whenever the Alexandrian solution is rejected, the conflict between the two sides is deepened and made permanent. This happened in the medieval development from Duns Scotus to Ockham, in some expressions of the Reformation theology, in Pascal and Kierkegaard, in the neo-orthodox theology, and-on the opposite side-in naturalism and empiricism. In a surprising alliance orthodox theologians and rationalists deny the reunion of form and emotion in the final revelation. They deny the healing power of revelation in the conflicts of cognitive reason. But if final revelation is unable to heal the splits of cognitive reason, how could it heal the splits of reason in any of its functions? There cannot simultaneously be a reunited "heart" and an eternally split mind. Either healing embraces the cognitive function or nothing is healed. It is one of the merits of "existential" philosophy that it endeavors to reunite union and detachment. Certainly the emphasis is on union and participation; but detachment is not excluded. Otherwise existentialism would not be a philosophy but only a set of emotional exclamations.

Emotion within the cognitive realm does not deform a given structure; it opens it up. Yet it must be admitted that emotional distortions of truth occur incessantly. Passion, libido, will to power, rationalization, and ideology are the most persistent enemies of truth. It is understandable that emotion as such has been denounced as the archenemy of knowledge. But this leads to the consequence that in order to protect knowledge itself relevant knowledge has to be eliminated. It is the claim of final revelation that ultimately relevant knowledge is beyond this alternative, that that which can be grasped only with "infinite passion" (Kierkegaard) is identical with that which appears as the criterion in every act of rational knowledge. If it could not make this claim, Christianity either would have to abdicate, or it would become an instrument of the suppression of truth. The ultimate concern about the final revelation is as radically rational as it is radically emotional, and neither side can be eliminated without destructive consequences.

The conquest of the conflicts of existential reason is what can hc

called "saved reason." Actual reason needs salvation, as do all the other sides of man's nature and of reality generally. Reason is not excluded from the healing power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Theonomous reason, beyond the conflict of absolutism and relativism, of formalism and emptionalism—this is reason in revelation. Reason in revelation is neither confirmed in its state of conflict nor denied in its essential structure. But its essential structure is re-established under the conditions of existence, fragmentarily, yet really and in power. Religion and theology, therefore, should never attack reason as such, just as they should not attack the world as such or man as such. Undiscerning attacks of this kind drive Christianity into the Manichean camp, and much theological negativism about reason is more Manichean than Christian.

A final word about the nature of theology can be said on the basis of this description of reason in revelation and salvation. Theology obviously must use theonomous reason in order to explain the Christian message. This includes the fact that the conflict between the receiving and the shaping functions of reason is conquered in theological work. No one was more aware of this fact than the early Franciscan school, represented, for instance, by Alexander of Hales. They called theology a "practical" knowledge, pointing to what today, perhaps more adequately, is called "existential" knowledge. It is unfortunate that ever since the day of Thomas Aquinas this emphasis increasingly has been lost (together with the general loss of theonomy in all realms of life) and that the Reformers combined their rediscovery of the existential character of theology with a badly defined rejection of reason. If it is understood that reason receives revelation and that it is an object of salvation like every other element of reality, a theology which uses theonomous reason may again be possible.

D. THE GROUND OF REVELATION

12. God and the Mystery of Revelation

A consequence of the method used in apologetic theology is that the concept of revelation is approached from "below," from man in the situation of revelation, and not from "above," from the divine ground of revelation. But after the meaning and actuality of revelation have been discussed, the question of the ground of revelation arises.

The ground of revelation is not its "cause," in the categorical sense of the word "cause." It is the "ground of being" manifest in existence. The relation between the ground of being and its revelatory manifestations

can be expressed only in terms of finite actions originating in a highest being and transforming the course of finite events. This is unavoidable. In the same way the relation of the ground of revelation to those who receive revelation can be conceived only in personal categories; for that which is the ultimate concern of a person cannot be less than a person, although it can be and must be more than personality. Under these circumstances, the theologian must emphasize the symbolic character of all concepts which are used to describe the divine act of self-revelation, and he must try to use terms which indicate that their meaning is not categorical. "Ground" is such a term. It oscillates between cause and substance and transcends both of them. It indicates that the ground of revelation is neither a cause which keeps itself at a distance from the revelatory effect nor a substance which effuses itself into the effect, but rather the mystery which appears in revelation and which remains a mystery in its appearance.

The religious word for what is called the ground of being is God. A major difficulty of any systematic theology is that it presupposes all other parts in each of its parts. A doctrine of God as the ground of revelation presupposes the doctrine of Being and God, which, on the other hand, is dependent on the doctrine of revelation. At this point, therefore, it is necessary to anticipate some concepts which can be explained fully only within the context of the doctrine of God.

If we use the symbol "divine life," as we certainly must, we imply that there is an analogy between the basic structure of experienced life and the ground of being in which life is rooted. This analogy leads to the recognition of three elements which appear in different ways in all sections of systematic theology and which are the basis for the trinitarian interpretation of the final revelation.

The divine life is the dynamic unity of depth and form. In mystical language the depth of the divine life, its inexhaustible and ineffable character, is called "Abyss." In philosophical language the form, the meaning and structure element of the divine life, is called "Logos." In religious language the dynamic unity of both elements is called "Spirit." Theologians must use all three terms in order to point to the ground of revelation. It is the abysmal character of the divine life which makes revelation mysterious; it is the logical character of the divine life which makes the revelation of the mystery possible; and it is the spiritual character of the divine life which creates the correlation of miracle and ecstasy in which revelation can be received. Each of these three concepts which point to the ground of revelation must be used. If the abysmal character of the divine life is neglected, a rationalistic deism transforms revelation into information. If the logical character of the divine life is neglected, an irrationalistic theism transforms revelation into heteronomous subjection. If the spiritual character of the divine life is neglected, a history of revelation is impossible. The doctrine of revelation is based on a trinitarian interpretation of the divine life and its self-manifestation.

Revelation and salvation are elements of God's directing creativity. God directs the processes of individual, social, and universal life toward their fulfilrnent in the Kingdom of God. Revelatory experiences are imbedded in general experience. They are distinguished from it but not separated from it. World history is the basis of the history of revelation, and in the history of revelation world history reveals its mystery.

13. Final Revelation and the Word of God

The doctrine of revelation has been developed traditionally as a doctrine of the "Word of God." This is possible if Word is interpreted as the logos element in the ground of being, which is the interpretation which the classical Logos doctrine gave it. But the Word of God often is understood-half-literally, half-symbolically-as a spoken word, and a "theology of the Word" is presented which is a theology of the spoken word. This intellectualization of revelation runs counter to the sense of the Logos Christology. The Logos Christology was not overintellectualistic; actually it was a weapon against this danger. If Jesus as the Christ is called the Logos, Logos points to a revelatory reality, not to revelatory words. Taken seriously, the doctrine of the Logos prevents the elaboration of a theology of the spoken or the written word, which is the Protestant pitfall?

The term "Word of God" has six different meanings. The "Word" is first of all the principle of the divine self-manifestation in the ground of being itself. The ground is not only an abyss in which every form

9. This statement is a complete reversal of the doctrine of the Ritschlian school that the reception of Christianity by the Greek mind meant an intellectualization of Christianity. The Creek mind can be called "intellectualistic" only in its limited and distorted manifestations, but not as such. From the beginning to the end, knowledge means "union with the unchangeable," with the "really real." Metaphysical knowledge is existential; even in an empiricist and logician like Aristotle it has a mystical clement. The reduction of knowledge to detached observation for the sake of control is not Greek but modern. This understanding of Greek philosophy demands a reorientation of that type of interpretation of the history of dogma of which Harnack was the classical representative.

disappears; it also is the source from which every form emerges. The ground of being has the character of self-manifestation; it has logos character. This is not something added to the divine life; it is the divine life itself. In spite of its abysmal character the ground of being is "logical"; it includes its own logos.

Second, the Word is the medium of creation, the dynamic spiritual word which mediates between the silent mystery of the abyss of being and the fulness of concrete, individualized, self-related beings. Creation through the Word, in contrast to a process of emanation as elaborated in Neo-Platonism, points symbolically both to the freedom of creation and to the freedom of the created. The manifestation of the ground of being is spiritual, not mechanical (as it is, for instance, in Spinoza).

Third, the Word is the manifestation of the divine life in the history of revelation. It is the word received by all those who are in a revelatory correlation. If revelation is called the Word of God, this emphasizes the fact that all revelation, however subpersonal the medium may be, addresses itself to the centered self and must have *logos* character to be received by it. The ecstasy of revelation is not a-logos (irrational), although it is not produced by human reason. It is inspired, spiritual; it unites the abyss and the logos elements in the manifestation of the mystery.

Fourth, the Word is the manifestation of the divine life in the final revelation. The Word is a name for Jesus as the Christ. The Logos, the principle of all divine manifestation, becomes a being in history under the conditions of existence, revealing in this form the basic and determinative relation of the ground of being to us, symbolically speaking, the "heart of the divine life." The Word is not the sum of the words spoken by Jesus. It is the being of the Christ, of which his words and his deeds are an expression. Here the impossibility of identifying the Word with speech is so obvious that it is hard to understand how theologians who accept the doctrines of the Incarnation can maintain this confusion.

Fifth, the term Word is applied to the document of the final revelation and its special preparation, namely, the Bible. But if the Bible is called the Word of God, theological confusion is almost unavoidable. Such consequences as the dictation theory of inspiration, dishonesty in dealing with the biblical text, a "monophysitic" dogma of the infallibility of a book, etc., follow from such an identification. The Bible is the Word of God in two senses. It is the document of the final revelation; and it participates in the final revelation of which it is the document. Probably

nothing has contributed more to the misinterpretation of the biblical doctrine of the Word than the identification of the Word with the Bible.

Sixth, the message of the church as proclaimed in her preaching and teaching is called the Word. In so far as Word means the objective message which is given to the church and which should be spoken to her, it is the Word in the same sense in which the biblical revelation or any other revelation is the Word. But in so far as Word means the actual preaching of the church, it might be only words and not the Word at all, mere human speech without divine manifestation in it. The Word depends not only on the meaning of the words of preaching alone but also on the power with which they are spoken. And it depends not only on the understanding of the listener alone but also on his existential reception of the content. Nor does the Word depend on the preacher or the listener alone, but on both in correlation. These four factors and their interdependence constitute the "constellation" in which human words may become the Word, divine self-manifestation. They may and they may not become the Word. Therefore, no activity of the church can be carried through with the certainty that it expresses the Word. No minister should claim more than his intention to speak the Word when he preaches. He never should claim that he has spoken it or that he will be able to speak it in the future, for, since he has no power over the revelatory constellation, he possesses no power to preach the Word. He may speak mere words, theologically correct though they may be. And he may speak the Word, though his formulations are theologically incorrect. Finally, the mediator of revelation may not be a preacher or religious teacher at all but simply someone whom we meet and whose words become the Word for us in a special constellation.

The many different meanings of the term "Word" are all united in one meaning, namely, "God manifest"—manifest in himself, in creation, in the history of revelation, in the final revelation, in the Bible, in the words of the church and her members. "God manifest"-the mystery of the divine abyss expressing itself through the divine Logos-this is the meaning of the symbol, the "Word of God."

PART II
BEING AND GOD

I

BEING AND THE QUESTION OF GOD

INTRODUCTION: THE QUESTION OF BEING

The basic theological question is the question of God. God is the answer to the question implied in being. The problem of reason and revelation is secondary to that of being and God, although it was discussed first. Like everything else, reason has being, participates in being, and is logically subordinate to being. Therefore, in the analysis of reason and of the questions implied in its existential conflicts we have been forced to anticipate concepts which are derived from an analysis of being. In proceeding from the correlation of reason and revelation to that of being and God, we move to the more fundamental consideration; in traditional terms, we move from the epistemological to the ontological question. The ontological question is: What is being itself? What is that which is not a special being or a group of beings, not something concrete or something abstract, but rather something which is always thought implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, if something is said to be? Philosophy asks the question of being as being. It investigates the character of everything that is in so far as it is. This is its basic task, and the answer it provides determines the analysis of all special forms of being. It is "first philosophy," or, if the term still could be used, "metaphysics." Since the connotations of the term "metaphysics" make its use precarious, the word "ontology" is preferable. The ontological question, the question of being-itself, arises in something like a "metaphysical shock" -the shock of possible nonbeing. This shock often has been expressed in the question, "Why is there something; why not nothing?" But in this form the question is meaningless, for every possible answer would be subject to the same question in an infinite regression. Thought must start with being; it cannot go behind it, as the form of the question itself shows. If one asks why there *is* not nothing, one attributes being even to nothing. Thought is based on being, and it cannot leave this basis; but thought can imagine the negation of everything that is, and it can describe the nature and structure of being which give everything

that is the power of resisting nonbeing. Mythology, cosmogony, and metaphysics have asked the question of being both implicitly and explicitly and have tried to answer it. It is the ultimate question, although fundamentally it is the expression of a state of existence rather than a formulated question. Whenever this state is experienced and this question is asked, everything disappears in the abyss of possible nonbeing; even a god would disappear if he were not being-itself. But if everything special and definite disappears in the light of the ultimate question, one must ask how an answer is possible. Does this not mean that ontology is reduced to the empty tautology that being is being? Is not the term "structure of being" a contradiction in terms, saying that that which is beyond every structure itself has a structure?

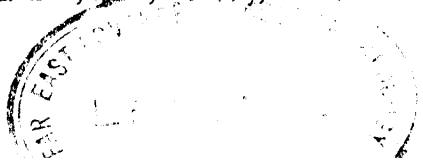
Ontology is possible because there are concepts which are less universal than being but more universal than any ontic concept, that is, more universal than any concept designating a realm of beings. Such concepts have been called "principles" or "categories" or "ultimate notions." The human mind has worked for thousands of years in their discovery, elaboration, and organization. But no agreement has been reached, although certain concepts reappear in almost every ontology. Systematic theology cannot, and should not, enter into the ontological discussion as such. Yet it can and must consider these central concepts from the point of view of their theological significance. Such consideration, demanded in every part of the theological system, may well influence the ontological analysis indirectly. But the arena of ontological discussion is not the theological arena, although the theologian must be familiar in it.

It is possible to distinguish four levels of ontological concepts: (1) the basic ontological structure which is the implicit condition of the ontological question; (2) the elements which constitute the ontological structure; (3) the characteristics of being which are the conditions of existence; and (4) the categories of being and knowing. Each of these levels demands a special analysis. Only a few remarks concerning their general ontological character are necessary at this point.

The ontological question presupposes an asking subject and an object about which the question is asked; it presupposes the subject-object structure of being, which in turn presupposes the self-world structure as the basic articulation of being. The self having a world to which it belongs -this highly dialectical structure--logically and experientially precedes all other structures. Its analysis should be the first step in every ontological task. The second level of ontological analysis deals with the elements which constitute the basic structure of being. They share the polar character of the basic structure, and it is just their polarity that makes them principles by preventing them from becoming highest generic concepts. One can imagine a realm of nature beside or outside the realm of history, but there is no realm of dynamics without form or of individuality without universality. The converse also is true. Each pole is meaningful only in so far as it refers by implication to the opposite pole. Three outstanding pairs of elements constitute the basic ontological structure: individuality and universality, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. In these three polarities the first element expresses the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself, while the second element expresses the belongingness of being, its character of being a part of a universe of being.

The third level of ontological concepts expresses the power of being to exist and the difference between essential and existential being. Both in experience and in analysis being manifests the duality of essential and existential being. There is no ontology which can disregard these two aspects, whether they are hypostasized into two realms (Plato), or combined in the polar relation of potentiality and actuality (Aristotle), or contrasted with each other (Schelling II, Kierkegaard, Heidegger), or derived from each other, either existence from essence (Spinoza, Hegel) or essence from existence (Dewey, Sartre). In all these ontologies the duality of essential and existential being is seen, and the question of their relation to one another and to being-itself is asked. The answer is prepared by the polarity of freedom and destiny on the second level of ontological analysis. However, freedom as such is not the basis of existence, but rather freedom in unity with finitude. Finite freedom is the turning point from being to existence. Therefore, it is the analysis of finitude in its polarity with infinity as well as in its relation to freedom and destiny, to being and nonbeing, to essence and existence, which is the task of ontology in the third level.

The fourth level deals with those concepts which traditionally have been called categories, that is, the basic forms of thought and being. They participate in the nature of finitude and can be called structures of finite being and thinking. To determine their number and organization is one of the infinite tasks of philosophy. From the theological point of view four main categories must be analyzed: time, space, causality, and sub-



stance.[1] Categories like quantity and quality have no direct theological significance and are not especially discussed. Other concepts which often have been called "categories," like movement and rest, or unity and manifoldness, are treated implicitly on the second level of analysis, movement and rest in connection with dynamics and form, unity and manifoldness in connection with individuality and universality. The polar character of these concepts puts them on the level of the elements of the basic ontological structure and not on the level of the categories. Finally, it must be stated that two of the *transcendentalia* of scholastic philosophy, the true and the good (*verum, bonum*), usually combined with being and oneness (esse, unum), do not belong to pure ontology, because they are meaningful only in relation to a judging subject. Their ontological foundation, however, is discussed in connection with the duality of essence and existence.

Since it is the purpose of this section of the theological system to develop the question of God as the question implied in being, the concept of finitude is the center of the following analysis, for it is the finitude of being which drives us to the question of God.

First, however, it is necessary to say something about the epistemological character of all ontological concepts. Ontological concepts are a priori in the strict sense of the word. They determine the nature of experience. They are present whenever something is experienced. A priori does not mean that ontological concepts are known prior to experience. They should not be attacked as if this were meant. On the contrary, they are products of a critical analysis of experience. Nor does a priori mean that the ontological concepts constitute a static and unchangeable structure which, once discovered, will always be valid. The structure of experience may have changed in the past and may change in the future, but, while such a possibility cannot be excluded, there is no reason for using it as an argument against the a priori character of ontological concepts.

Those concepts are a priori which are presupposed in every actual experience, since they constitute the very structure of experience itself. The conditions of experience are a priori. If these conditions change—and with them the structure of experience-another set of conditions must make it possible to have experience. This situation will persist

1. If time and space arc called "categories," this is a deviation from the Kantian terminology which calls time and space forms of intuition. But the larger sense of category has been accepted generally, even in the post-Kantian schools.

as long as it is meaningful to speak of experience at all. As long as there is experience in any definite sense of the word, there is a structure of experience which can be recognized within the process of experiencing and which can be elaborated critically. Process philosophy is justified in its attempt to dissolve into processes everything which seems to be static. But it would become absurd if it tried to dissolve the structure of process into a process. This simply would mean that what we know as process has been superseded by something else, the nature of which is unknown at present. In the meantime, every philosophy of process has an explicit or implicit ontology which is aprioristic in character.

This also is the answer to historical relativism, which denies the possibility of an ontological or a theological doctrine of man by arguing as follows: since man's nature changes in the historical process, nothing ontologically definite or theologically relevant can be affirmed with regard to it; and since the doctrine of man (i.e., his freedom, his finitude, his existential predicament, his historical creativity), is the main entrance for ontology and the main point of reference for theology, neither ontology nor theology is really possible. Such a criticism would remain unanswerable if the ontological and the theological doctrines of man claimed to deal with an unchangeable structure called human nature. Although such a claim often has been attempted, it is not necessary. Human nature changes in history. Process philosophy is right in this. But human nature changes in ***history.*** The structure of a being ***which has history*** underlies all historical changes. This structure is the subject of an ontological and a theological doctrine of man. Historical man is a descendant of beings who had no history, and perhaps there will be beings who are descendants of historical man who have no history. This simply means that neither animals nor supermen are the objects of a doctrine of man. Ontology and theology deal with historical man as he is given in present experience and in historical memory. An anthropology which transcends these limits, empirically toward the past or speculatively toward the future, is not a doctrine of man. It is a doctrine of the biological preparation for, or the biological continuation of, what in a special stage of the universal development was and is and perhaps will be historical man. In this case, as in all others, ontology and theology establish a relatively but not absolutely static a priori, overcoming the alternatives of absolutism and relativism which threaten to destroy both of them.

This agrees with a powerful tradition in classical ontology and the-

ology represented by voluntarism and nominalism. Even before Duns Scotus, theologians rejected the "realistic" attempts to fix God to a static structure of being. In Duns Scotus and all ontology and theology influenced by him-up to Bergson and Heidegger-an element of ultimate indeterminacy is seen in the ground of being. God's ***potestas absoluta*** is a perennial threat to any given structure of things. It undercuts any absolute apriorism, but it does not remove ontology and the relatively a priori structures with which ontology is concerned.

A. THE BASIC ONTOLOGICAL STRUCTURE SELF AND WORLD

1. MAN, SELF, AND WORLD

Every being participates in the structure of being, but man alone is immediately aware of this structure. It belongs to the character of existence that man is estranged from nature, that he is unable to understand it in the way he can understand man. He can describe the behavior of all beings, but he does not know directly what their behavior means to them. This is the truth of the behaviorist method-ultimately a tragic truth. It expresses the strangeness of all beings to each other. We can approach other beings only in terms of analogy and, therefore, only indirectly and uncertainly. Myth and poetry have tried to overcome this limitation of our cognitive function. Knowledge either has resigned itself to failure or has transformed the world, aside from the knowing subject, into a vast machine of which all living beings, including man's body, are mere parts (Cartesians) .

However, there is a third possibility, based on an understanding of man as that being in whom all levels of being are united and approachable. Consciously or unconsciously, ontology in all its forms has used this possibility. Man occupies a preeminent position in ontology, not as an outstanding object among other objects, but as that being who asks the ontological question and in whose self-awareness the ontological answer can be found. The old tradition-expressed equally by mythology and mysticism, by poetry and metaphysics-that the principles which constitute the universe must be sought in man is indirectly and involuntarily confirmed, even by the behavioristic self-restriction. "Philosophers of life" and "Existentialists" have reminded us in our time of this truth on which ontology depends. Characteristic in this respect is Heidegger's method in *Sein und Zeit.* He calls "Dasein" ("being there") the place where the structure of being is manifest. But "Dasein" is given to man

within himself. Man is able to answer the ontological question himself because he experiences directly and immediately the structure of being and its elements.

This approach must, however, be protected against a fundamental misunderstanding. It in no way assumes that man is more easily accessible as an object of knowledge, physical or psychological, than are nonhuman objects. Just the contrary is asserted. Man is the most difficult object encountered in the cognitive process. The point is that man is aware of the structures which make cognition possible. He lives in them and acts through them. They are immediately present to him. They are he himself. Any confusion on this point has destructive consequences. The basic structure of being and all its elements and the conditions of existence lose their meaning and their truth if they are seen as objects among objects. If the self is considered to be a thing among things, its existence is questionable; if freedom is thought to be a thing among things, its existence is questionable; if freedom is thought to be a quality of will, it loses out to necessity; if finitude is understood in terms of measurement, it has no relation to the infinite. The truth of all ontological concepts is their power of expressing that which makes the subject-object structure possible. They constitute this structure; they are not controlled by it.

Man experiences himself as having a world to which he belongs. The basic ontological structure is derived from an analysis of this complex dialectical relationship. Self-relatedness is implied in every experience. There is something that "has" and something that is "had," and the two are one. The question is not whether selves exist. The question is whether we are aware of self-relatedness. And this awareness can only be denied in a statement in which self-relatedness is implicitly affirmed. for self-relatedness is experienced in acts of negation as well as in acts of affirmation. A self is not a thing that may or may not exist; it is an original phenomenon which logically precedes all questions of existence.

The term "self" is more embracing than the term "ego." It includes the subconscious and the unconscious "basis" of the self-conscious ego as well as self-consciousness (*cogitatio* in the Cartesian sense). Therefore, selfhood or self-centeredness must be attributed in some measure to all living beings and, in terms of analogy, to all individual *Gestalten* even in the inorganic realm. One can speak of self-centeredness in atoms as well as in animals, wherever the reaction to a stimulus is dependent on a structural whole. Man is a fully developed and completely centered

self. He "possesses" himself in the form of self-consciousness. He has an ego-self.

Being a self means being separated in some way from everything else, having everything else opposite one's self, being able to look at it and to act upon it. At the same time, however, this self is aware that it belongs to that at which it looks. The self is "in" it. Every self has an environment in which it lives, and the ego-self has **a** world in which it lives. All beings have an environment which is ***their*** environment. Not everything that can be found in the space in which an animal lives belongs to its environment. Its environment consists in those things with which it has an active interrelation. Different beings within the same limited space have different environments. Each being ***has*** an environment, although it belongs to its environment. The mistake of all theories which explain the behavior of a being in terms of environment alone is that they fail to explain the special character of the environment in terms of the special character of the being which ***has*** such an environment. Self and environment determine each other.

Because man has an ego-self, he transcends every possible environment. Man has a world. Like environment, world is a correlative concept. Man ***has*** a world, although he is in it at the same time. "World" is not the sum total of all beings-an inconceivable concept. As the Greek *kosmos* and the Latin *universum* indicate, "world" is a structure or a unity of manifoldness. If we say that man has a world at which he looks, from which he is separated and to which he belongs, we think of a structured whole even though we may describe this world in pluralistic terms. The whole opposite man is ***one*** at least in this respect, that it is related to us perspectively, however discontinuous it may be in itself. Every pluralistic philosopher speaks of the pluralistic character of the world, thus implicitly rejecting an absolute pluralism. The world is the structural whole which includes and transcends all environments, not only those of beings which lack a fully developed self, but also the environments in which man partially lives. As long as he is human, that is, as long as he has not "fallen" from humanity (e.g., in intoxication or insanity), man never is bound completely to an environment. He always transcends it by grasping and shaping it according to universal norms and ideas. Even in the most limited environment man possesses the universe; he has a world. Language, as the power of universals, is the basic expression of man's transcending his environment, of having a world. The

ego-self is that self which can speak and which by speaking trespasses the boundaries of any given situation.

When man looks at his world, he looks at himself as an infinitely small part of his world. Although he is the perspective-center, he becomes a particle of what is centered in him, a particle of the universe. This structure enables man to encounter himself. Without its world the self would be an empty form. Self-consciousness would have no content, for every content, psychic as well as bodily, lies within the universe. There is no self-consciousness without world-consciousness, but the converse also is true. World-consciousness is possible only on the basis of a fully developed self-consciousness. Man must be completely separated from his world in order to look at it as a world. Otherwise he would remain in the bondage of mere environment. The interdependence of ego-self and world is the basic ontological structure and implies all the others.

Both sides of the polarity are lost if either side is lost. The self without a world is empty; the world without a self is dead. The subjective idealism of philosophers like Fichte is unable to reach the world of contents unless the ego makes an irrational leap into its opposite, the non-ego. The objective realism of philosophers like Hobbes is unable to reach the form of self-relatedness without an irrational leap from the movement of things into the ego. Descartes tried desperately and unsuccessfully to reunite the empty *cogitatio* of the pure ego with the mechanical movement of dead bodies. Whenever the self-world correlation is cut, no reunion is possible. On the other hand, if the basic structure of self-world relatedness is affirmed, it is possible to show how this structure might disappear from cognitive view because of the subject-object structure of reason, which is rooted in the self-world correlation and which grows out of it.

2. The Logical and the Ontological Object

The self-world polarity is the basis of the subject-object structure of reason. It was not possible, except by anticipation, to discuss this structure in Part I before discussing the self-world polarity. The relation between the self-world polarity and the subject-object structure must now be explained.

We have described the world as a structured whole, and we have called its structure "objective reason." We have described the self as a structure of centeredness, and we have called this structure "subjective reason." And we have stated that these correspond to each other, without, however, giving any special interpretation of the correspondence.

Reason makes the self a self, namely, a centered structure; and reason makes the world a world, namely, a structured whole. Without reason, without the logos of being, being would be chaos, that is, it would not be being but only the possibility of it (me on). But where there is reason there are a self and a world in interdependence. The function of the self in which it actualizes its rational structure is the mind, the bearer of subjective reason. Looked at by the mind, the world is reality, the bearer of objective reason.

The terms "subject" and "object" have had a long history during which their meanings practically traded places. Originally subjective meant that which has independent being, a hypostasis of its own. Objective meant that which is in the mind as its content. Today, especially under the influence of the great British empiricists, that which is real is said to have objective being, while that which is in the mind is said to have subjective being. We must follow the present terminology, but we must go beyond it.

In the cognitive realm everything toward which the cognitive act is directed is considered an object, be it God or a stone, be it one's self or a mathematical definition. In the logical sense everything about which a predication is made is, by this very fact, an object. The theologian cannot escape making God an object in the logical sense of the word, just as the lover cannot escape making the beloved an object of knowledge and action. The danger of logical objectification is that it never is merely logical. It carries ontological presuppositions and implications. If God is brought into the subject-object structure of being, he ceases to be the ground of being and becomes one being among others (first of all, a being beside the subject who looks at him as an object). He ceases to be the God who is really God. Religion and theology are aware of the danger of religious objectification. They attempt to escape the unintentional blasphemy implied in this situation in several ways. Prophetic religion denies that one can "see" God, for sight is the most objectifying sense. If there is a knowledge of God, it is God who knows himself through man. God remains the subject, even if he becomes a logical object (cf. I Cor. 13: 12). Mysticism tries to overcome the objectifying scheme by an ecstatic union of man and God, analogous to the erotic relation in which there is a drive toward a moment in which the difference between lover and beloved is extinguished. Theology always must remember that in speaking of God it makes an object of that which precedes the subject-object structure and that, therefore, it must include in its speaking of God the acknowledgment that it cannot make God an object.

But there is a third sense in which the objectifying scheme is used. Making an object can mean depriving it of its subjective elements, making it into something which is an object and nothing *but* an object. Such an object is a "thing," in German a Ding, something which is altogether *bedingt* ("conditioned"). The word "thing" does not necessarily have this connotation; it can stand for everything that is. But it is counter to our linguistic feeling to- call human beings "things." They are more than things and more than mere objects. They are selves and therefore bearers of subjectivity. Metaphysical theories as well as social institutions in which selves are transformed into things contradict truth and justice, for they contradict the basic ontological structure of being, the self-world polarity in which every being participates in varying degrees of approximation to the one or the other pole. The fully developed human personality represents one pole, the mechanical tool the other. The term "thing" is most adequately applied to the tool. It is almost devoid of subjectivity. But not completely. Its constitutive elements, taken from inorganic nature, have some unique structures which cannot be ignored, and it itself possesses-or should possess-an artistic form, in which its purpose is visibly expressed. Even everyday tools are not merely things. Everything resists the fate of being considered or treated as a mere thing, as an object which has no subjectivity. This is the reason why ontology cannot begin with things and try to derive the structure of reality from them. That which is completely conditioned, which has no selfhood and subjectivity, cannot explain self and subject. Whoever attempts to do this must introduce surreptitiously into the nature of objectivity the very subjectivity which he wants to derive from it.

According to Parmenides, the basic ontological structure is not being but the unity of being and the word, the logos in which it is grasped. Subjectivity is not an epiphenomenon, a derived appearance. It is an original phenomenon, although only and always in polar relation with objectivity. The way in which recent naturalism has disavowed its former reductionist methods, for example, reducing everything to physical objects and their movements, suggests an increasing insight into the impossibility of deriving subjectivity from objectivity. In the practical realm the widespread resistance against the objectifying tendencies in industrial society, first in its capitalistic and then in its totalitarian forms, suggests that there is a realization that making man into a part of even

the most useful machine means dehumanization, destruction of man’s essential subjectivity. Past and present existentialism, in all its varieties, is united in protesting against the theoretical and practical forms of surrendering the subject to the object, the self to the thing. An ontology which begins with the self-world structure of being and the subject-object structure of reason is protected against the danger of surrendering the subject to the object.

It is also protected against the opposite danger. It is just as impossible to derive the object from the subject as it is to derive the subject from the object. Idealism in all its forms has discovered that there is no way from the “absolute ego” to the non-ego, from the absolute consciousness to the nonconscious, from the absolute self to the world, from the pure subject to the objective structure of reality. In each case that which is supposed to be derived is surreptitiously slipped into that from which it is to be derived. This trick of deductive idealism is the precise counterpart of the trick of reductive naturalism.

The motive behind the different forms of the philosophy of identity was insight into the situation. But the insight did not go far enough. The relation of subject and object is not that of an identity from which neither subjectivity nor objectivity can be derived. The relation is one of polarity. The basic ontological structure cannot be derived. It must be accepted. The question, “What precedes the duality of self and world, of subject and object?” is a question in which reason looks into its own abyss-an abyss in which distinction and derivation disappear. Only revelation can answer this question.

B. THE ONTOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

3. Individualization and Participation

According to Plato, the idea of difference is “spread over all things.” Aristotle could call individual beings the *telos,* the inner aim, of the process of actualization. According to Leibniz, no absolutely equal things can exist, since precisely their differentiation from each other makes their independent existence possible. In the biblical creation stories God produces individual beings and not universals, Adam and Eve rather than the ideas of manhood and womanhood. Even Neo-Platonism, in spite of its ontological “realism,” accepted the doctrine that there are ideas (eternal archetypes) not only of the species but also of individuals. Individualization is not a characteristic of a special sphere of beings; it is an ontological element and therefore a ***quality*** of every-

thing. It is implied in and constitutive of every self, which means that at least in an analogous way it is implied in and constitutive of every being. The very term “individual” points to the interdependence of self-relatedness and individualization. A self-centered being cannot be divided. It can be destroyed, or it can be deprived of certain parts out of which new self-centered beings emerge (e.g., regeneration of structure in some lower animals). In the latter case either the old self has ceased to exist and is replaced by new selves or the old self remains, diminished in extension and power for the sake of the new selves. But in no case is the center itself divided. This is as impossible as the partition of a mathematical point. Selfhood and individualization are different conceptually, but actually they are inseparable.

Man not only is completely self-centered; he also is completely individualized. And he is the one because he is the other. The species is dominant in all nonhuman beings, even in the most highly developed animals; essentially the individual is an examplar, representing in an individual way the universal characteristics of the species. Although the individualization of a plant or an animal is expressed even in the smallest part of its centered whole, it is significant only in unity with individual persons or unique historical events. The individuality of a nonhuman being gains significance if it is drawn into the processes of human life. But only then. Man is different. Even in coliectivistic societies the individual as the bearer and, in the last analysis, the aim of the collective is significant rather than the species. Even the most despotic state claims to exist for the benefit of its individual subjects. Law, by its very nature, is based on the valuation of the individual as unique, unexchangeable, inviolable, and therefore to be protected and made responsible at the same time. The individual is a person in the sight of the law. The original meaning of the word “person” (persona, ***prosopon)*** points to the actor’s mask which makes him a definite character.

Historically this has not always been acknowledged by systems of law. In many cultures the law has not recognized everyone as a person. Anatomical equality has not been considered a sufficient basis for the valuation of every man as a person. Personal standing has been denied to slaves, children, women. They have not attained full individualization in many cultures because they have been unable to participate fully; and, conversely, they have been unable to participate fully because they have not been fully individualized. No process of emancipation was begun until the Stoic philosophers fought successfully for the doctrine that

every human being participates in the universal logos. The uniqueness of every person was not established until the Christian church acknowledged the universality of salvation and the potentiality of every human being to participate in it. This development illustrates the strict interdependence of individuality and participation on the level of complete individualization, which is, at the same time, the level of complete participation.

The individual self participates in his environment or, in the case of complete individualization, in his world. An individual leaf participates in the natural structures and forces which act upon it and which are acted upon by it. This is the reason why philosophers like Cusanus and Leibniz have asserted that the whole universe is present in every individual, although limited by its individual limitations. There are microcosmic qualities in every being, but man alone is ***microcosmos.*** In him the world is present not only indirectly and unconsciously but directly and in a conscious encounter. Man participates in the universe through the rational structure of mind and reality. Considered environmentally, he participates in a very small section of reality; he is surpassed in some respects by migrating animals. Considered cosmically, he participates in the universe because the universal structures, forms, and laws are open to him. And with them everything which can be grasped and shaped through them is open to him. Actually man's participation always is limited. Potentially there are no' limits he could not transcend. The universals make man universal; language proves that he is ***microcosmos.*** Through the universals man participates in the remotest stars and the remotest past. This is the ontological basis for the assertion that knowledge is union and that it is rooted in the ***erōs*** which reunites elements which essentially belong to each other.

When individualization reaches the perfect form which we call a "person," participation reaches the perfect form which we call "communion." Man participates in all levels of life, but he participates fully only in that level of life which he is himself-he has communion only with persons. Communion is participation in another completely centered and completely individual self. In this sense communion is not something an individual might or might not have. Participation is essential for the individual, not accidental, No individual exists without participation, and no personal being exists without communal being. The person as the fully developed individual self is impossible without other fully developed selves. If he did not meet the resistance of other selves,

every self would try to make himself absolute. But the resistance of the other selves is unconditional. One individual can conquer the entire world of objects, but he cannot conquer another person without destroying him as a person. The individual discovers himself through this resistance. If he does not want to destroy the other person, he must enter into communion with him. In the resistance of the other person the person is born. Therefore, there is no person without an encounter with other persons, Persons can grow only in the communion of personal encounter. Individualization and participation are interdependent on all levels of being.

The concept of participation has many functions. A symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes; the knower participates in the known; the lover participates in the beloved; the existent participates in the essences which make it what it is, under the condition of existence; the individual participates in the destiny of separation and guilt; the Christian participates in the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus the Christ. In polarity with individualization, participation underlies the category of relation as a basic ontological element. Without individualization nothing would exist to be related. Without participation the category of relation would have no basis in reality. Every relation includes a kind of participation., This is true even of indifference or hostility. Nothing can make one hostile in which one does not somehow participate, perhaps in the form of being excluded from it. And nothing can produce the attitude of indifference whose existence has not made some difference to one. The element of participation guarantees the unity of a disrupted world and makes a universal system of relations possible.

The polarity of individualization and participation solves the problem of nominalism and realism which has shaken and almost disrupted Western civilization. According to nominalism, only the individual has ontological reality; universals are verbal signs which point to similarities between individual things. Knowledge, therefore, is not participation. It is an external act of grasping and controlling things. Controlling knowledge is the epistemological expression of a nominalistic ontology; empiricism and positivism are its logical consequences. But pure nominalism is untenable. Even the empiricist must acknowledge that everything approachable by knowledge must have the structure of "being knowable." And this structure includes by definition a mutual participation of the knower and the known. Radical nominalism is unable to make the process of knowledge understandable.

"Realism" must be subjected to the same scrutiny. The word indicates that the universals, the essential structures of things, are the really real in them.[2] "Mystical realism" emphasizes participation over against individualization, the participation of the individual in the universal and the participation of the knower in the known. In this respect realism is correct and able to make knowledge understandable. But it is wrong if it establishes a second reality behind empirical reality and makes of the structure of participation a level of being in which individuality and personality disappear.

4. Dynamics and Form

Being is inseparable from the logic of being, the structure which makes it what it is and which gives reason the power of grasping and shaping it. "Being something" means having a form. According to the polarity of individualization and participation, there are special and general forms, but in actual being these never are separated. Through their union every being becomes a definite being. Whatever loses its form loses its being. Form should not be contrasted with content. The form which makes a thing what it is, is its content, its ***essentia,*** its definite power of being. The form of a tree is what makes it a tree, what gives it the general character of treehood as well as the special and unique form of an individual tree.

The separation of form and content becomes a problem in man's cultural activity. Here given materials, things, or events which have their natural form are transformed by man's rational functions. A landscape has a natural form which is, at the same time, its content. The artist uses the natural form of a landscape as material for an artistic creation whose content is not the material but rather what has been made of the material. One can distinguish (as Aristotle did) between form and material. But even in the cultural sphere a distinction between form and content cannot be made. The problem of formalism (see above, pp. 89 ff.) is a problem of attitude. The question is not whether a certain form is adequate to a certain material. The question is whether a cultural creation is the expression of a spiritual substance or whether it is a mere form without such substance. Every type of material can be shaped by every form as long as the form is genuine, that is, as long as it is an

2. The word "realism" means today almost what "nominalism" meant in the Middle Ages, while the "realism" of the Middle Ages expresses almost exactly what we call "idealism" today. It might be suggested that, whenever one speaks of classical realism, one should call it "mystical realism."

immediate expression of the basic experience out of which the artist lives-in unity with his period as well as in conflict with it. If he fails to use such forms and instead uses forms which have ceased to be expressive, the artist is a formalist irrespective of whether the forms are traditional or revolutionary. A revolutionary style can become as formalistic as a conservative style. The criterion is the expressive power of a form and not a special style.

These considerations point to the other element in the polarity of form and dynamics. Every form forms something. The question is: What is this "something"? We have called it "dynamics," a very complex concept with a rich history and many connotations and implications. The problematic character of this concept, and of all concepts related to it, is due to the fact that everything which can be conceptualized must have being and that there is no being without form. Dynamics, therefore, cannot be thought as something that is; nor can it be thought as something that is not. It is the ***me on,*** the potentiality of being, which is nonbeing in contrast to things that have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure nonbeing. This highly dialectical concept is not an invention of the philosophers. It underlies most mythologies and is indicated in the chaos, the ***tohu-va-bohu,*** the night, the emptiness, which precedes creation. It appears in metaphysical speculations as *Urgrund* (Böhme), will '(Schopenhauer), will to power (Nietzsche), the unconscious (Hartmann, Freud), ***élan vital*** (Bergson), strife (Scheler, Jung). None of these concepts is to be taken conceptually. Each of them points symbolically to that which cannot be named. If it could be named properly, it would be a formed being beside other beings instead of an ontological element in polar contrast with the element of pure form. Therefore, it is unfair to criticize these concepts on the basis of their literal meaning. Schopenhauer's "will" is not the psychological function called "will." And the "unconscious" of Hartmann and Freud is not a "room" which can be described as though it were a cellar filled with things which once belonged to the upper rooms in which the sun of consciousness shines. The unconscious is mere potentiality, and it should not be painted in the image of the actual. The other descriptions of "that which does not yet have being" must be interpreted in the same way, that is, analogically.

In Greek philosophy nonbeing, or matter, was an ultimate principle—the principle of resistance against form. Christian theology, however, has had to try to deprive it of its independence and to seek a place for it

in the depth of the divine life. The doctrine of God as *actus purus* prevented Thomism from solving the problem, but Protestant mysticism, using motifs of Duns Scotus and Luther, tried to introduce a dynamic element into the vision of the divine life. Late Romanticism as well as the philosophies of life and of process have followed this line, though always in danger of losing the divinity of the divine in their attempts to transform the static God of the *actus purus* into the living God. It is obvious, however, that any ontology which suppresses the dynamic element in the structure of being is unable to explain the nature of a life-process and to speak meaningfully of the divine life.

The polarity of dynamics and form appears in man's immediate experience as the polar structure of vitality and intentionality. Both terms need justification and explanation. Vitality is the power which keeps a living being alive and growing. *Élan vital* is the creative drive of the living substance in everything that lives toward new forms. However, a narrower use of the term is more frequent. Ordinarily one speaks of the vitality of men, not of the vitality of animals or plants. The meaning of the word is colored by its polar contrast. Vitality, in the full sense of the word, is human because man has intentionality. The dynamic element in man is open in all directions; it is bound by no a priori limiting structure. Man is able to create a world beyond the given world; he creates the technical and the spiritual realms. The dynamics of subhuman life remain within the limits of natural necessity, notwithstanding the infinite variations it produces and notwithstanding the new forms created by the evolutionary process. Dynamics reaches out beyond nature only in man. This is his vitality, and therefore man alone has vitality in the full sense of the word.

Man's vitality lives in contrast with his intentionality and is conditioned by it. On the human level form is the rational structure of subjective reason actualized in a life-process. One could call this pole "rationality," but rationality means having reason, not actualizing reason. One could call it "spirituality," but spirituality means the unity of dynamics and form in man's moral and cultural acts. Therefore, we recommend the use of the term "intentionality," which means being related to meaningful structures, living in universals, grasping and shaping reality. In this context "intention" does not mean the will to act for a purpose; it means living in tension with (and toward) something objectively valid. Man's dynamics, his creative vitality, is not undirected, chaotic, self-contained activity. It is directed, formed; it transcends itself

toward meaningful contents. There is no vitality as such and no intentionality as such. They are interdependent, like the other polar elements.

The dynamic character of being implies the tendency of everything to transcend itself and to create new forms. At the same time everything tends to conserve its own form as the basis of its self-transcendence. It tends to unite identity and difference, rest and movement, conservation and change. Therefore, it is impossible to speak of being without also speaking of becoming. Becoming is just as genuine in the structure of being as is that which remains unchanged in the process of becoming. And, vice versa, becoming would be impossible if nothing were preserved in it as the measure of change. A process philosophy which sacrifices the persisting identity of that which is in process sacrifices the process itself, its continuity, the relation of what is conditioned to its conditions, the inner aim (*telos*) which makes a process a whole. Bergson was right when he combined the *élan vital, the* universal tendency toward self-transcendence, with duration, with continuity and self-conservation in the temporal flux.

The growth of the individual is the most obvious example of self-transcendence based on self-conservation. It shows very clearly the simultaneous interdependence of the two poles. Inhibition of growth ultimately destroys the being which does not grow. Misguided growth destroys itself and' that which transcends itself without self-conservation. An example of wider scope is biological evolution from lower or less complex forms of life to higher and more complex forms. It is this example, more than anything else, which has inspired the philosophy of process and of creative evolution.

Self-transcendence and self-conservation are experienced immediately by man in man himself. Just as the self on the subhuman level is imperfect and in correlation with an environment, while on the human level the self is perfect and in correlation with a world, so self-transcendence on the subhuman level is limited by a constellation of conditions, while self-transcendence on the human level is limited only by the structure which makes man what he is-a complete self which has a world. On the basis of achieving self-conservation (the preservation of his humanity), man can transcend any given situation. He can transcend himself without limits in all directions just because of this basis. His creativity breaks *through the* biological realm to which he belongs and establishes new realms never attainable on a nonhuman level. Man is able to create a new world of technical tools and a world of cultural forms. In both cases something new comes into being through man's grasping and shaping

activity. Man uses the material given by nature to create technical forms which transcend nature, and he creates cultural forms which have validity and meaning. Living in these forms, he transforms himself, while originating them. He is not only a tool for their creation; he is at the same time their bearer and the result of their transforming effect upon him. His self-transcendence in this direction is indefinite, while the biological self-transcendence has reached its limits in him. Any step beyond that biological structure which makes intentionality and historicity possible would be a relapse, a false growth, and a destruction of man's power of indefinite cultural self-transcendence. "Super-man," in a biological sense, would be less than man, for man has freedom, and freedom cannot be trespassed biologically.

5. Freedom and Destiny

The third ontological polarity is that of freedom and destiny, in which the description of the basic ontological structure and its elements reaches both its fulfilment and its turning point. Freedom in polarity with destiny is the structural element which makes existence possible because it transcends the essential necessity of being without destroying it. In view of the immense role the problem of freedom has played in the history of theology, it is surprising to see how little ontological inquiry into the meaning and nature of freedom is carried on by modern theologians, or even how little the results of previous inquiry are used by them, for a concept of freedom is just as important for theology as a concept of reason. Revelation cannot be understood without a concept of freedom.

Man is man because he has freedom, but he has freedom only in polar interdependence with destiny. The term "destiny" is unusual in this context. Ordinarily one speaks of freedom and necessity. However, necessity is a category and not an element. Its contrast is possibility, not freedom. Whenever freedom and necessity are set over against each other, necessity is understood in terms of mechanistic determinacy and freedom is thought of in terms of indeterministic contingency. Neither of these interpretations grasps the structure of being as it is experienced immediately in the one being who has the possibility of experiencing it because he is free, that is, in man. Man experiences the structure of the individual as the bearer of freedom within the larger structures to which the individual structure belongs. Destiny points to this situation in which

man finds himself, facing the world to which, at the same time, he belongs?

The methodological perversion of much ontological inquiry is more obvious in the doctrine of freedom than at any other point. The traditional discussion of determinism and indeterminism necessarily is inconclusive because it moves on a level which is secondary to the level on which the polarity of freedom and destiny lies. Both conflicting parties presuppose that there is a ***thing*** among other things called "will," which may or may not have the quality of freedom. But by definition a ***thing*** as a completely determined object lacks freedom. The freedom of a ***thing*** is a contradiction in terms. Therefore, determinism always is right in this kind of discussion; but it is right because, in the last analysis, it expresses the tautology that a thing is a thing. Indeterminism protests against the deterministic thesis, pointing to the fact that the moral and the cognitive consciousness presupposes the power of responsible decision. However, when it draws the consequences and attributes freedom to an object or a function called "will," indeterminism falls into a contradiction in terms and inescapably succumbs to the deterministic tautology. Indeterministic freedom is the negation of deterministic necessity. But the negation of necessity never constitutes experienced freedom. It asserts something absolutely contingent, a decision without motivation, an unintelligible accident which is in no way able to do justice to the moral and the cognitive consciousness for the sake of which it is invented. Both determinism and indeterminism are theoretically impossible because by implication they deny their claim to express truth. Truth presupposes a decision for the true against the false. Both determinism and indeterminism make such a decision unintelligible.

Freedom is not the freedom of a function (the "will") but of man, that is, of that being who is not a thing but a complete self and a rational person. It is possible, of course, to call the "will" the personal center and to substitute it for the totality of the self. Voluntaristic psychologies would support such a procedure. But it has proved to be very misleading, as the deadlock in the traditional controversy about freedom indicates. One should speak of the freedom of man, indicating that every part and every function which constitutes man a personal self participates in his freedom, This includes even the cells of his body, in so far as they participate in the constitution of his personal center. That which is not centered, that which is isolated from the total process of the self,

3. For **further explanation see below.**

either by natural or by artificial separation (disease or laboratory situations, for instance), is determined by the mechanism of stimulus and response or by the dynamism of the relation between the unconscious and the conscious. However, it is impossible to derive the determinacy of the whole, including its nonseparated parts, from the determinacy of isolated parts. Ontologically the whole precedes the parts and gives them their character as parts of this special whole. It is possible to understand the determinacy of isolated parts in the light of the freedom of the whole-namely, as a partial disintegration of the whole-but the converse is not possible.

Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility. The etymology of each of these words is revealing. Deliberation points to an act of weighing (*librare*) arguments and motives. The person who does the weighing is above the motives; as long as he weighs them, he is not identical with any of the motives but is free from all of them. To say that the stronger motive always prevails is an empty tautology, since the test by which a motive is proved stronger is simply that it prevails. The self-centered person does the weighing and reacts as a whole, through his personal center, to the struggle of the motives. This reaction is called "decision." The word "decision," like the word "incision," involves the image of cutting. A decision cuts off possibilities, and these were real possibilities; otherwise no cutting would have been necessary.* The person who does the "cutting" or the "excluding" must be beyond what he cuts off or excludes. His personal center has possibilities, but it is not identical with any of them. The word "responsibility" points to the obligation of the person who has freedom to respond if he is questioned about his decisions. He cannot ask anyone else to answer for him. He alone must respond, for his acts are determined neither by something outside him nor by any part of him but by the centered totality of his being. Each of us is responsible for what has happened through the center of his self, the seat and organ of his freedom.

In the light of this analysis of freedom the meaning of destiny becomes understandable. Our destiny is that out of which our decisions arise; it is the indefinitely broad basis of our centered selfhood; it is the concreteness of our being which makes all our decisions ***our*** decisions. When I make a decision, it is the concrete totality of everything that

4. In the German word *Ent-Scheidung* the image of *scheiden* ("to separate") is implied, pointing to the fact that in every decision several possibilites are excluded—*ausgeschieden*.

constitutes my being which decides, not an epistemological subject. This refers to body structure, psychic strivings, spiritual character. It includes the communities to which I belong, the past unremembered and remembered, the environment which has shaped me, the world which has made an impact on me. It refers to all my former decisions. Destiny is not a strange power which determines what shall happen to me. It is myself as given, formed by nature, history, and myself. My destiny is the basis of my freedom; my freedom participates in shaping my destiny.

Only he who has freedom has a destiny. Things have no destiny because they have no freedom. God has no destiny because he ***is*** freedom. The word "destiny" points to something which is going to happen to someone; it has an eschatological connotation. This makes it qualified to stand in polarity with freedom. It points not to the opposite of freedom but rather to its conditions and limits. *Fatum* ("that which is foreseen") or *Schicksal* ("that which is sent"), and their English correlate "fate," designate a simple contradiction to freedom rather than a polar correlation, and therefore they hardly can be used in connection with the ontological polarity under discussion. But even the deterministic use of these words usually leaves a place for freedom; one has the possibility of accepting his fate or of revolting against it. Strictly speaking, this means that only he who has this alternative has a fate. And to have this alternative means to be free.

Since freedom and destiny constitute an ontological polarity, everything that participates in being must participate in this polarity. But man, who has a complete self and a world, is the only being who is free in the sense of deliberation, decision, and responsibility. Therefore, freedom and destiny can be applied to subhuman nature only by way of analogy; this parallels the situation with respect to the basic ontological structure and the other ontological polarities.

In terms of analogy we may speak of the polarity of spontaneity and law, of which the polarity of freedom and destiny is not only the outstanding example but also the cognitive entrance. An act which originates in the acting self is spontaneous. A reaction to a stimulus is spontaneous if it comes from the centered and self-related whole of a being. This refers not only to living beings but also to inorganic ***Gestalten*** which react according to their individual structure. Spontaneity is interdependent with law. Law makes spontaneity possible, and law is law only because it determines spontaneous reactions. The term "law" is very revealing in this respect. It is derived from the social sphere and

designates an enforceable rule by which a social group is ordered and controlled. Natural laws are based on the rational structure of man and society; therefore, they are unconditionally valid, although the positive laws of social groups may contradict them. If the concept of natural law is applied universally to nature, it designates the structural determinateness of things and events. Nature does not obey-or disobey-laws the way men do; in nature spontaneity is united with law in the way freedom is united with destiny in man. The law of nature does not remove the reactions of self-centered ***Gestalten,*** but it determines the limits they cannot trespass. Each being acts and reacts according to the law of its self-centered structure and according to the laws of the larger units in which it is included. It is not, however, determined in such a way that its self-relatedness, and consequently its spontaneity, is destroyed. Except in the case of the abstract equations of macrophysics, calculation deals with chance, ***not*** with determined mechanisms. The chances of verification may be overwhelmingly great, but they are not absolute. The analogy to freedom in all beings makes an absolute determination impossible. The laws of nature are laws for self-centered units with spontaneous reactions. The polarity of freedom and destiny is valid for everything that is.

C. BEING AND FINITUDE

6. Being and Nonbeing

The question of being is produced by the "shock of nonbeing."[5] Only man can ask the ontological question because he alone is able to look beyond the limits of his own being and of every other being. Looked at from the standpoint of possible nonbeing, being is a mystery. Man is able to take this standpoint because he is free to transcend every given reality. He is not bound to "beingness"; he can envisage nothingness; he can ask the ontological question. In doing so, however, he also must ask a question about that which creates the mystery of being; he must consider the mystery of nonbeing. Both questions have been joined together since the beginning of human thought, first in mythological, then in cosmogonic, and finally in philosophical terms. The way in which the early Greek philosophers, above all, Parmenides, wrestled with the question of nonbeing is most impressive. Parmenides realized that in speaking of nonbeing one gives it some kind of being which contradicts its character as the negation of being. Therefore, he excluded it from rational thought. But in doing so he rendered the realm of becoming unintelligible and evoked the atomistic solution which identifies nonbeing with empty space, thus giving it some kind of being. What kind of being must we attribute to nonbeing? This question never has ceased to fascinate and to exasperate the philosophical mind.

5. The term "nonbeing," as used in the following sections, contains the Latin word *non*, which has lost for our feeling the power of the English word "not." The shock of nonbeing is the shock of not being in the sense of a radical negation, in the sense of "being not."

There are two possible ways of trying to avoid the question of nonbeing, the one logical and the other ontological. One can ask whether nonbeing is anything more than the content of a logical judgment-a judgment in which a possible or real assertion is denied. One can assert that nonbeing is a negative judgment devoid of ontological significance. To this we must reply that every logical structure which is more than merely a play with possible relations is rooted in an ontological structure. The very fact of logical denial presupposes a type of being which can transcend the immediately given situation by means of expectations which may be disappointed. An anticipated event does not occur. This means that the judgment concerning the situation has been mistaken, the necessary conditions for the occurrence of the expected event have been nonexistent. Thus disappointed, expectation creates the distinction between being and nonbeing. But how is such an expectation possible in the first place? What is the structure of this being which is able to transcend the given situation and to fall into error? The answer is that man, who is this being, must be separated from his being in a way which enables him to look at it as something strange and questionable. And such a separation is actual because man participates not only in being but also in nonbeing. Therefore, the very structure which makes negative judgments possible proves the ontological character of nonbeing. Unless man participates in nonbeing, no negative judgments are possible; in fact, no judgments of any kind are possible. The mystery of nonbeing cannot be solved by transforming it into a type of logical judgment. The ontological attempt to avoid the mystery of nonbeing follows the strategy of trying to deprive it of its dialectical character. If being and nothingness are placed in absolute contrast, nonbeing is excluded from being in every respect; everything is excluded except being itself (i.e., the whole world is excluded). There can be no world unless there is a dialectical participation of nonbeing in being. It is not by chance that historically the recent rediscovery of the ontological question has been guided by pre-Socratic philosophy and that systematically there has been an overwhelming emphasis on the problem of nonbeing.[6]

The mystery of nonbeing demands a dialectical approach. The genius

6. See Heidegger's relation to Parmenides and the role of nonbeing both in his philosophy and in that of his existentialist followers.

of the Greek language has provided a possibility of distinguishing the dialectical concept of nonbeing from the nondialectical by calling the first me *on* and the second *ouk* on. *Ouk on* is the "nothing" which has no relation at all to being; *me on* is the "nothing" which has a dialectical relation to being. The Platonic school identified me *on* with that which does not yet have being but which can become being if it is united with essences or ideas. The mystery of nonbeing was not, however, removed, for in spite of its "nothingness" nonbeing was credited with having the power of resisting a complete union with the ideas. The *me-ontic* matter of Platonism represents the dualistic element which underlies all paganism and which is the ultimate ground of the tragic interpretation of life.

Christianity has rejected the concept of *me-ontic* matter on the basis of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Matter is not a second principle in addition to God. The *nihil* out of which God creates is *ouk on*, the undialectical negation of being. Yet Christian theologians have had to face the dialectical problem of nonbeing at several points. When Augustine and many theologians and mystics who followed him called sin "nonbeing," they were perpetuating a remnant of the Platonic tradition. They did not mean by this assertion that sin has no reality or that it is a lack of perfect realization, as critics often have misrepresented their view. They meant that sin has no positive ontological standing, while at the same time they interpreted nonbeing in terms of resistance against being and perversion of being. The doctrine of man's creatureliness is another point in the doctrine of man where nonbeing has a dialectical character. Being created out of nothing means having to return to nothing. The stigma of having originated out of nothing is impressed on every creature. This is the reason why Christianity has to reject Arius' doctrine of the Logos as the highest of the creatures. As such he could not have brought eternal life. And this also is the reason why Christianity must reject the doctrine of natural immortality and must affirm instead the doctrine of eternal life given by God as the power of being-itself.

A third point at which theologians have had to face the dialectical problem of nonbeing is the doctrine of God. Here it must be stated immediately that historically it was not the theology of the *via negutiva* which drove Christian thinkers to the question of God and nonbeing. The nonbeing of negative theology means "not being anything special," being beyond every concrete predicate. This nonbeing embraces everything; it means being everything; it is being-itself. The dialectical question of nonbeing was and is a problem of affirmative theology. If God is

called the living God, if he is the ground of the creative processes of life, if history has significance for him, if there is no negative principle in addition to him which could account for evil and sin, how can one avoid positing a dialectical negativity in God himself? Such questions have forced theologians to relate nonbeing dialectically to being-itself and consequently to God. B&me's *Un`grund,* Schelling's "first potency," Hegel's "antithesis," the "contingent" and the "given" in God in recent theism, Berdyaev's "meonic freedom,"—all are examples of the problem of dialectical nonbeing exerting influence on the Christian doctrine of God.

Recent existentialism has "encountered nothingness" (Kuhn) in a profound and radical way. Somehow it has replaced being-itself by nonbeing, giving to nonbeing a positivity and a power which contradict the immediate meaning of the word. Heidegger's "annihilating nothingness" describes man's situation of being threatened by nonbeing in an ultimately inescapable way, that is, by death. The anticipation of nothingness at death gives human existence its existential character. Sartre includes in nonbeing not only the threat of nothingness but also the threat of meaninglessness (i.e., the destruction of the structure of being). In existentialism there is no way of conquering this threat. The only way of dealing with it lies in the courage of taking it upon one's self: courage! As this survey shows, the dialectical problem of nonbeing is inescapable. It is the problem of finitude. Finitude unites being with dialectical nonbeing. Man's finitude, or creatureliness, is unintelligible without the concept of dialectical nonbeing.

7. The Finite and the Infinite

Being, limited by nonbeing, is finitude. Nonbeing appears as the "not yet" of being and as the "no more" of being. It confronts that which is with a definite end (finis). This is true of everything except being-itself -which is not a "thing." As the power of being, being-itself cannot have a beginning and an end. Otherwise it would have arisen out of nonbeing. But nonbeing is literally nothing except in relation to being. Being precedes nonbeing in ontological validity, as the word "nonbeing" itself indicates. Being is the beginning without a beginning, the end without an end. It is its own beginning and end, the initial power of everything that is. However, everything which participates in the power of being is "mixed" with nonbeing. It is being in process of coming from and going toward nonbeing. It is finite.

Both the basic ontological structure and the ontological elements imply

finitude. Selfhood, individuality, dynamics, and freedom all include manifoldness, definiteness, differentiation, and limitation. To be something is not to be something else. To be here and now in the process of becoming is not to be there and then. All categories of thought and reality express this situation. To be something is to be finite.

Finitude is experienced on the human level; nonbeing is experienced as the threat to being. The end is anticipated. The process of self-transcendence carries a double meaning in each of its moments. At one and the same time it is an increase and a decrease in the power of being. In order to experience his finitude, man must look at himself from the point of view of a potential infinity. In order to be aware of moving toward death, man must look out over his finite being as a whole; he must in some way be beyond it. He must also be able to imagine infinity; and he is able to do so, although not in concrete terms, but only as an abstract possibility. The finite self faces a world; the finite individual has the power of universal participation; man's vitality is united with an essentially unlimited intentionality; as finite freedom he is involved in an embracing destiny. All the structures of finitude force finite being to transcend itself and, just for this reason, to become aware of itself as finite.

According to this analysis, infinity is related to finitude in a different way than the other polar elements are related to one another. As the negative character of the word indicates, it is defined by the dynamic and free self-transcendence of finite being. Infinity is a directing concept, not a constituting concept. It directs the mind to experience its own unlimited potentialities, but it does not establish the existence of an infinite being. On this basis it is possible to understand the classical antinomies regarding the finite and the infinite character of the world. Even a physical doctrine of the finitude of space cannot keep the mind from asking what lies behind finite space. This is a self-contradictory question; yet it is inescapable. On the other hand, it is impossible to say that the world is infinite because infinity never is given as an object. Infinity is a demand, not a thing. This is the stringency of Kant's solution of the antinomies between the finite and the infinite character of time and space. Since neither time nor space is a thing, but both are forms of things, it is possible to transcend every finite time and every finite space without exception. But this does not establish an infinite thing in an infinite time and space. The human mind can keep going endlessly by transcending finite realities in the macrocosmic or in the microcosmic

direction. But the mind itself remains bound to the finitude of its individual bearer. Infinitude is finitude transcending itself without any a priori limit.

The power of infinite self-transcendence is an expression of man's belonging to that which is beyond nonbeing, namely, to being-itself. The potential presence of the infinite (as unlimited self-transcendence) is the negation of the negative element in finitude. It is the negation of nonbeing. The fact that man never is satisfied with any stage of his finite development, the fact that nothing finite can hold him, although finitude is his destiny, indicates the indissoluble relation of everything finite to being-itself. Being-itself is not infinity; it is that which lies beyond the polarity of finitude and infinite self-transcendence. Being-itself manifests itself to finite being in the infinite drive of the finite beyond itself. But being-itself cannot be identified with infinity, that is, with the negation of finitude. It precedes the finite, and it precedes the infinite negation of the finite.

Finitude in awareness is anxiety. Like finitude, anxiety is an ontological quality. It cannot be derived; it can only be seen and described. Occasions in which anxiety is aroused must be distinguished from anxiety itself. As an ontological quality, anxiety is as omnipresent as is finitude. Anxiety is independent of any special object which might produce it; it is dependent only on the threat of nonbeing-which is identical with finitude. In this sense it has been said rightly that the object of anxiety is "nothingness"-and nothingness is not an "object." Objects are feared. A danger, a pain, an enemy, may be feared, but fear can be conquered by action. Anxiety cannot, for no finite being can conquer its finitude. Anxiety is always present, although often it is latent. Therefore, it can become manifest at any and every moment, even in situations where nothing is to be feared.[7]

The recovery of the meaning of anxiety through the combined endeavors of existential philosophy, depth psychology, neurology, and the arts is one of the achievements of the twentieth century. It has become clear that fear as related to a definite object and anxiety as the awareness of finitude are two radically different concepts. Anxiety is ontological; fear, psychological.[8] Anxiety is an ontological concept because it ex-

7. Psychotherapy cannot remove ontological anxiety, because it cannot change the structure of finitude. But it can remove compulsory forms of anxiety and can reduce the frequency and intensity of fears. It can put anxiety "in its proper place."

8. The English word "anxiety" has received the connotation of *Angst* only during the past decade. Both *Angst* and anxiety are derived from the Latin word *angustiae,* which

presses finitude from "inside." Here it must be said that there is no reason for preferring concepts taken from "outside" to those taken from "inside." According to the self-world structure, both types are equally valid. The self being aware of itself and the self looking at its world (including itself) are equally significant for the description of the ontological structure. Anxiety is the self-awarness of the finite self as finite. The fact that it has a strongly emotional character does not remove its revealing power. The emotional element simply indicates that the totality of the finite being participates in finitude and faces the threat of nothingness. It would seem adequate, therefore, to give a description of finitude from both outside and inside, pointing to the special form of anxious awareness which corresponds to whatever special form of finitude is under consideration.

8. Finitude and the Categories

Categories are the forms in which the mind grasps and shapes reality. To speak of something reasonably is to speak of it by means of the categorical forms, through "ways of speaking" which are also the forms of being. The categories are to be distinguished from logical forms which determine discourse but which are only indirectly related to reality itself. The logical forms are formal in that they abstract from the content to which the discourse refers. The categories, on the other hand, are forms which determine content. They are ontological, and therefore they are present in everything. The mind is not able to experience reality except through the categorical forms. These forms are used in religious as well as in secular speech. They appear implicitly or explicitly in every thought concerning God and the world, man and nature. They are omnipresent, even in that realm from which they are excluded by definition, that is, in the realm of the "unconditional." Therefore, systematic theology must deal with them, of course not in terms of a developed system of categories but in a way which shows their significance for the question of God, the question to which the entire ontological analysis leads.

The categories reveal their ontological character through their double relation to being and to nonbeing. They express being, but at the same time they express the nonbeing to which everything that is, is subject. The categories are forms of finitude; as such they unite an affirmative

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means "narrows." Anxiety is experienced in the narrows of threatening nothingness. Therefore, anxiety should not be replaced by the word "dread." which points to a sudden reaction to a danger but not to the ontological situation of facing nonbeing.

and a negative element. The ontological task which prepares the way for the theological question, the question of God, is an analysis of this duality. In dealing with the four main categories-time, space, causality, substance-we must in each case consider not only the positive and the negative elements "from the outside," namely, in relation to the world, but we must consider them also "from the inside," namely, in relation to the self. Each category expresses not only a union of being and nonbeing but also a union of anxiety and courage.

Time is the central category of finitude. Every philosopher has been fascinated and embarrassed by its mysterious character. Some philosophers emphasize the negative element; others, the positive element. The former point to the transitoriness of everything temporal and to the impossibility of fixing the present moment within a flux of time which never stands still. They point to the movement of time from a past that is no more toward a future that is not yet through a present which is nothing more than the moving boundary line between past and future. To be means to be present. But if the present is illusory, being is conquered by nonbeing.

Those who emphasize the positive element in time have pointed to the creative character of the temporal process, to its directness and irreversibility, to the new produced within it. But neither group has been able to maintain an exclusive emphasis. It is impossible to call the present illusory, for it is only in the power of an experienced present that past and future and the movement from the one to the other can be measured. On the other hand, it is impossible to overlook the fact that time "swallows" what it has created, that the new becomes old and vanishes, and that creative evolution is accompanied in every moment by destructive disintegration. Ontology can only state a balance between the positive and the negative character of time. A decision concerning the meaning of time cannot be derived from an analysis of time.

As experienced in immediate self-awareness, time unites the anxiety of transitoriness with the courage of a self-affirming present. The melancholy awareness of the trend of being toward nonbeing, a theme which fills the literature of all nations, is most actual in the anticipation of one's own death. What is significant here is not the fear of death, that is, the moment of dying. It is anxiety about *having* to die which reveals the ontological character of time. In the anxiety of having to die nonbeing is experienced from "the inside." This anxiety is potentially present in every moment. It permeates the whole of man's being; it shapes soul

and body and determines spiritual life; it belongs to the created character of being quite apart from estrangement and sin. It is actual in "Adam" (i.e., man's essential nature) as well as in "Christ" (i.e., man's new reality). The biblical record points to the profound anxiety of having to die in him who was called the Christ. We repeat, anxiety about transitoriness, about being delivered to the negative side of temporality, is rooted in the structure of being and not in a distortion of this structure.

This anxiety concerning temporal existence is possible only because it is balanced by a courage which affirms temporality. Without this courage man would surrender to the annihilating character of time; he would resign from having a present. Yet man affirms the present moment, though analytically it seems unreal, and he defends it against the anxiety its transitoriness creates in him. He affirms the present through an ontological courage which is as genuine as his anxiety about the time process. This courage is effective in all beings, but it is radically and consciously effective only in man, who is able to anticipate his end. Therefore, man needs the greatest courage to take upon himself his anxiety. He is the most courageous of all beings because he has to conquer the deepest anxiety. It is hardest for him to affirm the present because he is able to imagine a future which is not yet his own and to remember a past which is no longer his own. He must defend his present against the vision of an infinite past and of an infinite future; he is excluded from both. Man cannot escape the question of the ultimate foundation of his ontological courage.

The present always involves man's presence in it, and presence means having something present to one's self over against one's self (in German, *gegenwaertig*). The present implies space. Time creates the present through its union with space. In this union time comes to a standstill because there is something on which to stand. Like time, space unites being with nonbeing, anxiety with courage. Like time, space is subject to contradictory valuations, for it is a category of finitude. To be means to have space. Every being strives to provide and to preserve space for itself. This means above all a physical location-the body, a piece of soil, a home, a city, a country, the world. It also means a social "space"—a vocation, a sphere of influence, a group, a historical period, a place in remembrance and anticipation, a place within a structure of values and meanings. Not to have space is not to be. Thus in all realms of life striving for space is an ontological necessity. It is a consequence of the

spatial character of finite being and a quality of created goodness. It is finitude, not guilt.

But to be spatial also means to be subject to nonbeing. No finite being possesses a space which is definitely its own. No finite being can rely on space, for not only must it face losing this or that space because it is a "pilgrim on earth," but eventually it must face losing every place it has had or might have had. As the powerful symbol used by Job and the psalmist expresses it: "Its place knoweth it no more." There is no necessary relationship between any place and the being which has provided this space for itself. Finitude means having no definite place; it means having to lose every place finally and, with it, to lose being itself. This threat of nonbeing cannot be escaped by means of a flight into time without space. Without space there is neither presence nor a present. And, conversely, the loss of space includes the loss of temporal presence, the loss of the present, the loss of being.

To have no definite and no final space means ultimate insecurity. To be finite is to be insecure. This is experienced in man's anxiety about tomorrow; it is expressed in anxious attempts to provide a secure space for himself, physically and socially. Every life-process has this character. The desire for security becomes dominant in special periods and in special social and psychological situations. Men create systems of security in order to protect their space. But they can only repress their anxiety; they cannot banish it, for this anxiety anticipates the final "spacelessness" which is implied in finitude.

On the other hand, man's anxiety about having to lose his space is balanced by the courage with which he affirms the present and, with it, space. Everything affirms the space which it has within the universe. As long as it lives, it successfully resists the anxiety of not-having-a-place. It courageously faces the occasions when not-having-a-place becomes an actual threat. It accepts its ontological insecurity and reaches a security in this acceptance. Yet it cannot escape the question how such courage is possible. How can a being which cannot be without space accept both preliminary and final spacelessness?

Causality also has a direct bearing on religious symbolism and on theological interpretation. Like time and space, it is ambiguous. It expresses both being and nonbeing. It affirms the power of being by pointing to that which precedes a thing or event as its source. If something is causally explained, its reality is affirmed, and the power of its resistance against nonbeing is understood. The cause makes its effect real, in

thought as well as in reality. To look for causes means to look for the power of being in a thing.

This affirmative meaning of causality, however, is the reverse side of its negative meaning. The question of the cause of a thing or event presupposes that it does not possess its own power of coming into being. Things and events have no aseity. This is characteristic only of God. Finite things are not self-caused; they have been "thrown" into being (Heidegger). The question, "Where from?" is universal. Children as well as philosophers ask it. But it cannot be answered, for every answer, every statement, about the cause of something is open to the same question in endless regression. It cannot be stopped even by a god who is supposed to be the answer to the entire series. For this god must ask himself, "Where have I come from?" (Kant). Even a highest being must ask the question of its own cause, indicating thereby its partial nonbeing. Causality expresses by implication the inability of anything to rest on itself. Everything is driven beyond itself to its cause, and the cause is driven beyond itself to its cause, and so on indefinitely. Causality powerfully expresses the abyss of nonbeing in everything.

The causal scheme must not be identified with a deterministic scheme. Causality is removed neither by the indeterminacy of subatomic processes nor by the creative character of biological and psychological processes. Nothing in these realms occurs without a preceding situation or constellation which is its cause. Nothing has the power of depending on itself without a causal nexus; nothing is "absolute." Even finite creativity cannot escape that form of nonbeing which appears in causality. If we look at a thing and ask what it is, we must look beyond it and ask what its causes are.

The anxiety in which causality is experienced is that of not being in, of, and by one's self, of not having the "aseity" which theology traditionally attributes to God. Man is a creature. His being is contingent; by itself it has no necessity, and therefore man realizes that he is the prey of nonbeing. The same contingency which has thrown man into existence may push him out of it. In this respect causality and contingent being are the same thing. The fact that man is causally determined makes his being contingent with respect to himself. The anxiety in which he is aware of this situation is anxiety about the lack of necessity of his being. He might not be! Then why is he? And why should he continue to be? There is no reasonable answer. This is exactly the anxiety implied in the awareness of causality as a category of finitude.

Courage accepts derivedness, contingency. The man who possesses this courage does not look beyond himself to that from which he comes, but he rests in himself. Courage ignores the causal dependence of everything finite. Without this courage no life would be possible, but the question how this courage is possible remains. How can a being who is dependent on the causal nexus and its contingencies accept this dependence and, at the same time, attribute to himself a necessity and self-reliance which contradict this dependence?

The fourth category which describes the union of being and nonbeing in everything finite is substance. In contrast to causality, substance points to something underlying the flux of appearances, something which is relatively static and self-contained. There is no substance without accidents. The accidents receive their ontological power from the substance to which they belong. But the substance is nothing beyond the accidents in which it expresses itself. So in both substance and accidents the positive element is balanced by the negative element.

The problem of substance is not avoided by philosophers of function or process, because questions about that which *has* functions or about that which *is* in process cannot be silenced. The replacement of static notions by dynamic ones does not remove the question of that which makes change possible by not (relatively) changing itself. Substance as a category is effective in any encounter of mind and reality; it is present whenever one speaks of something.

Therefore, everything finite is innately anxious that its substance will be lost. This anxiety refers to continuous change as well as to the final loss of substance. Every change reveals the relative nonbeing of that which changes. The changing reality lacks substantiality, the power of being, the resistance against nonbeing. It is this anxiety which drove the Greeks to ask insistently and ceaselessly the question of the unchangeable. To dismiss the question with the correct assertion that the static has neither a logical nor an ontological priority over the dynamic is not justifiable, for this anxiety about change is anxiety about the threat of nonbeing implied in change. It is manifest in all great changes of personal and social life, which produce a kind of individual or social dizziness, a feeling that the ground on which the person or group has stood is being taken away, that self-identity or group identity is being destroyed. This anxiety reaches its most radical form in the anticipation of the final loss of substance-and accidents as well. The human experience of having to die anticipates the complete loss of identity with one's

self. Questions about an immortal substance of the soul express the profound anxiety connected with this anticipation.

The question of the unchangeable in our being, like the question of the unchangeable in being-itself, is an expression of the anxiety of losing substance and identity. To dismiss this question with the correct assertion that the arguments for the so-called immortality of the soul are wrong, that they are attempts to escape the seriousness of the question of substantiality by establishing an endless continuation of what is essentially finite, is unjustified. The question of unchangeable substance cannot be silenced. It expresses the anxiety implied in the always threatening loss of substance, that is, of identity with one's self and the power of maintaining one's self.

Courage accepts the threat of losing individual substance and the substance of being generally. Man attributes substantiality to something which proves ultimately to be accidental-a creative work, a love relation, a concrete situation, himself. This is not a self-elevation of the finite, but rather it is the courage of affirming the finite, of taking one's anxiety upon himself. The question is how such a courage is possible. How can a finite being, aware of the inescapable loss of his substance, accept this loss?

The four categories are four aspects of finitude in its positive and negative elements. They express the union of being and nonbeing in everything finite. They articulate the courage which accepts the anxiety of nonbeing. The question of God is the question of the possibility of this courage.

9. Finitude and the Ontological Elements

Finitude is actual not only in the categories but also in the ontological elements. Their polar character opens them to the threat of nonbeing. In every polarity each pole is limited as well as sustained by the other one. A complete balance between them presupposes a balanced whole. But such a whole is not given. There are special structures in which, under the impact of finitude, polarity becomes tension. Tension refers to the tendency of elements within a unity to draw away from one another, to attempt to move in opposite directions. For Heraclitus everything is in inner tension like a bent bow, for in everything there is a tendency downward (earth) balanced by a tendency upward (fire). In his view nothing whatever is produced by a process which moves in one

direction only; everything is an embracing but transitory unity of two opposite processes. Things are hypostasized tensions.

Our own ontological tension comes *to* awareness in the anxiety of losing our ontological structure through losing one or another polar element and, consequently, the polarity to which it belongs. This anxiety is not the same as that mentioned in connection with the categories, namely, the anxiety of nonbeing simply and directly. It is the anxiety of not being what we essentially are. It is anxiety about disintegrating and falling into nonbeing through existential disruption. It is anxiety about the breaking of the ontological tensions and the consequent destruction of the ontological structure.

This can be seen in terms-of each of the polar elements. Finite individualization produces a dynamic tension with finite participation; the break of their unity is a possibility. Self-relatedness produces the threat of a loneliness in which world and communion are lost. On the other hand, being in the world and participating in it produces the threat of a complete collectivization, a loss of individuality and subjectivity whereby the self loses its self-relatedness and is transformed into a mere part of an embracing whole. Man as finite is anxiously aware of this twofold threat. Anxiously he experiences the trend from possible loneliness to collectivity and from possible collectivity to loneliness. He oscillates anxiously between individualization and participation, aware of the fact that he ceases to be if one of the poles is lost, for the loss of either pole means the loss of both.

The tension between finite individualization and finite participation is the basis of many psychological and sociological problems, and for this reason it is a very important subject of research for depth psychology and depth sociology. Philosophy often has overlooked the question of essential solitude and its relation to existential loneliness and self-seclusion. It also has overlooked the question of essential belongingness and its relation to existential self-surrender to the collective. The merit of existential thinking in all centuries, but especially since Pascal, is that it has rediscovered the ontological basis of the tension between loneliness and belongingness.

Finitude also transforms the polarity of dynamics and form into a tension which produces the threat of a possible break and anxiety about this threat. Dynamics drives toward form, in which being is actual and has the power of resisting nonbeing. But at the same time dynamics is threatened because it may lose itself in rigid forms, and, if it tries to break through them, the result may be chaos, which is the loss of both

dynamics and form. Human vitality tends to embody itself in cultural creations, forms, and institutions through the exercise of creative intentionality. But every embodiment endangers the vital power precisely by giving it actual being. Man is anxious about the threat of a final form in which his vitality will be lost, and he is anxious about the threat of a chaotic formlessness in which both vitality and intentionality will be lost.

There is abundant witness to this tension in literature from Greek tragedy to the present day, but it has not been given sufficient attention in philosophy except in the "philosophy of life" or in theology except by some Protestant mystics. Philosophy has emphasized the rational structure of things but has neglected the creative process through which things and events come into being. Theology has emphasized the divine "law" and has confused creative vitality with the destructive separation of vitality from intentionality. Philosophical rationalism and theological legalism have prevented a full recognition of the tension between dynamics and form.

Finally, finitude transforms the polarity of freedom and destiny into a tension which produces the threat of a possible break and its consequent anxiety. Man is threatened with the loss of freedom by the necessities implied in his destiny, and he is equally threatened with the loss of his destiny by the contingencies implied in his freedom. He is continuously in danger of trying to preserve his freedom by arbitrarily defying his destiny and of trying to save his destiny by surrendering his freedom. He is embarrassed by the demand that he make decisions implied in his freedom, because he realizes that he lacks the complete cognitive and active unity with his destiny which should be the foundation of his decisions. And he is afraid of accepting his destiny without reservations, because he realizes that his decision will be partial, that he will accept only a part of his destiny, and that he will fall under a special determination which is not identical with his real destiny. So he tries to save his freedom by arbitrariness, and then he is in danger of losing both his freedom and his destiny.

The traditional discussion between determinism and indeterminism concerning "freedom of the will" is an "objectified" form of the ontological tension between freedom and destiny. Both partners in this discussion defend an ontological element without which being could not be conceived. Therefore, they are right in what they affirm but wrong in what they negate. The determinist does not see that the very affirmation of determinism as true presupposes the freedom of decision between true

and false, and the indeterminist does not see that the very potentiality of making decisions presupposes a personality structure which includes destiny. Speaking pragmatically, people always act as if they consider one another to be free and to be destined simultaneously. No one ever treats a man either as a mere locus of a series of contingent actions or as a mechanism in which calculable effects follow from calculated causes. Man always considers man—including himself-in terms of a unity of freedom and destiny. The fact that finite man is threatened with the loss of one side of the polarity-and consequently with the loss of the other, since loss of either side destroys the polarity as a whole-only confirms the essential character of the ontological structure.

To lose one's destiny is to lose the meaning of one's being. Destiny is not a meaningless fate. It is necessity united with meaning. The threat of possible meaninglessness is a social as well as an individual reality. There are periods in social life, as well as in personal life, during which this threat is especially acute. Our present situation is characterized by a profound and desperate feeling of meaninglessness. Individuals and groups have lost any faith they may have had in their destiny as well as any love of it. The question, "What for?" is cynically dismissed. Man's essential anxiety about the possible loss of his destiny has been transformed into an existential despair about destiny as such. Accordingly, freedom has been declared an absolute, separate from destiny (Sartre). But absolute freedom in a finite being becomes arbitrariness and falls under biological and psychological necessities. The loss of a meaningful destiny involves the loss of freedom also.

Finitude is the possibility of losing one's ontological structure and, with it, one's self. But this is a possibility, not a necessity. To be finite is to be threatened. But a threat is possibility, not actuality. The anxiety of finitude is not the despair of self-destruction. Christianity sees in the picture of Jesus as the Christ a human life in which all forms of anxiety are present but in which all forms of despair are absent. In the light of this picture it is possible to distinguish "essential" finitude from "existential" disruption, ontological anxiety from the anxiety of guilt which is despair.[9]

9. The material discussed in this chapter is by no means complete. Poetic, scientific, and religious psychology have made available an almost unmanageable amount of material concerning finitude and anxiety. The purpose of this analysis is to give only an ontological description of the structures underlying all these facts and to point to some outstanding confirmations of the analysis.

10. Essential and Existential Being

Finitude, in correlation with infinity, is a quality of being in the same sense as the basic structure and the polar elements. It characterizes being in its essential nature. Being is essentially related to nonbeing; the categories of finitude indicate this. And being is essentially threatened with disruption and self-destruction; the tensions of the ontological elements under the condition of finitude indicate this. But being is not essentially in a state of disruption and selfdestruction. The tension between the elements does not necessarily lead to the threatened break. Since the ontological structure of being includes the polarity of freedom and destiny, nothing ontologically relevant can happen to being that is not mediated by the unity of freedom and destiny. Of course, the breaking of the ontological tensions is not a matter of accident; it is universal and is dependent on destiny. But, on the other hand, it is not a matter of structural necessity; it is mediated by freedom.

Philosophical and theological thought, therefore, cannot escape making a distinction between essential and existential being. In every philosophy there is an indication, sometimes only implicit, of an awareness of this distinction. Whenever the ideal is held against the real, truth against error, good against evil, a distortion of essential being is presupposed and is judged by essential being. It does not matter how the appearance of such a distortion is explained in terms of causality. If it is acknowledged as distortion—and even the most radical determinist accuses his opponent of an (unconscious) distortion of the truth which he himself defends-the question of the possibility of such a distortion is raised in ontological terms. How can being, including within it the whole of its actuality, contain its own distortion? This question is always present even though it is not always asked. But, if it is asked, every answer openly or secretly points to the classical distinction between the essential and the existential.

Both of these terms are very ambiguous. Essence can mean the nature of a thing without any valuation of it, it can mean the universals which characterize a thing, it can mean the ideas in which existing things participate, it can mean the norm by which a thing must be judged, it can mean the original goodness of everything created, and it can mean the patterns of all things in the divine mind. The basic ambiguity, however, lies in the oscillation of the meaning between an empirical and a valuating sense. Essence as the nature of a thing, or as the quality in which a thing participates, or as a universal, has one character. Essence as that from which being has "fallen," the true and undistorted nature of things, has another character. In the second case essence is the basis of value judgments, while in the first case essence is a logical ideal to be reached by abstraction or intuition without the interference of valuations. How can the same word cover both meanings? Why has this ambiguity persisted in philosophy since Plato? The answer to both questions lies in the ambiguous character of existence, which expresses being and at the same time contradicts it-essence as that which makes a thing what it is (*ousia*) has a purely logical character; essence as that which appears in an imperfect and distorted way in a thing carries the stamp of value. Essence empowers and judges that which exists. It gives it its power of being, and, at the same time, it stands against it as commanding law. Where essence and existence are united, there is neither law nor judgment. But existence is not united with essence; therefore, law stands against all things, and judgment is actual in self-destruction.

Existence also is used with different meanings. It can mean the possibility of finding a thing within the whole of being, it can mean the actuality of what is potential in the realm of essences, it can mean the "fallen world," and it can mean a type of thinking which is aware of its existential conditions or which rejects essence entirely. Again, an unavoidable ambiguity justifies the use of this one word in these different senses. Whatever exists, that is, "stands out" of mere potentiality, is more than it is in the state of mere potentiality and less than it could be in the power of its essential nature. In some philosophers, notably Plato, the negative judgment on existence prevails. The good is identical with the essential, and existence does not add anything. In other philosophers, notably Ockham, the positive judgment prevails. All reality exists, and the essential is nothing more than the reflex of existence in the human mind. The good is the selfexpression of the highest existent-God-and it is imposed on the other existents from outside them. In a third group of philosophers, notably Aristotle, a mediating attitude prevails. The actual is the real, but the essential provides its power of being, and in the highest essence potentiality and actuality are one.

Christian theology always has used the distinction between essential and existential being and predominantly in a way which is nearer to Aristotle than to Plato or Ockham. This is not surprising. In contrast to Plato, Christianity emphasizes existence in terms of creation through God, not through a demiurge. Existence is the fulfilment of creation;

existence gives creation its positive character. In contrast to Ockham, Christianity has emphasized the split between the created goodness of things and their distorted existence. But the good is not considered an arbitrary commandment imposed by an all-powerful existent on the other existents. It is the essential structure of reality.

Christianity must take the middle road wherever it deals with the problem of being. And it must deal with the problem of being, for, although essence and existence are philosophical terms, the experience and the vision behind them precede philosophy. They appeared in mythology and poetry long before philosophy dealt with them rationally. Consequently, theology does not surrender its independence when it uses philosophical terms which are analogous to terms which religion has used for ages in prerational, imaginative language.

The preceding considerations are preliminary and definitory; only by implication are they more than this. A complete discussion of the relation of essence to existence is identical with the entire theological system. The distinction between essence and existence, which religiously speaking is the distinction between the created and the actual world, is the backbone of the whole body of theological thought. It must be elaborated in every part of the theological system.

D. HUMAN FINITUDE AND THE QUESTION OF GOD

11. The Possibility of the Question of God and the So-called Ontological Argument

It is a remarkable fact that for many centuries leading theologians and philosophers were almost equally divided between those who attacked and those who defended the arguments for the existence of God. Neither group prevailed over the other in a final way. This situation admits only one explanation: the one group did not attack what the other group defended. They were not divided by a conflict over the same matter. They fought over different matters which they expressed in the same terms. Those who attacked the arguments for the existence of God criticized their argumentative form; those who defended them accepted their implicit meaning.

There can be little doubt that the arguments are a failure in so far as they claim to be arguments. Both the concept of existence and the method of arguing to a conclusion are inadequate for the idea of God. However it is defined, the "existence of God" contradicts the idea of a

creative ground of essence and existence. The ground of being cannot be found within the totality of beings, nor can the ground of essence and existence participate in the tensions and disruptions characteristic of the transition from essence to existence. The scholastics were right when they asserted that in God there is no difference between essence and existence. But they perverted their insight when in spite of this assertion they spoke of the existence of God and tried to argue in favor of it. Actually they did not mean "existence." They meant the reality, the validity, the truth of the idea of God, an idea which did not carry the connotation of something or someone who might or might not exist. Yet this is the way in which the idea of God is understood today in scholarly as well as in popular discussions about the "existence of God." It would be a great victory for Christian apologetics if the words "God" and "existence" were very definitely separated except in the paradox of God becoming manifest under the conditions of existence, that is, in the christological paradox. God does not exist. He is being-itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him.

The method of arguing through a conclusion also contradicts the idea of God, Every argument derives conclusions from something that is given about something that is sought. In arguments for the existence of God the world is given and God is sought. Some characteristics of the world make the conclusion "God" necessary. God is derived from the world. This does not mean that God is dependent on the world. Thomas Aquinas is correct when he rejects such an interpretation and asserts that what is first in itself may be last for our knowledge. But, if we derive God from the world, he cannot be that which transcends the world infinitely. He is the "missing link," discovered by correct conclusions. He is the uniting force between the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa* (Descartes), or the end of the causal regression in answer to the question, "Where from?" (Thomas Aquinas), or the teleological intelligence directing the meaningful processes of reality-if not identical with these processes (Whitehead). In each of these cases God is "world," a missing part of that from which he is derived in terms of conclusions. This contradicts the idea of God as thoroughly as does the concept of existence. The arguments for the existence of God neither are arguments nor are they proof of the existence of God. They are expressions of the *question* of God which is implied in human finitude. This question is their truth; every answer they give is untrue. This is the sense in which theology must deal with these arguments, which are the solid body of any natural

theology. It must deprive them of their argumentative character, and it must eliminate the combination of the words "existence" and "God." If this is accomplished, natural theology becomes the elaboration of the question of God; it ceases to be the answer to this question. The following interpretations are to be understood in this sense. The arguments for the existence of God analyze the human situation in such a way that the question of God appears possible and necessary.

The question of God is possible because an awareness of God is present in the question of God. This awareness precedes the question. It is not the result of the argument but its presupposition. This certainly means that the "argument" is no argument at all. The so-called ontological argument points to the ontological structure of finitude. It shows that an awareness of the infinite is included in man's awareness of finitude. Man knows that he is finite, that he is excluded from an infinity which nevertheless belongs to him. He is aware of his potential infinity while being aware of his actual finitude. If he were what he essentially is, if his potentiality were identical with his actuality, the question of the infinite would not arise. Mythologically speaking, Adam before the fall was in an essential, though untested and undecided, unity with God. But this is not man's situation, nor is it the situation of anything that exists. Man must ask about the infinite from which he is estranged, although it belongs to him; he must ask about that which gives him the courage to take his anxiety upon himself. And he can ask this double question because the awareness of his potential infinity is included in his awareness of his finitude.

The ontological argument in its various forms gives a description of the way in which potential infinity is present in actual finitude. As far as the description goes, that is, as far as it is analysis and not argument, it is valid. The presence within finitude of an element which transcends it is experienced both theoretically and practically. The theoretical side has been elaborated by Augustine, the practical side by Kant, and behind both of them stands Plato. Neither side has constructed an argument for the reality of God, but all elaborations have shown the presence of something unconditional within the self and the world. Unless such an element were present, the question of God never could have been asked, nor could an answer, even the answer of revelation, have been received.

The unconditional element appears in the theoretical (receiving) functions of reason as ***verum ipsum,*** the true-itself as the norm of all approximations to truth. The unconditional element appears in the

practical (shaping) functions of reason as ***bonum ipsum,*** the good-itself as the norm of all approximations to goodness. Both are manifestations of ***esse ipsum,*** being-itself as the ground and abyss of everything that is.

Augustine, in his refutation of skepticism, has shown that the skeptic acknowledges and emphasizes the absolute element in truth in his denial of the possibility of a true judgment. He becomes a skeptic precisely because he strives for an absoluteness from which he is excluded. ***Veritas ipsa*** is acknowledged and sought for by no one more passionately than by the skeptic. Kant has shown in an analogous way that relativism with respect to ethical content presupposes an absolute respect for ethical form, the categorical imperative, and an acknowledgment of the unconditional validity of the ethical command. ***Bonum ipsum*** is independent of any judgment about the bona. Up to this point Augustine and Kant cannot be refuted, for they do not argue; they point to the unconditional element in every encounter with reality. But both Augustine and Kant go beyond this safe analysis. They derive from it a concept of God which is more than esse ***ipsum, verum ipsum,*** and ***bonum ipsum,*** more than an analytical dimension in the structure of reality. Augustine simply identifies ***verum ipsum*** with the God of the church, and Kant tries to derive a lawgiver and a guarantor of the co-ordination between morality and happiness from the unconditional character of the ethical command. In both cases the starting point is right, but the conclusion is wrong. The experience of an unconditional element in man's encounter with reality is used for the establishment of an unconditional being (a contradiction in terms) within reality.

The Anselmian statement that God is a necessary thought and that therefore this idea must have objective as well as subjective reality is valid in so far as thinking, by its very nature, implies an unconditional element which transcends subjectivity and objectivity, that is, a point of identity which makes the idea of truth possible. However, the statement is not valid if this unconditional element is understood as a highest being called God. The existence of such a highest being is not implied in the idea of truth.

The same must be said of the many forms of the moral argument. They are valid in so far as they are ontological analyses (not arguments) in moral disguise, that is, ontological analyses of the unconditional element in the moral imperative. The concept of the moral world order which often has been used in this connection tries to express the unconditional character of the moral command in the face of the processes of

nature and history which seem to contradict it. It points to the foundation of the moral principles in the ground of being, in being-itself. But no "divine coordinator" can be derived in this way. The ontological basis of the moral principles and their unconditional character cannot be used for the establishment of a highest being. *Bonum ipsum* does not imply the existence of a highest being.

The limits of the ontological argument are obvious. But nothing is more important for philosophy and theology than the truth it contains, the acknowledgment of the unconditional element in the structure of reason and reality. The idea of a theonomous culture, and with it the possibility of a philosophy of religion, is dependent on this insight. A philosophy of religion which does not begin with something unconditional never reaches God. Modern secularism is rooted largely in the fact that the unconditional element in the structure of reason and reality no longer was seen and that therefore the idea of God was imposed on the mind as a "strange body." This produced first heteronomous subjection and then autonomous rejection. The destruction of the ontological *argument* is not dangerous. What is dangerous is the destruction of an approach which elaborates the possibility of the question of God. This approach is the meaning and truth of the ontological argument.

12. The Necessity of the Question of God and the So-called Cosmological Arguments

The question of God *can* be asked because there is an unconditional element in the very act of asking any question. The question of God *must* be asked because the threat of nonbeing, which man experiences as anxiety, drives him to the question of being conquering nonbeing and of courage conquering anxiety. This question is the cosmological question of God.

The so-called cosmological and teleological arguments for the existence of God are the traditional and inadequate form of this question. In all their variations these arguments move from special characteristics of the world to the existence of a highest being. They are valid in so far as they give an analysis of reality which indicates that the cosmological question of God is unavoidable. They are not valid in so far as they claim that the existence of a highest being is the logical conclusion of their analysis, which is as impossible logically, as it is impossible existentially to derive courage from anxiety.

The cosmological method of arguing for the existence of God has

taken two main paths. It has moved from the finitude of being to an infinite being (the cosmological argument in the narrower sense), and it has moved from the finitude of meaning to a bearer of infinite meaning (the teleological argument in the traditional sense). In both cases the cosmological question comes out of the element of nonbeing in beings and meanings. No question of God would arise if there were no logical and noological (relating to meaning) threat of nonbeing, for then being would be safe; religiously speaking, God would be present in it.

The first form of the cosmological argument is determined by the categorical structure of finitude. From the endless chain of causes and effects it arrives at the conclusion that there is a first cause, and from the contingency of all substances it concludes that there is a necessary substance. But cause and substance are categories of finitude. The "first cause" is a hypostasized question, not a statement about a being which initiates the causal chain. Such a being would itself be a part of the causal chain and would again raise the question of cause. In the same way, a "necessary substance" is a hypostasized question, not a statement about a being which gives substantiality to all substances. Such a being would itself be a substance with accidents and would again open the question of substantiality itself. When used as material for "arguments," both categories lose their categorical character. First cause and necessary substance are symbols which express the question implied in finite being, the question of that which transcends finitude and categories, the question of being-itself embracing and conquering nonbeing, the question of God.

The cosmological question of God is the question about that which ultimately makes courage possible, a courage which accepts and overcomes the anxiety of categorical finitude. We have analyzed the labile balance between anxiety and courage in relation to time, space, causality, and substance. In each case we finally have come face to face with the question how the courage which resists the threat of nonbeing implied in these categories is possible. Finite being includes courage, but it cannot maintain courage against the ultimate threat of nonbeing. It needs a basis for ultimate courage. Finite being is a question mark, It asks the question of the "eternal now" in which the temporal and the spatial are simultaneously accepted and overcome. It asks the question of the "ground of being" in which the causal and the substantial are simultaneously confirmed and negated. The cosmological approach cannot

answer these questions, but it can and it must analyze their roots in the structure of finitude.

The basis for the so-called teleological argument for the existence of God is the threat against the finite structure of being, that is, against the unity of its polar elements. The ***telos,*** from which this argument has received its name, is the "inner aim," the meaningful, understandable structure of reality. This structure is used as a springboard to the conclusion that finite ***teloi*** imply an infinite cause of teleology, that finite and threatened meanings imply an infinite and unthreatened cause of meaning. In terms of logical argument this conclusion is as invalid as the other cosmological "arguments." As the statement of a question it is not only valid but inescapable and, as history shows, most impressive. Anxiety about meaninglessness is the characteristically ***human*** form of ontological anxiety. It is the form of anxiety which only a being can have in whose nature freedom and destiny are united. The threat of losing this unity drives man toward the question of an infinite, unthreatened ground of meaning; it drives him to the question of God. The teleological argument formulates the question of the ground of meaning, just as the cosmological argument formulates the question of the ground of being. In contrast to the ontological argument, however, both are in the larger sense cosmological and stand over against it.

The task of a theological treatment of the traditional arguments for the existence of God is twofold: to develop the question of God which they express and to expose the impotency of the "arguments," their inability to answer the question of God. These arguments bring the ontological analysis to a conclusion by disclosing that the question of God is implied in the finite structure of being. In performing this function, they partially accept and also partially reject traditional natural theology, and they drive reason to the quest for revelation.

II

THE REALITY OF GOD

A. THE MEANING OF "GOD"

1. A PHENOMENOLOCICAL DESCRIPTION

a) God and man's ultimate concern.-"God" is the answer to the question implied in man's finitude; he is the name for that which concerns man ultimately. This does not mean that first there is a being called God and then the demand that man should be ultimately concerned about him. It means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is god for-him. The phrase "being ultimately concerned" points to a tension in human experience. On the one hand, it is impossible to be concerned about something which cannot be encountered concretely, be it in the realm of reality or in the realm of imagination. Universals can become matters of ultimate concern only through their power of representing concrete experiences. The more concrete a thing is, the more the possible concern about it. The completely concrete being, the individual person, is the object of the most radical concern-the concern of love. On the other hand, ultimate concern must transcend every preliminary finite and concrete concern. It must transcend the whole realm of finitude in order to be the answer to the question implied in finitude. But in transcending the finite the religious concern loses the concreteness of a being-to-being relationship. It tends to become not only absolute but also abstract, provoking reactions from the concrete element. This is the inescapable inner tension in the idea of God. The conflict between the concreteness and the ultimacy of the religious concern is actual wherever God is experienced and this experience is expressed, from primitive prayer to the most elaborate theological system. It is the key to understanding the dynamics of the history of religion, and it is the basic problem of every doctrine of God, from the earliest priestly wisdom to the most refined discussions of the trinitarian dogma.

A phenomenological description of the meaning of "God" in every

religion, including the Christian, offers the following definition of the meaning of the term "god." Gods are beings who transcend the realm of ordinary experience in power and meaning, with whom men have relations which surpass ordinary relations in intensity and significance. A discussion of each element of this basic description will give a full phenomenological picture of the meaning of "god," and this will be the tool with which an interpretation of the nature and the development of the phenomena which are called "religious" may be fashioned.

Gods are "beings." They are experienced, named, and defined in concrete intuitive (*anschaulich*) terms through the exhaustive use of all the ontological elements and categories of finitude. Gods are substances, caused and causing, active and passive, remembering and anticipating, arising and disappearing in time and space. Even though they are called "highest beings," they are limited in power and significance. They are limited by other gods or by the resistance of other beings and principles, for example, matter and fate. The values they represent limit and sometimes annihilate each other. The gods are open to error, compassion, anger, hostility, anxiety. They are images of human nature or subhuman powers raised to a superhuman realm. This fact, which theologians must face in all its implications, is the basis of all theories of "projection" which say that the gods are simply imaginary projections of elements of finitude, natural and human elements. What these theories disregard is that projection always is projection on something-a wall, a screen, another being, another realm. Obviously, it is absurd to class that on which the projection is realized with the projection itself. A screen is not projected; it receives the projection. The realm against which the divine images are projected is not itself a projection. It is the experienced ultimacy of being and meaning. It is the realm of ultimate concern.

Therefore, not only do the images of the gods bear all the characteristics of finitude-this makes them images and gives them concreteness—but they also have characteristics in which categorical finitude is radically transcended. Their identity as finite substances is negated by all kinds of substantial transmutations and expansions, in spite of the sameness of their names. Their temporal limitations are overcome; they are called "immortals" in spite of the fact that their appearance and disappearance are presupposed. Their spatial definiteness is negated when they act as multi- or omnipresent, yet they have a special dwelling place with which they are intimately connected. Their subordination to the chain of causes and effects is denied, for overwhelming or absolute power is

attributed to them in spite of their dependence on other divine powers and on the influence finite beings have on them. In concrete cases they demonstrate omniscience and perfection in spite of the struggles and betrayals going on among the gods themselves. They transcend their own finitude in power of being and in the embodiment of meaning. The tendency toward ultimacy continuously fights against the tendency toward concreteness.

The history of religion is full of human attempts to participate in divine power and to use it for human purposes. This is the point at which the magic world view enters religious practice and offers technical tools for an effective use of divine power. Magic itself is a theory and practice concerning the relation of finite beings to each other; it assumes that there are direct, physically unmediated sympathies and influences between beings on the "psychic" level, that is, on the level which comprises the vital, the subconscious, and the emotional. In so far as the gods are beings, magic relations in both directions are possible-from man to the gods and from the gods to man-and they are the basis for human participation in divine power.

Nonmagical, personalistic world views lead to a person-to-person relationship to divine power, which is appropriated through prayer, that is, through an appeal to the personal center of the divine being. The god answers in a free decision. He might or he might not use his power to fulfil the content of the prayer. In any case, he remains free, and attempts to force him to act in a particular way are considered magic. Seen in this context, every prayer of supplication illustrates the tension between the concrete element and the ultimate element in the idea of God. Theologians have suggested that this type of prayer should be replaced by thanksgiving in order to avoid magic connotations (Ritschl) . But actual religious life reacts violently against such a demand. Men continue to use the power of their god by asking his favors. They demand a concrete god, a god with whom man can deal.

A third way of trying to use the divine power is through a mystical participation in it which is neither magical nor personalistic. Its main characteristic is the devaluation of the divine beings and their power over against the ultimate power, the abyss of being-itself. The Hindu doctrine that the gods tremble when a saint exercises radical asceticism is another illustration of the tension between the gods as beings with a higher, though limited, power and the ultimate power which they express and conceal at the same time. The conflict between the Brahma

power and the god Brahman as an object of a concrete relation with man points to the same tension within the structure of man's ultimate concern which was noted above.

The gods are superior not only in power but also in meaning. They embody the true and the good. They embody concrete values, and as gods they claim absoluteness for them. The imperialism of the gods which follows from this situation is the basis of all other imperialisms. Imperialism is never the expression of will to power as such. It always is a struggle for the absolute victory of a special value or system of values, represented by a special god or hierarchy of gods. The ultimacy of the religious concern drives toward universality in value and in meaning; the concreteness of the religious concern drives toward particular meanings and values. The tension is insoluble. The co-ordination of all concrete values removes the ultimacy of the religious concern. The subordination of concrete values to any one of them produces anti-imperialistic reactions on the part of the others. The drowning of all concrete values in an abyss of meaning and value evokes antimystical reactions on the part of the concrete element in man's ultimate concern. The conflict between these elements is present in every act of creedal confession, in every missionary task, in every claim to possess final revelation. It is the nature of the gods which creates these conflicts, and it is man's ultimate concern which is mirrored in the nature of the gods.

We have discussed the meaning of "god" in terms of man's relation to the divine, and we have taken this relationship into the phenomenological description of the nature of the gods. This underlines the fact that the gods are not objects within the context of the universe. They are expressions of the ultimate concern which transcends the cleavage between subjectivity and objectivity. It remains to be emphasized that an ultimate concern is not "subjective." Ultimacy stands against everything which can be derived from mere subjectivity, nor can the unconditional be found within the entire catalogue of finite objects which are conditioned by each other.

If the word "existential" points to a participation which transcends both subjectivity and objectivity, then man's relation to the gods is rightly called "existential." Man cannot speak of the gods in detachment. The moment he tries to do so, he has lost the god and has established just one more object within the world of objects. Man can speak of the gods only on the basis of his relation to them. This relation oscillates between the concreteness of a give-and-take attitude, in which the divine beings

easily become objects and tools for human purposes, and the absoluteness of a total surrender on the side of man. The absolute element of man's ultimate concern demands absolute intensity, infinite passion (Kierkegaard), in the religious relation. The concrete element drives men toward an unlimited amount of relative action and emotion in the cult in which the ultimate concern is embodied and actualized, and also outside it. The Catholic system of relativities represents the concrete element most fully, while Protestant radicalism predominantly emphasizes the absolute element. The tension in the nature of the gods, which is the tension in the structure of man's ultimate concern (and which, in the last analysis, is the tension in the human situation), determines the religions of mankind in all their major aspects.

b) God ***and the idea of the*** holy.-The sphere of the gods is the sphere of holiness. A sacred realm is established wherever the divine is manifest. Whatever is brought into the divine sphere is consecrated. The divine is the holy.

Holiness is an experienced phenomenon; it is open to phenomenological description. Therefore, it is a very important cognitive "doorway" to understanding the nature of religion, for it is the most adequate basis we have for understanding the divine. The holy and the divine must be interpreted correlatively. A doctrine of God which does not include the category of holiness is not only unholy but also untrue. Such a doctrine transforms the gods into secular objects whose existence is rightly denied by naturalism. On the other hand, a doctrine of the holy which does not interpret it as the sphere of the divine transforms the holy into something aesthetic-emotional, which is the danger of theologies like those of Schleiermacher and Rudolf Otto. Both mistakes can be avoided in a doctrine of God which analyzes the meaning of ultimate concern and which derives from it both the meaning of God and the meaning of the holy.

The holy is the ***quality*** of that which concerns man ultimately. Only that which is holy can give man ultimate concern, and only that which gives man ultimate concern has the quality of holiness.

The phenomenological description of the holy in Rudolf Otto's classical book ***The Idea of the Holy*** demonstrates the interdependence of the meaning of the holy and the meaning of the divine, and it demonstrates their common dependence on the nature of ultimate concern. When Otto calls the experience of the holy "numinous," he interprets the holy as the presence of the divine. When he points to the mysterious character of

holiness, he indicates that the holy transcends the subject-object structure of reality. When he describes the mystery of the holy as ***tremendum*** and *fascinosum,* he expresses the experience of "the ultimate" in the double sense of that which is the abyss and that which is the ground of man's being. This is not directly asserted in Otto's merely phenomenological analysis, which, by the way, never should be called "psychological." However, it is implicit in his analysis, and it should be made explicit beyond Otto's own intention.

Such a concept of the holy opens large sections of the history of religion to theological understanding, by explaining the ambiguity of the concept of holiness at every religious level. Holiness cannot become actual except through holy "objects." But holy objects are not holy in and of themselves. They are holy only by negating themselves in pointing to the divine of which they are the mediums. If they establish themselves as holy, they become demonic. They still are "holy," but their holiness is antidivine. A nation which looks upon itself as holy is correct in so far as everything can become a vehicle of man's ultimate concern, but the nation is incorrect in so far as it considers itself to be inherently holy. Innumerable things, all things in a way, have the power of becoming holy in a mediate sense. They can point to something beyond themselves. But, if their holiness comes to be considered inherent, it becomes demonic. This happens continually in the actual life of most religions. The representations of man's ultimate concern-holy objects-tend to become his ultimate concern. They are transformed into idols. Holiness provokes idolatry.

Justice is the criterion which judges idolatrous holiness. The prophets attack demonic forms of holiness in the name of justice. The Greek philosophers criticize a demonically distorted cult in the name of *Dikē.* In the name of the justice which God gives, the Reformers destroy a system of sacred things and acts which has claimed holiness for itself. In the name of social justice, modern revolutionary movements challenge sacred institutions which protect social injustice. In all these cases it is demonic holiness, not holiness as such, which comes under attack.

However, it must be said with regard to each of these cases that to the degree to which the antidemonic struggle was successful historically, the meaning of holiness was transformed. The holy became the righteous, the morally good, usually with ascetic connotations. The divine command to be holy as God is holy was interpreted as a requirement of moral perfection. And since moral perfection is an ideal and not a reality,

the notion of actual holiness disappeared, both inside and outside the religious sphere. The fact that there are no "saints" in the classical sense on Protestant soil supported this development in the modern world. One of the characteristics of our present situation is that the meaning of holiness has been rediscovered in liturgical practice as well as in theological theory, although in popular language holiness still is identified with moral perfection.

The concept of the holy stands in contrast with two other concepts, the unclean and the secular. In the classical sixth chapter of Isaiah the prophet must be purified by means of a burning coal before he can endure the manifestation of the holy. The holy and the unclean seem to exclude each other. However, the contrast is not unambiguous. Before it received the meaning of the immoral, the unclean designated something demonic, something which produced taboos and numinous awe. Divine and demonic holiness were not distinguished until the contrast became exclusive under the impact of the prophetic criticism. But if the holy is completely identified with the clean, and if the demonic element is completely rejected, then the holy approximates the secular. Moral law replaces the *tremendum* and *fascinosum* of holiness. The holy loses its depth, its mystery, its numinous character.

This is not true of Luther and many of his followers. The demonic elements in Luther's doctrine of God, his occasional identification of the wrath of God with Satan, the half-divine-half-demonic picture he gives of God's acting in nature and history-all this constitutes the greatness and the danger of Luther's understanding of the holy. The experience he describes certainly is numinous, tremendous, and fascinating, but it is not safeguarded against demonic distortion and against the resurgence of the unclean within the holy.

In Calvin and his followers the opposite trend prevails. Fear of the demonic permeates Calvin's doctrine of the divine holiness. An almost neurotic anxiety about the unclean develops in later Calvinism. The word "Puritan" is most indicative of this trend. The holy is the clean; cleanliness becomes holiness. This means the end of the numinous character of the holy. The *tremendum* becomes fear of the law and of judgment; the *fascinosum* becomes pride of self-control and repression. Many theological problems and many psychotherapeutic phenomena are rooted in the ambiguity of the contrast between the holy and the unclean.

The second contrast to the holy is the secular. The word "secular" is less expressive than the word "profane," which means "in front of the

doors"—of the holy. But profane has received connotations of "unclean," while the term "secular" has remained neutral. Standing outside the doors of the sanctuary does not in itself imply the state of uncleanness. The profane might be invaded by unclean spirits but not necessarily. The German word *profan* preserves this idea of neutrality. The secular is the realm of preliminary concerns. It lacks ultimate concern; it lacks holiness. All finite relations are in themselves secular. None of them is holy. The holy and the secular seem to exclude each other. But again the contrast is ambiguous. The holy embraces itself and the secular, precisely as the divine embraces itself and the demonic. Everything secular is implicitly related to the holy. It can become the bearer of the holy. The divine can become manifest in it. Nothing is essentially and inescapably secular. Everything has the dimension of depth, and in the moment in which the third dimension is actualized, holiness appears. Everything secular is potentially sacred, open to consecration.

Furthermore, the holy needs to be expressed and can be expressed only through the secular, for it is through the finite alone that the infinite can express itself. It is through holy "objects" that holiness must become actual. The holy cannot appear except through that which in another respect is secular. In its essential nature the holy does not constitute a special realm in addition to the secular. The fact that under the conditions of existence it establishes itself as a special realm is the most striking expression of existential disruption. The very heart of what classical Christianity has called "sin" is the unreconciled duality of ultimate and preliminary concerns, of the finite and that which transcends finitude, of the secular and the holy. Sin is a state of things in which the holy and the secular are separated, struggling with each other and trying to conquer each other. It is the state in which God is not "all in all," the state in which God is "in addition to" all other things. The history of religion and culture is a continuous confirmation of this analysis of the meaning of holiness and of its relation to the unclean and to the secular.

2. Typological Considerations

a) ***Typology and the history of*** religion.-The ultimate can become actual only through the concrete, through that which is preliminary and transitory. This is the reason why the idea of God has a history, and why this history is the basic element in the history of religion, simultaneously determining it and being determined by it. In order to understand the idea of God, the theologian must look into its history, even though he derives his doctrine of God from what he considers to be the final revelation, for the final revelation presupposes some insight into the meaning of "God" on the part of those by whom it is received. The theologian must clarify and interpret this meaning in the light of the final revelation, but also, at the same time, he must interpret it on the basis of the material given by the history of religion-including Christianity in so far as it is a religion—and the history of human culture in so far as it has a religious substance.

Systematic theology cannot produce a survey of the history of religion. Neither can it sketch a general line of religious progress in human history. There is no such line. In the history of religion, as in the history of culture, each gain in one respect is accompanied by a loss in another respect. When speaking of final revelation, the theologian naturally considers its appearance real progress over preparatory revelation; but he does not (or ***should*** not) call the receiving revelation in which he personally stands progress over the final revelation, for final revelation is an **event** which is prepared by history and is received in history, but it cannot be derived from history. It stands over against progress and regress, judging the one as severely as the other. Therefore, if the theologian speaks of elements of progress in the history of religion, he must refer to those developments in which the contradiction between the ultimate element and the concrete element in the idea of God is fragmentarily overcome. Such developments occur always and everywhere, producing the different types of expression in which the meaning of God is grasped and interpreted. Since these developments are fragmentary, progress and regress are ambiguously mixed in them, and no progressivistic interpretation of the history of religion can be derived from them.

What is possible is a description of typical processes and structures. Types are ideal structures which are approximated by concrete things or events without ever being attained. Nothing historical completely represents a particular type, but everything historical is nearer to or farther away from a particular type. Every special event is opened up for our understanding by the type to which it belongs. Historical understanding oscillates between the intuition of the special and the analysis of the typical. The special cannot be described without reference to the type. The type is unreal without the special event in which it appears. Typology cannot replace historiography; historiography cannot describe anything without typology.

The development of the meaning of God has two interdependent causes: the tension within the idea of God and the general factors determining the movement of history (e.g., economic, political, and cultural factors). The development of the idea of God is not a dialectical thread spun out of the implications of ultimate concern, independent of universal history. On the other hand, neither the rise nor the development of the idea of God can be explained in terms of social and cultural factors independent of the given structure of "ultimate concern" which logically precedes each of its historical manifestations and every particular notion of God. Historical forces determine the existence of the idea of God, not its essence; they determine its variable manifestations, not its invariable nature. The social situation of a period conditions the idea of God, but it does not produce it. A feudal order of society, for example, conditions the experience and adoration and doctrine of God hierarchically. But the idea of God is present in history before and after the feudal period. It is present in all periods, transcending them in its essence, determined by them in its existence. The Christian theologian is not exempt from this rule. However strenuously. he may try to transcend his period, his concept of God is dated. But the fact that he is grasped by the idea of God is not dated. This fact transcends all dates.

A concept of God is needed to delimit the discussion of the history and typology of the idea of God. If this concept is too narrow, the question arises whether there are religions which have, no god; and in view of original Buddhism, for example, it is difficult not to answer this question affirmatively. If the concept of God is too wide, the question arises whether there is a God who is not the focal point of any religion; and in view of certain moral or logical concepts of God it is difficult not to answer this question affirmatively. In both cases, however, the presupposed concept of God is inadequate. If God is understood as that which concerns man ultimately, early Buddhism has a concept of God just as certainly as does Vedanta Hinduism. And if God is understood as that which concerns man ultimately, moral or logical concepts of God are seen to be valid in so far as they express an ultimate concern. Otherwise they are philosophical possibilities but not the God of religion.

Theological interpretations of the history of religion often are misguided by the unique picture which every religion presents-a picture which can easily be criticized in the light of final revelation. The criticism is much more difficult and much more serious if the typical structures within the unique form of a non-Christian historical religion are

elaborated and compared with the typical structures appearing in Christianity as a historical religion. This is the only fair and methodologically adequate way of dealing systematically with the history of religion. After this has been done, the final step can be taken; both Christianity and the non-Christian religions can and must be subjected to the criterion of final revelation. It is regrettable and altogether unconvincing if Christian apologetics begins with a criticism of the historical religions without attempting to understand the typological analogies between them and Christianity and without emphasizing the element of universal preparatory revelation which they carry within them.[1]

The general outline of the typological analysis of the history of religion follows from the tension of the elements in the idea of God. The concreteness of man's ultimate concern drives him toward polytheistic structures; the reaction of the absolute element against these drives him toward monotheistic structures; and the need for a balance between the concrete and the absolute drives him toward trinitarian structures. However, there is another factor which determines the typological structures of the idea of God, namely, the difference between the holy and the secular. We have seen that everything secular can enter the realm of the holy and that the holy can be secularized. On the one hand, this means that secular things, events, and realms can become matters of ultimate concern, become divine powers; and, on the other hand, this means that divine powers can be reduced to secular objects, lose their religious character. Both types of movement can be observed throughout the entire history of religion and culture, which indicates that there is an essential unity of the holy and the secular, in spite of their existential separation. This means that the secular ultimates (the ontological concepts) and the sacred ultimates (the conceptions of God) are interdependent. Every ontological concept has a typical manifestation of man's ultimate concern in its background, although now it has been transformed into a definite concept. And every conception of God discloses special ontological assumptions in the categorical material it uses. Therefore, systematic theologians must analyze the religious substance of the basic ontological concepts and the secular implications of the different types of

1. Cf., e.g., Brunner's way of dealing with the history of religion in his book, ***Revelation and Reason*** (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946). Of course, he can claim that he stands in the line of Deutero-Isaiah and Calvin. But the extremely polemical situation in which these two men spoke makes them questionable guides for a theological understanding of universal revelation and the history of religion. Paul and the early church are better guides here.

the idea of God. The religious typology must be pursued in its secular transformations and implications.

b) Types of polytheism.-Polytheism is a qualitative and not a quantitative concept. It is not the belief in a plurality of gods but rather the lack of a uniting and transcending ultimate which determines its character. Each of the polytheistic divine powers claims ultimacy in the concrete situation in which it appears. It disregards similar claims made by other divine powers in other situations. This leads to conflicting claims and threatens to disrupt the unity of self and world. The demonic element in polytheism is rooted in the claim of each of the divine powers to be ultimate, although none of them possesses the universal basis for making such a claim. An absolute polytheism is impossible. The principle of ultimacy always reacts against the principle of concretion. Polytheism "lives on" the restricting power of monotheistic elements.

This is obvious in each of the main types of polytheism-the universalistic, the mythological, and the dualistic. In the universalistic type the special divine beings, like divinities of places and realms, numinous forces in things and persons, are embodiments of a universal, all-pervading sacred power (*mana*), which is hidden behind all things and at the same time is manifest through them. A substantial unity prevents the rise of a complete polytheism. But this unity is not a real unity. It does not transcend the manifoldness into which it is split, and it cannot control its innumerable appearances. It is dispersed among these appearances and contradicts itself in them. Some forms of pan-sacramentalism, romanticism, and pantheism are the offspring of this universalistic type of polytheism. It highlights the tension between the concrete and the ultimate, but it reaches neither down to full concreteness nor up to full ultimacy.

In the mythological type of polytheism divine power is concentrated in individual deities of a relatively fixed character who represent broad realms of being and value. The mythological gods are self-related, they transcend the realm they control, and they are related to other gods of the same character in terms of kinship, hostility, love, and struggle. This type of polytheism is characterized by the great mythologies for which this type alone gives the adequate presuppositions. In the universalistic type the divine beings are not sufficiently fixed and individualized to become the subjects of stories, while in the dualistic type the myth is transformed into a dramatic interpretation of history. In all monotheistic types the myth is broken by the radical emphasis on the element of

ultimacy in the idea of God. It is true that the broken myth is still a myth, and it is true that there is no way of speaking about God except in mythological terms; but the mythical as a category of religious intuition is different from the unbroken mythology of a special type of the idea of God.

The tension in the idea of God is reflected in the mythological "imaginings" concerning the nature of the gods especially in the imagination of those who embrace the mythological type. Concrete concern impells the religious imagination to personify the divine powers, for man is radically concerned only about that which can encounter him on equal terms. Therefore, the person-to-person relationship between God and man is constitutive for religious experience. Man cannot be ultimately concerned about something which is less than he is, something impersonal. This explains the fact that all divine powers-stones and stars, plants and animals, spirits and angels, and every single one of the great mythological gods-possess a personal character. It explains the fact that actually there is a struggle for a personal God in all religions, a struggle which resists all philosophical attacks.

A personal God: this indicates the concreteness of man's ultimate concern. But his ultimate concern is not only concrete but also ultimate, and this brings another element into the mythological imagery. The gods are subpersonal and suprapersonal at one and the same time. Animal-gods are not deified brutes; they are expressions of man's ultimate concern symbolized in various forms of animal vitality. This animal vitality stands for a transhuman, divinedemonic vitality. The stars as gods are not deified astral bodies; they are expressions of man's ultimate concern symbolized in the order of the stars and in their creative and destructive power. The subhuman-superhuman character of the mythological gods is a protest against the reduction of divine power to human measure. In the moment in which this protest loses its effectiveness, the gods become glorified men rather than gods. They become individual persons who possess no divine ultimacy. This development can be studied in Homeric religion as well as in modern humanistic theism. Completely humanized gods are unreal. They are idealized men. They have no numinous power. The *fascinosum* and *tremendum* are gone. Therefore, religion imagines divine personalities whose qualities disrupt and transcend their personal form in every respect. They are subpersonal or transpersonal personalities, a paradoxical combination of words which mir-

rors the tension between the concrete and the ultimate in man's ultimate concern and in every type of the idea of God.

Prophets and philosophers have attacked the immorality of many myths. These attacks are only partially justified. The relations of the mythological gods are transmoral; they are ontological; they refer to structures of being and to conflicts of values. The conflicts between the gods stem from the unconditional claims which each of the gods makes. They are demonic, but they are not immoral.

The mythological type of polytheism could not live without monotheistic restrictions. One of these restrictions is manifest in the fact that the god who is addressed in a concrete situation receives all the characteristics of ultimacy. In the moment of prayer the god to whom a man prays is the ultimate, the lord of heaven and earth. This is true in spite of the fact that in the next prayer another god assumes the same role. The possibility of experiencing this kind of exclusiveness expresses a feeling for the identity of the divine in spite of the multiplicity of gods and the differences between them. The other way in which the conflicts of the mythological gods are overcome is through the hierarchical organization of the divine realm, which often is undertaken by priests in the religious-political or national-political interest. This is inadequate, but it prepares the way for the monarchical type of monotheism. Finally, one must point to the fact that in a fully developed polytheism like that of Greece the gods themselves are subject to a higher principle, fate, which they mediate but against which they are powerless. In this way the arbitrariness of their individual nature is limited, and, at the same time, the path to the abstract type of monotheism is prepared.

The third type of polytheism is the dualistic, which is based on the ambiguity in the concept of the holy and on the conflict between divine and demonic holiness. In the universalistic type the danger involved in approaching the holy discloses awareness of an element of destructiveness in the nature of the divine. The *tremendum,* as well as the *fascinosum,* however, can indicate creativity as well as destructiveness. The divine "fire" produces life as well as ashes. When the religious consciousness distinguishes between good and evil spirits, it introduces a dualism into the sphere of the holy through which it attempts to overcome the ambiguity of the numinous beings. But, as bearers of divine power, the evil spirits are not merely evil, and, as individuals with a divine claim, the good spirits arc not merely good. The universalistic type of polytheism takes notice of the ambiguity in the sphere of the holy, but it does not conquer it.

This is true also of the mythological type. The ruling gods dispossess the other divine beings. The demonic forces of the past are kept down. But the victorious gods themselves are threatened by old or new divine powers. They are not unconditional, and therefore they are partially demonic. The ambiguity in the sphere of the holy is not overcome by the great mythologies.

The most radical attempt to separate the divine from the demonic is religious dualism. Although its classic expression is the religion of Zoroaster and, in a derived and rationalized form, Manichaeism, dualistic structures appear in many other religions, including Christianity. Religious dualism concentrates divine holiness in one realm and demonic holiness in another realm. Both gods are creative, and different sections of reality belong to one or the other realm. Some things are evil in their essential nature, because they are created by the evil god or because they are dependent on an ultimate principle of evil. The ambiguity in the realm of holiness has become a radical split.

However, this type of polytheism is even less able than the others to exist without monotheistic elements. The very fact that the one god is called "good" gives him a divine character superior to that of the evil god, for god as the expression of man's ultimate concern is supreme not only in power but also in value. The evil god is god only according to half the nature of divinity, and even this half is limited. Dualism envisages the ultimate victory of the divine holiness over the demonic holiness. This presupposes that divine holiness is essentially superior or, as later Parsiism has taught, that there is an ultimate principle above the struggling realms, namely, the good embracing itself and its opposite. In this form dualistic monotheism has foreshadowed the God of history, the God of exclusive and trinitarian monotheism.

c) ***Types of monotheism.***-Polytheism could not exist unless it included monotheistic elements. But in all types of polytheism the concrete element in the idea of God prevails over the element of ultimacy. In monotheism the opposite is the case. The divine powers of polytheism are subjected to a highest divine power. However, just as there is no absolute polytheism, so there is no absolute monotheism. The concrete element in the idea of God cannot be destroyed.

Monarchic monotheism lies on the boundary line between polytheism and monotheism. The god-monarch rules over the hierarchy of inferior

gods and godlike beings. He represents the power and value of the hierarchy. His end would be the end of all those ruled by him. The conflicts between the gods are reduced by his power; he determines the order of values. Therefore, he can easily be identified with the ultimate in being and value, which is what the Stoics, for example, did when they identified Zeus with the ontological ultimate. On the other hand, he is not secure against attacks from other divine powers. Like every monarch, he is threatened by revolution or by outside attack. Monarchic monotheism is too deeply involved in polytheism to be liberated from it. Nevertheless, there are elements of monarchic monotheism not only in many non-Christian religions but also in Christianity itself. The "Lord of Hosts" of whom the Old Testament and Christian liturgy often speak is a monarch who rules over heavenly beings, angels, and spirits. Several times during Christian history some members of these hosts have become dangerous for the sovereignty of the highest God."

The second type of monotheism is the mystical. Mystical monotheism transcends all realms of being and value, and their divine representatives, in favor of the divine ground and abyss from which they come and in which they disappear. All conflicts between the gods, between the divine and the demonic, between gods and things, are overcome in the ultimate which transcends all of them. The element of ultimacy swallows the element of concreteness. The ontological structure, with its polarities which are applied to the gods in all forms of polytheism, has no validity for the transcendent One, the principle of mystical monotheism. The imperialism of the mythological gods collapses; no demonic claims can be made by anything finite. The power of being in its completeness and the entire sum of meanings and values are seen without differentiation and conflict in the ground of being and meaning, in the source of all values.

Yet even this most radical negation of the concrete element in the idea of God is not able to suppress the quest for concreteness. Mystical monotheism does not exclude divine powers in which the ultimate embodies itself temporally. And, once admitted, the gods can regain their lost significance, especially for people who are unable to grasp the ultimate in its purity and abstraction from everything concrete. The history of mystical monotheism in India and in Europe has shown that it is "wide open" for polytheism and that it is easily overpowered by it among the masses of the people.

2. Cf. the warning against the cult of angels in the New Testament.

Monotheism is able to resist polytheism radically only in the form of exclusive monotheism, which is created by the elevation of a concrete god to ultimacy and universality without the loss of his concreteness and without the assertion of a demonic claim. Such a possibility contradicts every expectation which can be derived from the history of religion. It is the result of an astounding constellation of objective and subjective factors in Israel, especially in the prophetic line of its religion. Theologically speaking, exclusive monotheism belongs to final revelation, for it is a direct preparation for it.

The God of Israel is the concrete God who has led his people out of Egypt, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." At the same time, he claims to be the God who judges the gods of the nations, before whom the nations of the world are "as a drop in a bucket." This God who is concrete and absolute at the same time is a "jealous God"; he cannot tolerate any divine claim beside his own. Of course, such a claim could be what we have called "demonic," the claim of something conditioned to be unconditioned. But this is not true in Israel. Yahweh does not claim universality in the name of a particular quality or in the name of his nation and its particular qualities. His claim is not imperialistic, for it is made in the name of that principle which implies ultimacy and universality-the principle of justice. The relation of the God of Israel to his nation is based on a covenant. The covenant demands justice, namely, the keeping of the Commandments, and it threatens the violation of justice with rejection and destruction. This means that God is independent of his nation and of his own individual nature. If his nation breaks the covenant, he still remains in power. He proves his universality by destroying his nation in the name of principles which are valid for all nations-the principles of justice. This undercuts the basis of polytheism. It breaks through the demonic implications of the idea of God, and it is the critical guardian which protects the holy against the temptation of the bearers of the holy to claim absoluteness for themselves. The Protestant principle is the restatement of the prophetic principle as an attack against a self-absolutizing and, consequently, demonically distorted church. Both prophets and reformers announced the radical implications of exclusive monotheism.

Like the God of mystical monotheism, the God of exclusive monotheism is in danger of losing the concrete element in the idea of God. His ultimacy and universality tend to swallow his character as a living God. The personal traits in his picture are removed as anthropomor-

phisms which contradict his ultimacy, and the historical traits of his character are forgotten as accidental factors which contradict his universality. He can be amalgamated with the God of mystical monotheism or with the transformation of this God into the philosophical absolute. But one thing cannot happen. There can be no relapse into polytheism. While mystical monotheism and its philosophical transformations are inclusive of everything finite because they are reached by elevation above it, exclusive monotheism excludes the finite against whose demonic claims it has protested. Nevertheless, exclusive monotheism needs an expression of the concrete element in man's ultimate concern. This posits the trinitarian problem.

Trinitarian monotheism is not a matter of the number three. It is a qualitative and not a quantitative characterization of God. It is an attempt to speak of the living God, the God in whom the ultimate and the concrete are united. The number three has no specific significance in itself, although it comes nearest to an adequate description of life-processes. Even in the history of the Christian doctrine of the trinity there have been vascillations between trinitarian and binitarian emphasis (the discussion about the position of the Holy Ghost) and between trinity and quaternity (the question about the relation of the Father to the common divine substance of the three ***personae).*** The trinitarian problem has nothing to do with the trick question how one can be three and three be one. The answer to this question is given in every life; process. The trinitarian problem is the problem of the unity between ultimacy and concreteness in the living God. Trinitarian monotheism is concrete monotheism, the affirmation of the living God.

The trinitarian problem is a perennial feature of the history of religion. Each type of monotheism is aware of it and gives implicit or explicit answers. In monarchical monotheism the highest god makes himself concrete in manifold incarnations, in the sending of lower divinities, and in the procreation of half-gods. All this is not paradoxical, for the highest gods of monarchic monotheism are not ultimate. In some cases monarchical monotheism reaches quasi-trinitarian formulas; a father-divinity, a mother-divinity, and a child-divinity are united in the same myth and in the same cult. A more profound preparation for genuine trinitarian thinking is the participation of a god in human destiny, in suffering and death, in spite of the ultimacy of the power he wields and with which he conquers guilt and death. This opens the way to the gods of the late-ancient mystery cults, in which a god whose ultimacy is

acknowledged becomes radically concrete for the initiated. These cults influenced the early church not only through their ritual forms but also through their adumbration of the trinitarian problem, which reached the church through the medium of exclusive monotheism.

Mystical monotheism gives classical expression to the trend toward trinitarian monotheism in the differentiation of the god Brahma from the Brahman principle. The latter represents the element of ultimacy in the most radical way; the former is a concrete god, united with Shiva and Vishnu in a divine triad. Here again the number three is not important. It is the relation of the Brahman-Atman, the absolute, to the concrete gods of Hindu piety which is central. The question of the ontological standing of Brahma and the others in relation to Brahman, the principle of being-itself, is a genuine trinitarian question, analogous to the Origenistic question of the ontological standing of the Logos and the Spirit in relation to the abyss of the divine nature. Nevertheless, there is a decisive difference between them-the presence of exclusive monotheism in Christianity.

In exclusive monotheism an abstract transcendence of the divine develops. It is not the transcendence of the infinite abyss in which everything concrete disappears, as in mystical monotheism; rather it is the transcendence of the absolute command which empties all concrete manifestations of the divine. But since the concrete element demands its rights, mediating powers of a threefold character appear and posit the trinitarian problem. The first group of these mediators is made up of hypostasized divine qualities, like Wisdom, Word, Glory. The second group are the angels, the divine messengers who represent special divine functions. The third is the divine-human figure through whom God works the fulfilment of history, the Messiah. In all these the God who had become absolutely transcendent and unapproachable now becomes concrete and present in time and space. The significance of these mediators grows as the distance between God and man increases, and, to the degree to which they become more significant, the trinitarian problem becomes more acute, more urgent. When early Christianity calls Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah and identifies him with the divine Logos, the trinitarian problem becomes the central problem of religious existence. The basic motive and the different forms of trinitarian monotheism become effective in the trinitarian dogma of the Christian church. But the Christian solution is founded on the paradox that the Messiah, the mediator between God and man, is identical with a personal human life,

the name of which is Jesus of Nazareth. With this assertion the trinitarian problem becomes a part of the christological problem.

d) ***Philosophical transformations.***—In our basic statement about the relation of theology to philosophys we have made the following distinction between the religious attitude and the philosophical attitude: religion deals existentially with the meaning of being; philosophy deals theoretically with the structure of being. But religion can express itself only through the ontclogical elements and categories with which philosophy deals, while philosophy can discover the structure of being only to the degree to which being-itself has become manifest in an existential experience. Basically this refers to the idea of God. Certain fundamental assertions about the nature of being are implicit in the different types of man's symbolization of his ultimate concern, assertions which may or may not be made explicit by philosophical analysis. If philosophy makes them explicit, they bear a definite analogy to the special types of the idea of God in which they have been contained. Therefore, they can be considered theoretical transformations of existential visions of what concerns man ultimately. If this is true, theology can deal with these assertions in a double way. It can discuss their philosophical truth on merely philosophical grounds, and it can struggle with them as expressions of ultimate concern on religious grounds. In the first instance, philosophical arguments alone are valid; in the second instance, existential witness alone is adequate. The following analysis develops this distinction, which is of fundamental apologetic importance.

As the section on the formal criteria of theology has shown,[3] the experience of ultimacy implies an ultimate of being and meaning which concerns man unconditionally because it determines his very being and meaning. For the philosophical approach this ultimate is being-itself, ***esse ipsum,*** that beyond which thought cannot go, the power of being in which everything participates. Being-itself is a necessary concept for every philosophy, even for those which reject it; for they reject it with arguments taken from a definite understanding of what it means to have being. On the basis of its dissolution of the universals, nominalism objects to the concept of a universal power of being or to the concept of being-itself. But nominalism cannot escape the implicit assertion that the nature of being and knowing is best recognized by a nominalistic epistemology. If being is radically individualized, if it lacks embracing

3. Cf. Introduction, pp. 18-28.
4. Cf. Introduction, pp. 11-14.

structures and essences, this is a character of being, valid for everything that is. The question then is not whether one can speak of being-itself but what its nature is and how it can be approached cognitively.

The same argument is valid against the attempts of some logical positivists to take the question of being away from philosophy and to surrender it to emotion and to poetic expression. Logical positivism presupposes that its prohibitions against philosophy and its rejection of all but a few preceding philosophers are not based on arbitrary preferences—that they have a ***fundamentum in re.*** The hidden assumption is that being-itself cannot be approached cognitively except in those of its manifestations which are open to scientific analysis and verification. Everything else may be open to the noncognitive functions of the mind. But these functions cannot provide knowledge. Therefore, being has a character which makes logical positivism the best, or the only, method of cognitive approach. If the logical positivists cared to look at their hidden ontological assumptions as inquisitively as they look at the "public" ontologies of the classical philosophers, they would no longer be able to reject the question of being-itself.

The tension in the idea of God is transformed into the fundamental philosophical question how being-itself, if taken in its absolute sense, can account for the relativities of reality. The power of being must transcend every being that participates in it. This is the motive which pushes philosophical thought to the absolute, to the negation of any content, to the transnumerical One, to pure identity. On the other hand, the power of being is the power of everything that is, in so far as it ***is.*** This is the **motive** which drives philosophical thought to pluralistic principles, to relational or process descriptions of being, to the idea of difference. The double movement of philosophical thought from the relative to the absolute and from the absolute to the relative and the many attempts to find a balance between the two movements determine much philosophical thought throughout its history. They represent a theoretical transformation of the tension within the idea of God and within man's ultimate concern. And this tension, in the last analysis, is the expression of man's basic situation: man is finite, yet at the same time he transcends his finitude.

In its philosophical transformation the universalistic type of polytheism appears as monistic naturalism. *Deus sive natura* is an expression of the universalistic feeling for the all-pervading presence of the divine. But it is an expression in which the numinous character of the

universalistic idea of God has been replaced by the secular character of the monistic idea of nature. Nevertheless, the very fact that the words "God" and "nature" can be used interchangeably reveals the religious background of monistic naturalism.

In its philosophical transformation the mythological 'type of polytheism appears as pluralistic naturalism. The pluralism of ultimate principles for which this philosophy struggles-be it in the form of life-philosophy, or as pragmatism, or as process philosophy-rejects the monistic tendency both of universalistic polytheism and of monistic naturalism. It is naturalism, parallel to the fact that the gods of the mythological type do not radically transcend nature. But it is a naturalism which is open for the contingent and for the new, just as the gods of the corresponding type act irrationally and produce new divine figures in endless succession. But as we have seen that no absolute polytheism is possible, so no absolute pluralism is possible. The unity of being-itself and the unity of the divine press the philosophical consciousness as powerfully as they press the religious consciousness toward a monistic and monotheistic ultimate. The world which is supposed to be pluralistic is one at least in this respect-that it can be recognized as a world, an ordered unity, although it has pluralistic characteristics.

In its philosophical transformation the dualistic type of polytheism appears as metaphysical dualism. The Greek doctrine of a matter (the *me* on, or nonbeing) which resists form establishes two ontological ultimates, even though the second is described as that which has no ultimate ontological standing. That which resists the structure of being cannot be destitute of ontological power. This transformation of religious dualism in Greek philosophy corresponds with the tragic interpretation of existence in Greek art and poetry. Modern philosophy is consciously or unconsciously dependent on the Christian doctrine of creation, in which religious dualism is radically rejected. But the dualistic type of polytheism has been transformed into philosophy even in the Christian period. The duality is not that between form and matter but that between nature and freedom (Kantianism) or that between the irrational will and the rational idea (Böhme, Schelling, Schopenhauer), or that between the "given" and the personal (philosophical theism), or that between the mechanical and the creative (Nietzsche, Bergson, Berdyaev). The motive behind these dualisms is the problem of evil, a clear indication that behind these metaphysical forms of dualism lies the split in the holy and in religious dualism.

In its philosophical transformation monarchical monotheism appears as gradualistic metaphysics. The religious hierarchy is transformed into a hierarchy of powers of being ("The Great Chain of Being"). Ever since Plato wrote his *Symposium* and Aristotle his Metaphysics this type of thinking has influenced the Western world in many ways. The absolute is the highest in a scale of relative degrees of being (Plotinus, Dionysius, the Scholastics). The nearer a thing or a sphere of reality is to the absolute, the more being is embodied in it. God is the highest being. The terms "degrees of being," "more being," "less being," are meaningful only if being is not the predicate of an existential judgment but rather if being means "the power of being." Leibniz's monadology is an outstanding example of hierarchical thinking in modern philosophy. The degree of conscious perception determines the ontological status of a monad, from the lowest form of being to God as the central monad. The romantic philosophy of nature applies the hierarchical principle to the different levels of the natural and the spiritual world. It is a triumph of hierarchical thinking that evolutionary philosophers since Hegel's time have employed the formerly static degrees of being as standards of progress in their schemes of dynamic development.

In its philosophical transformation mystical monotheism appears as idealistic monism. The relatedness of universalistic polytheism and mystical monotheism is repeated in the relatedness of naturalistic monism and idealistic monism. The difference is that in idealistic monism the unity of being is seen in its ground, in the basic identity in which all manifoldness disappears, while in naturalistic monism the process itself, including all its variety, is considered the ultimate unity. One could say that naturalistic monism never really reaches the absolute because the absolute cannot be found in nature, while idealistic monism never really reaches manifoldness because manifoldness cannot be derived from anything outside nature. In terms of the philosophy of religion, both forms of monism are called "pantheistic." Pantheist has become a "heresy label" of the worst kind. It should be defined before it is applied aggressively. Pantheism does not mean, never has meant, and never should mean that everything that is, is God. If God is identified with nature (*deus sive natura*), it is not the totality of natural objects which is called God but rather the creative power and unity of nature, the absolute substance which is present in everything. And if God is identified with the absolute of idealistic monism, it is the essential structure of being, the essence of all essences, which is called God. Pantheism is the doctrine

that God is the substance or essence of all things, not the meaningless assertion that God is the totality of things. The pantheistic element in the classical doctrine that God is *ipsum esse,* being-itself, is as necessary for a Christian doctrine of God as the mystical element of the divine presence. The danger connected with these elements of mysticism and pantheism is overcome by exclusive monotheism and its philosophical analogues.

In its philosophical transformation exclusive monotheism appears as metaphysical realism. Realism has become a badge of honor in philosophy and theology in proportion to the degree to which idealism has become a badge of dishonor. But few realists are aware of the fact that the pathos of realism is ultimately rooted in the prophetic pathos which tore the divine from its "mixture" with the real, thus liberating the real to be considered in itself. The reason why realistic philosophy is unaware of its religious background is that, with its transformation into philosophy, exclusive monotheism ceases to be theism, just because its God is separated from the reality with which philosophical realism deals. This does not mean that God is denied; he simply is pushed to the edge of reality as a boundary concept, as in deism. He is removed from the real with which man must deal-which is the most effective form of actual denial. Realism does not deny the realm of essences from which idealism sets out, but it considers them mere tools for dealing realistically with reality in thought and action. It does not attribute to them any power of being, and consequently it denies them the power of judging the real. Realism inevitably becomes positivism and pragmatism if it does not proceed to dialectical realism, the philosophical analogue of trinitarian monotheism.

In its philosophical transformation trinitarian monotheism appears, as we have just said, as dialectical realism. In some respects all thinking is dialectical. It moves through "yes" and "no" and "yes" again. It is always a dialogue, whether this proceeds between different subjects or in one subject. But the dialectical method goes beyond this. It presupposes that reality itself moves through "yes" and "no," through positive, negative, and positive again. The dialectical method attempts to mirror the movement of reality. It is the logical expression of a philosophy of life, for life moves through self-affirmation, going out of itself and returning to itself. No one can understand Hegel's dialectical method who does not recognize its roots in the analysis of "life" in Hegel's early writings, from the ***Early Theological Writings*** to the *Phenomenology of Mind.* Dialectical

realism tries to unite the structural oneness of everything within the absolute with the undecided and unfinished manifoldness of the real. It tries to show that the concrete is present in the depth of the ultimate.

These brief indications are designed to demonstrate the fact that the tension in man's ultimate concern and the different types of the idea of God in which it is expressed are the permanent background (visible or hidden) of the way in which philosophical absolutes are conceived. "Transformation" does not mean conscious acts whereby religious symbols are changed into philosophical concepts. It means that the openness of being-itself, which is given in the basic religious experience, is the foundation for the philosophical grasp of the structure of being. This origin of the ultimate philosophical notions explains the fact that they have had and still have tremendous influence on the development of the religious ideas of God, both supporting them and conflicting with them, and affecting religious experience as well as theological conceptualization. They form an element in the history of religion because their own foundation is religious. Theology must deal with philosophical absolutes in both respects. It must ascertain their theoretical validity, which is a philosophical question, and it must seek their existential significance, which is a religious question.

B. THE ACTUALITY OF GOD

3. GOD AS BEING

a) God us being and finite being.-The being of God is being-itself. The being of God cannot be understood as the existence of a being alongside others or above others. If God is *a* being, he is subject to the categories of finitude, especially to space and substance. Even if he is called the "highest being" in the sense of the "most perfect" and the "most powerful" being, this situation is not changed. When applied to God, superlatives become diminutives. They place him on the level of other beings while elevating him above all of them. Many theologians who have used the term "highest being" have known better. Actually they have described the highest as the absolute, as that which is on a level qualitatively different from the level of any being-even the highest being. Whenever infinite or unconditional power and meaning are attributed to the highest being, it has ceased to be *a* being and has become being-itself. Many confusions in the doctrine of God and many apologetic weaknesses could be avoided if God were understood first of all as being-itself or as the ground of being. The power of being is

another way of expressing the same thing in a circumscribing phrase. Ever since the time of Plato it has been known-although it often has been disregarded, especially by the nominalists and their modern followers-that the concept of being as being, or being-itself, points to the power inherent in everything, the power of resisting nonbeing. Therefore, instead of saying that God is first of all being-itself, it is possible to say that he is the power of being in everything and above everything, the infinite power of being. A theology which does not dare to identify God and the power of being as the first step toward a doctrine of God relapses into monarchic monotheism, for if God is not being-itself, he is subordinate to it, just as Zeus is subordinate to fate in Greek religion. The structure of being-itself is his fate, as it is the fate of all other beings. But God is his own fate; he is "by himself"; he possesses "aseity." This can be said of him only if he is the power of being, if he is being-itself.

As being-itself God is beyond the contrast of essential and existential being. We have spoken of the transition of being into existence, which involves the possibility that being will contradict and lose itself. This transition is excluded from being-itself (except in terms of the christological paradox), for being-itself does not participate in nonbeing. In this it stands in contrast to every being. As classical theology has emphasized, God is beyond essence and existence. Logically, being-itself is "before," "prior to," the split which characterizes finite being.

For this reason it is as wrong to speak of God as the universal essence as it is to speak of him as existing. If God is understood as universal essence, as the form of all forms, he is identified with the unity and totality of finite potentialities; but he has ceased to be the power of the ground in all of them, and therefore he has ceased to transcend them. He has poured all his creative power into a system of forms, and he is bound to these forms. This is what pantheism means.

On the other hand, grave difficulties attend the attempt to speak of God as existing. In order to maintain the truth that God is beyond essence and existence while simultaneously arguing for the existence of God, Thomas Aquinas is forced to distinguish hetween two kinds of divine existence: that which is identical with essence and that which is not. But an existence of God which is not united with its essence is a contradiction in terms. It makes God a being whose existence does not fulfil his essential potentialities; being and not-yet-being are "mixed" in him, as they are in everything finite. God ceases to be God, the ground of being and meaning. What really has happened is that Thomas has had

to unite two different traditions: the Augustinian, in which the divine existence is included in his essence, and the Aristotelian, which derives the existence of God from the existence of the world and which then asserts, in a second step, that his existence is identical with his essence. Thus the question of the existence of God can be neither asked nor answered. If asked, it is a question about that which by its very nature is above existence, and therefore the answer-whether negative or affirmative-implicitly denies the nature of God. It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it. God is being-itself, not *a* being. On this basis a first step can be taken toward the solution of the problem which usually is discussed as the immanence and the transcendence of God. As the power of being, God transcends every being and also the totality of beings-the world. Being-itself is beyond finitude and infinity; otherwise it would be conditioned by something other than itself, and the real power of being would lie beyond both it and that which conditioned it. Being-itself infinitely transcends every finite being. There is no proportion or gradation between the finite and the infinite. There is an absolute break, an infinite "jump." On the other hand, everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinity. Otherwise it would not have the power of being. It would be swallowed by nonbeing, or it never would have emerged out of nonbeing. This double relation of all beings to being-itself gives being-itself a double characteristic. In calling it creative, we point to the fact that everything participates in the infinite power of being. In calling it abysmal, we point to the fact that everything participates in the power of being in a finite way, that all beings are infinitely transcended by their creative ground.

Man is bound to the categories of finitude. He uses the two categories of relation-causality and substance-to express the relation of being-itself to finite beings. The "ground" can be interpreted in both ways, as the cause of finite beings and as their substance. The former has been elaborated by Leibniz in the line of the Thomistic tradition, and the latter has been elaborated by Spinoza in the line of the mystical tradition. Both ways are impossible. Spinoza establishes a naturalistic pantheism, in contrast to the idealistic type which identifies God with the universal essence of being, which denies finite freedom and in so doing denies the freedom of God. By necessity God is merged into the finite beings, and their being is his being. Here again it must be emphasized that pantheism does not say that God is everything. It says that God is the substance

of everything and that there is no substantial independence and freedom in anything finite.

Therefore, Christianity, which asserts finite freedom in man and spontaneity in the nonhuman realm, has rejected the category of substance in favor of the category of causality in attempting to express the relation of the power of being to the beings who participate in it. Causality seems to make the world dependent on God, and, at the same time, to separate God from the world in the way a cause is separated from its effect. But the category of causality cannot "fill the bill," for cause and effect are not separate; they include each other and form a series which is endless in both directions. What is cause at one point in this series is effect at another point and conversely. God as cause is drawn into this series, which drives even him beyond himself. In order to disengage the divine cause from the series of causes and effects, it is called the first cause, the absolute beginning. What this means is that the category of causality is being denied while it is being used. In other words, causality is being used not as a category but as a symbol. And if this is done and is understood, the difference between substance and causality disappears, for if God is the cause of the entire series of causes and effects, he is the substance underlying the whole process of becoming. But this "underlying" does not have the character of a substance which underlies its accidents and which is completely expressed by them. It is an underlying in which substance and accidents preserve their freedom. In other words, it is substance not as a category but as a symbol. And, if taken symbolically, there is no difference between *prima causa* and *ultima substantia.* Both mean, what can be called in a more directly symbolic term, "the creative and abysmal ground of being." In this term both naturalistic pantheism, based on the category of substance, and rationalistic theism, based on the category of causality, are overcome.

Since God is the ground of being, he is the ground of the structure of being. He is not subject to this structure; the structure is grounded in him. He is this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure. God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself. These elements make him a living God, a God who can be man's concrete concern. They enable us to use symbols which we are certain point to the ground of reality.

b) God as being ***and the knowledge of*** God.-The statement that God is being-itself is a nonsymbolic statement. It does not point beyond itself. It means what it says directly and properly; if we speak of the

actuality of God, we first assert that he is not God if he is not being-itself. Other assertions about God can be made theologically only on this basis. Of course, religious assertions do not require such a foundation for what they say about God; the foundation is implicit in every religious thought concerning God. Theologians must make explicit what is implicit in religious thought and expression; and, in order to do this, they must begin with the most abstract and completely unsymbolic statement which is possible, namely, that God is being-itself or the absolute.

However, after this has been said, nothing else can be said about God as God which is not symbolic. As we already have seen, God as being-itself is the ground of the ontological structure of being without being subject to this structure himself. He *is* the structure; that is, he has the power of determining the structure of everything that has being. Therefore, if anything beyond this bare assertion is said about God, it no longer is a direct and proper statement, no longer a concept. It is indirect, and it points to something beyond itself. In a word, it is symbolic.

The general character of the symbol has been described. Special emphasis must be laid on the insight that symbol and sign are different; that, while the sign bears no necessary relation to that to which it points, the symbol participates in the reality of that for which it stands. The sign can be changed arbitrarily according to the demands of expediency, but the symbol grows and dies according to the correlation between that which is symbolized and the persons who receive it as a symbol. Therefore, the religious symbol, the symbol which points to the divine, can be a true symbol only if it participates in the power of the divine to which it points.

There can be no doubt that any concrete assertion about God must be symbolic, for a concrete assertion is one which uses a segment of finite experience in order to say something about him. It transcends the content of this segment, although it also includes it. The segment of finite reality which becomes the vehicle of a concrete assertion about God is affirmed and negated at the same time. It becomes a symbol, for a symbolic expression is one whose proper meaning is negated by that to which it points. And yet it also is affirmed by it, and this affirmation gives the symbolic expression an adequate basis for pointing beyond itself.

The crucial question must now be faced. Can a segment of finite reality become the basis for an assertion about that which is infinite? The answer is that it can, because that which is infinite is being-itself and because everything participates in being-itself. The *analogia entis* is not

the property of a questionable natural theology which attempts to gain knowledge of God by drawing conclusions about the infinite from the finite. The *analogia entis* gives us our only justification of speaking at all about God. It is based on the fact that God must be understood as being-itself.

The truth of a religious symbol has nothing to do with the truth of the empirical assertions involved in it, be they physical, psychological, or historical. A religious symbol possesses some truth if it adequately expresses the correlation of revelation in which some person stands. A religious symbol *is* true if it adequately expresses the correlation of some person with final revelation. A religious symbol can die only if the correlation of which it is an adequate expression dies. This occurs whenever the revelatory situation changes and former symbols become obsolete. The history of religion, right up to our own time, is full of dead symbols which have been killed not by a scientific criticism of assumed superstitions but by a religious criticism of religion. The judgment that a religious symbol *is* true is identical with the judgment that the revelation of which it is the adequate expression is true. This double meaning of the truth of a symbol must be kept in mind. A symbol has truth: it is adequate to the revelation it expresses. A symbol *is* true: it is the expression of a true revelation.

Theology as such has neither the duty nor the power to confirm or to negate religious symbols. Its task is to interpret them according to theological principles and methods. In the process of interpretation, however, two things may happen: theology may discover contradictions between symbols within the theological circle and theology may speak not only as theology but also as religion. In the first case, theology can point out the religious dangers and the theological errors which follow from the use of certain symbols; in the second case, theology can become prophecy, and in this role it may contribute to a change in the revelatory situation.

Religious symbols are double-edged. They are directed toward the infinite which they symbolize *and* toward the finite through which they symbolize it. They force the infinite down to finitude and the finite up to infinity. They open the divine for the human and the human for the divine. For instance, if God is symbolized as "Father," he is brought down to the human relationship of father and child. But at the same time this human relationship is consecrated into a pattern of the divine-human relationship. If "Father" is employed as a symbol for God, father-

hood is seen in its theonomous, sacramental depth. One cannot arbitrarily "make" a religious symbol out of a segment of secular reality. Not even the collective unconscious, the great symbol-creating source, can do this. If a segment of reality is used as a symbol for God, the realm of reality from which it is taken is, so to speak, elevated into the realm of the holy. It no longer is secular. It is theonomous. If God is called the "king," something is said not only about God but also about the holy character of kinghood. If God's work is called "making whole" or "healing," this not only says something about God but also emphasizes the theonomous character of all healing. If God's self-manifestation is called "the word," this not only symbolizes God's relation to man but also emphasizes the holiness of all words as an expression of the spirit. The list could be continued. Therefore, it is not surprising that in a secular culture both the symbols for God and the theonomous character of the material from which the symbols are taken disappear.

A final word of warning must be added in view of the fact that for many people the very term "symbolic" carries the connotation of nonreal. This is partially the result of confusion between sign and symbol and partially due to the identification of reality with empirical reality, with the entire realm of objective things and events. Both reasons have been undercut explicitly and implicitly in the foregoing chapters. But one reason remains, namely, the fact that some theological movements, such as Protestant Hegelianism and Catholic modernism, have interpreted religious language symbolically in order to dissolve its realistic meaning and to weaken its seriousness, its power, and its spiritual impact. This was not the purpose of the classical essays on the "divine names," in which the symbolic character of all affirmations about God was strongly emphasized and explained in religious terms, nor was it a consequence of these essays. Their intention and their result was to give to God and to all his relations to man more reality and power than a nonsymbolic and therefore easily superstitious interpretation could give them. In this sense symbolic interpretation is proper and necessary; it enhances rather than diminishes the reality and power of religious language, and in so doing it performs an important function.

4. God as Living

a) God as being and God as living.—Life is the process in which potential being becomes actual being. It is the actualization of the structural elements of being in their unity and in their tension. These ele-

ments move divergently and convergently in every life-process; they separate and reunite simultaneously. Life ceases in the moment of separation without union or of union without separation. Both complete identity and complete separation negate life. If we call God the "living God," we deny that he is a pure identity of being as being; and we also deny that there is a definite separation of being from being in him. We assert that he is the eternal process in which separation is posited and is overcome by reunion. In this sense, God lives. Few things about God are more emphasized in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, than the truth that God is a living God. Most of the so-called anthropomorphisms of the biblical picture of God are expressions of his character as living. His actions, his passions, his remembrances and anticipations, his suffering and joy, his personal relations and his plans-all these make him a living God and distinguish him from the pure absolute, from being-itself.

Life is the actuality of being, or, more exactly, it is the process in which potential being becomes actual being. But in God as God there is no distinction between potentiality and actuality. Therefore, we cannot speak of God as living in the proper or nonsymbolic sense of the word "life." We must speak of God as living in symbolic terms. Yet every true symbol participates in the reality which it symbolizes. God lives in so far as he is the ground of life.' Anthropomorphic symbols are adequate for speaking of God religiously. Only in this way can he be the living God for man. But even in the most primitive intuition of the divine a feeling should be, and usually is, present that there is a mystery about divine names which makes them improper, self-transcending, symbolic. Religious instruction should deepen this feeling without depriving the divine names of their reality and power. One of the most surprising qualities of the prophetic utterances in the Old Testament is that, on the one hand, they always appear concrete and anthropomorphic and that, on the other hand, they preserve the mystery of the divine ground. They never deal with being as being or with the absolute as the absolute; nevertheless, they never make God a being alongside others, into something conditioned by something else which also is conditioned. Nothing is more inadequate and disgusting than the attempt to translate the concrete symbols of the Bible into less concrete and less powerful symbols. Theology should not weaken the concrete symbols, but it must analyze them and interpret them in abstract ontological terms. Nothing is more

5. "He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Ps. 94:9).

inadequate and confusing than the attempt to restrict theological work to half-abstract, half-concrete terms which do justice neither to existential intuition nor to cognitive analysis.

The ontological structure of being supplies the material for the symbols which point to the divine life. However, this does not mean that a doctrine of God can be derived from an ontological system. The character of the divine life is made manifest in revelation. Theology can only explain and systematize the existential knowledge of revelation in theoretical terms, interpreting the symbolic significance of the ontological elements and categories.

While the symbolic power of the categories appears in the relation of God to the creature, the elements give symbolic expression to the nature of the divine life itself. The polar character of the ontological elements is rooted in the divine life, but the divine life is not subject to this polarity. Within the divine life, every ontological element includes its polar element completely, without tension and without the threat of dissolution, for God is being-itself. However, there is a difference between the first and the second elements in each polarity with regard to their power of symbolizing the divine life. The elements of individualization, dynamics, and freedom represent the self or subject side of the basic ontological structure within the polarity to which they belong. The elements of participation, form, and destiny represent the world or object side of the basic ontological structure within the polarity to which they belong. Both sides are rooted in the divine life. But the first side determines the existential relationship between God and man, which is the source of all symbolization. Man is a self who has a world. As a self he is an individual person who participates universally, he is a dynamic self-transcending agent within a special and a general form, and he is freedom which has a special destiny and which participates in a general destiny. Therefore, man symbolizes that which is his ultimate concern in terms taken from his own being. From the subjective side of the polarities he takes-or more exactly, receives-the material with which he symbolizes the divine life. He sees the divine life as personal, dynamic, and free. He cannot see it in any other way, for God is man's ultimate concern, and therefore he stands in analogy to that which man himself is. But the religious mind-theologically speaking, man in the correlation of revelation-always realizes implicitly, if not explicitly, that the other side of the polarities also is completely present in the side he uses as symbolic material. God is called a person, but he is a person not in finite

separation but in an absolute and unconditional participation in everything. God is called dynamic, but he is dynamic not in tension with form but in an absolute and unconditional unity with form, so that his self-transcendence never is in tension with his self-preservation, so that he always remains God. God is called "free," but he is free not in arbitrariness but in an absolute and unconditional identity with his destiny, so that he himself is his destiny, so that the essential structures of being are not strange to his freedom but are the actuality of his freedom. In this way, although the symbols used for the divine life are taken from the concrete situation of man's relationship to God, they imply God's ultimacy, the ultimacy in which the polarities of being disappear in the ground of being, in being-itself.

The basic ontological structure of self and world is transcended in the divine life without providing symbolic material. God cannot be called a self, because the concept "self" implies separation from and contrast to everything which is not self. God cannot be called the world even by implication. Both self and world are rooted in the divine life, but they cannot become symbols for it. But the elements which constitute the basic ontological structure can become symbols because they do not speak of kinds of being (self and world) but of qualities of being which are valid in their proper sense when applied to all beings and which are valid in their symbolic sense when applied to being-itself.

b) *The* ***divine life and the ontological elements.-The*** symbols provided by the ontological elements present a great number of problems for the doctrine of God. In every special case it is necessary to distinguish between the proper sense of the concepts and their symbolic sense. And it is equally necessary to balance one side of the ontological polarity against the other without reducing the symbolic power of either of them. The history of theological thought is a continuous proof of the difficulty, the creativeness, and the danger of this situation. This is obvious if we consider the symbolic power of the polarity of individualization and participation. The symbol "personal God" is absolutely fundamental because an existential relation is a person-to-person relation. Man cannot be ultimately concerned about anything that is less than personal, but since personality ***(persona, prosopon)*** includes individuality, the question arises in what sense God can be called an individual. Is it meaningful to call him the "absolute individual"? The answer must be that it is meaningful only in the sense that he can be called the "absolute participant." The one term cannot be applied without the other. This can only

mean that both individualization and participation are rooted in the ground of the divine life and that God is equally "near" to each of them while transcending them both.

The solution of the difficulties in the phrase "personal God" follows from this. "Personal God" does not mean that God is ***a*** person. It means that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality. He is not a person, but he is. not less than personal. It should not be forgotten that classical theology employed the term ***persona*** for the trinitarian hypostases but not for God himself. God became "a person" only in the nineteenth century, in connection with the **Kantian** separation of nature ruled by physical law from personality ruled by moral law. Ordinary theism has made God a heavenly, completely perfect person who resides above the world and mankind. The protest of atheism against such a highest person is correct. There is no evidence for his existence, nor is he a matter of ultimate concern. God is not God without universal participation. "Personal God" is a confusing symbol.

God is the principle of participation as well as the principle of individualization. The divine life participates in every life as its ground and aim. God participates in everything that is; he has community with it; he shares in its destiny. Certainly such statements are highly symbolic. They can have the unfortunate logical implication that there is something alongside God in which he participates from the outside. But the divine participation creates that in which it participates. Plato uses the word ***parousia*** for the presence of the essences in temporal existence. This word later becomes the name for the preliminary and final presence of the transcendent Christ in the church and in the world. ***Par-ousia*** means "being by," "being with"-but on the basis of being absent, of being separated. In the same way God's participation is not a spatial or temporal presence. It is meant not categorically but symbolically. It is the parousia, the "being with" of that which is neither here nor there. If applied to God, participation and community are not less symbolic than individualization and personality. While active religious communication between God and man depends on the symbol of the personal God, the symbol of universal participation expresses the passive experience of the divine parousia in terms of the divine omnipresence.

The polarity of dynamics and form supplies the material basis for a group of symbols which are central for any presentday doctrine of God. Potentiality, vitality, and self-transcendence are indicated in the term

"dynamics," while the term "form" embraces actuality, intentionality, and self-preservation.

Potentiality and actuality appear in classical theology in the famous formula that God is *actus purus,* the pure form in which everything potential is actual, and which is the eternal self-intuition of the divine fulness (*pleroma*). In this formula the dynamic side in the dynamics-form polarity is swallowed by the form side. Pure actuality, that is, actuality free from any element of potentiality, is a fixed result; it is not alive. Life includes the separation of potentiality and actuality. The nature of life is actualization, not actuality. The God who is *actus purus* is not the living God. It is interesting that even those theologians who have used the concept of *actus purus* normally speak of God in the dynamic symbols of the Old Testament and of Christian experience. This situation has induced some thinkers-partly under the influence of Luther's dynamic conception of God and partly under the impact of the problem of evil-to emphasize the dynamics in God and to depreciate the stabilization of dynamics in pure actuality. They try to distinguish between two elements in God, and they assert that, in so far as God is a living God, these two elements must remain in tension. Whether the first element is called the *Ungrund* or the "nature in God" (Böhme), or the first potency (Schelling), or the will (Schopenhauer), or the "given" in God (Brightman), or *me-onic* freedom (Berdyaev), or the contingent (Hartshome)-in all these cases it is an expression of what we have called "dynamics," and it is an attempt to prevent the dynamics in God from being transformed into pure actuality.

Theological criticism of these attempts is easy if the concepts are taken in their proper sense, for then they make God finite, dependent on a fate or an accident which is not himself. The finite God, if taken literally, is a finite god, a polytheistic god. But this is not the way in which these concepts should be interpreted. They point symbolically to a quality of the divine life which is analogous to what appears as dynamics in the ontological structure. The divine creativity, God's participation in history, his outgoing character, are based on this dynamic element. It includes a "not yet" which is, however, always balanced by an "already" within the divine life. It is not an absolute "not yet," which would make it a divine-demonic power, nor is the "already" an absolute already. It also can be expressed as the negative element in the ground of being which is overcome as negative in the process of being-itself. As such it is the basis of the negative element in the creature,

in which it is not overcome but is effective as a threat and a potential disruption.

These assertions include a rejection of a nonsymbolic, ontological doctrine of God as becoming. If we say that being is actual as life, the element of self-transcendence is obviously and emphatically included. But it is included as a symbolic element in balance with form. Being is not in balance with becoming. Being comprises becoming and rest, becoming as an implication of dynamics and rest as an implication of form. If we say that God is being-itself, this includes both rest and becoming, both the static and the dynamic elements. However, to speak of a "becoming" God disrupts the balance between dynamics and form and subjects God to a process which has the character of a fate or which is completely open to the future and has the character of an absolute accident. In both cases the divinity of God is undercut. The basic error of these doctrines is their metaphysical-constructive character. They apply the ontological elements to God in a nonsymbolic manner and are driven to religiously offensive and theologically untenable consequences.

If the element of form in the dynamics-form polarity is applied symbolically to the divine life, it expresses the actualization of its potentialities. The divine life inescapably unites possibility with fulfilment. Neither side threatens the other, nor is there a threat of disruption. In terms of self-preservation one could say that God cannot cease to be God. His going-out from himself does not diminish or destroy his divinity. It is united with the eternal "resting in himself."

The divine form must be conceived in analogy with what we have called "intentionality" on the human level. It is balanced with vitality, the dynamic side on the human level. The polarity in this formulation appears in classical theology as the polarity of will and intellect in God. It is consistent that Thomas Aquinas had to subordinate the will in God to the intellect when he accepted the Aristotelian *actus purus* as the basic character of God. And it must be remembered that the line of theological thought which tries to preserve the element of dynamics in God actually begins with Duns Scotus, who elevated the will in God over the intellect. Of course, both will and intellect in their application to God express infinitely more than the mental acts of willing and understanding as these appear in human experience. They are symbols for dynamics in all its ramifications and for form as the meaningful structure of being-itself. Therefore, it is not a question of metaphysical psychology, whether Aquinas or Duns Scotus is right. It is a question of the

way in which psychological concepts should be employed as symbols for the divine life. And with respect to this question it is obvious that for more than a century a decision has been made in favor of the dynamic element. The philosophy of life, existential philosophy, and process philosophy agree on this point. Protestantism has contributed strong motives for this decision, but theology must balance the new with the old (predominantly Catholic) emphasis on the form character of the divine life.

If we consider the polarity of freedom and destiny in its symbolic value, we find that there hardly is a word said about God in the Bible which does not point directly or indirectly to his freedom. In freedom he creates, in freedom he deals with the world and man, in freedom he saves and fulfils. His freedom is freedom from anything prior to him or alongside him. Chaos cannot prevent him from speaking the word which makes light out of darkness; the evil deeds of men cannot prevent him from carrying through his plans; the good deeds of men cannot force him to reward them; the structure of being cannot prevent him from revealing himself; etc. Classical theology has spoken in more abstract terms of the aseity of God, of his being ***a se,*** selfderived. There is no ground prior to him which could condition his freedom; neither chaos nor nonbeing has power to limit or resist him. But aseity also means that there is nothing given in God which is not at the same time affirmed by his freedom. If taken nonsymbolically, this naturally leads to an unanswerable question, whether the structure of freedom, because it constitutes his freedom, is not itself something given in relation to which God has no freedom. The answer can only be that freedom, like the other ontological concepts, must be understood symbolically and in terms of the existential correlation of man and God. If taken in this way, freedom means that that which is man's ultimate concern is in no way dependent on man or on any finite being or on any finite concern. Only that which is unconditional can be the expression of unconditional concern. A conditioned God is no God.

Can the term "destiny" be applied symbolically to the divine life? The gods of polytheism have a destiny-or, more correctly, a fate-because they are not ultimate. But can one say that he who is unconditional and absolute has a destiny in the same manner in which he has freedom? Is it possible to attribute destiny to being-itself? It is possible, provided the connotation of a destinydetermining power above God is avoided and provided one adds that God is his own destiny and that in God

freedom and destiny are one. It may be argued that this truth is more adequately expressed if destiny is replaced by necessity, not mechanical necessity, but structural necessity, of course, or if God is spoken of as being his own law. Such phrases are important as interpretations, but they lack two elements of meaning which are present in the word "destiny." They lack the mystery of that which precedes any structure and law, being-itself; and they lack the relation to history which is included in the term "destiny." If we say that God is his own destiny, we point both to the infinite mystery of being and to the participation of God in becoming and in history.

c) God ***as spirit and the trinitarian principles.***—Spirit is the unity of the ontological elements and the ***telos*** of life. Actualized as life, being-itself is fulfilled as spirit. The word ***telos*** expresses the relation of life and spirit more precisely than the words "aim" or "goal." It expresses the inner directedness of life toward spirit, the urge of life to become spirit, to fulfil itself as spirit. ***Telos*** stands for an inner, essential, necessary aim, for that in which a being fulfils its own nature. God as living is God fulfilled in himself and therefore spirit. God ***is*** spirit. This is the most embracing, direct, and unrestricted symbol for the divine life. It does not need to be balanced with another symbol, because it includes all the ontological elements.

Some anticipatory remarks about spirit must be made at this point, although the doctrine of the spirit is the subject of a separate part of systematic theology. The word "spirit" (with a lower-case s) has almost disappeared from the English language as a significant philosophical term, in contrast to German, French, and Italian, in which the words ***Geist, esprit,*** and ***spirito*** have preserved their philosophical standing. Probably this is a result of the radical separation of the cognitive function of the mind from emotion and will, as typified in English empiricism. In any case, the word "spirit" appears predominantly in a religious context, and here it is spelled with a capital ***S.*** But it is impossible to understand the meaning of Spirit unless the meaning of spirit is understood, for Spirit is the symbolic application of spirit to the divine life.

The meaning of spirit is built up through the meaning of the ontological elements and their union. In terms of both sides of the three polarities one can say that spirit is the unity of power and meaning. On the side of power it includes centered personality, self-transcending vitality, and freedom of self-determination. On the side of meaning it includes universal participation, forms and structures of reality, and

limiting and directing destiny. Life fulfilled as spirit embraces passion as much as truth, libido as much as surrender, will to power as much as justice. If one of these sides is absorbed by its correlate, either abstract law or choatic movement remains. Spirit does not stand in contrast to body. Life as spirit transcends the duality of body and mind. It also transcends the triplicity of body, soul, and mind, in which soul is actual life-power and mind and body are its functions. Life as spirit is the life of the soul, which includes mind and body, but not as realities alongside the soul. Spirit is not a "part," nor is it a special function. It is the all-embracing function in which all elements of the structure of being participate. Life as spirit can be found by man only in man, for only in him is the structure of being completely realized.

The statement that God is Spirit means that life as spirit is the inclusive symbol for the divine life. It contains all the ontological elements. God is not nearer to one "part" of being or to a special function of being than he is to another. As Spirit he is as near to the creative darkness of the unconscious as he is to the critical light of cognitive reason. Spirit is the power through which meaning lives, and it is the meaning which gives direction to power. God as Spirit is the ultimate unity of both power and meaning. In contrast to Nietzsche, who identified the two assertions that God is Spirit and that God is dead, we must say that God is the living God because he is Spirit.

Any discussion of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity must begin with the christological assertion that Jesus is the Christ. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is a corroboration of the christological dogma. The situation is different if we do not ask the question of the Christian doctrines but rather the question of the ***presuppositions*** of these doctrines in an idea of God. Then we must speak about the trinitarian principles, and we must begin with the Spirit rather than with the Logos. God is Spirit, and any trinitarian statement must be derived from this basic assertion.

God's life is life as spirit, and the trinitarian principles are moments within the process of the divine life. Human intuition of the divine always has distinguished between the abyss of the divine (the element of power) and the fulness of its content (the element of meaning), between the divine depth and the divine logos. The first principle is the basis of Godhead, that which makes God God. It is the root of his majesty, the unapproachable intensity of his being, the inexhaustible ground of being in which everything has its origin. It is the power of being infinitely resisting nonbeing, giving the power of being to everything that is. During the past centuries theological and philosophical rationalism have deprived the idea of God of this first principle, and by doing so they have robbed God of his divinity. He has become a hypostasized moral ideal or another name for the structural unity of reality. The power of the Godhead has disappeared.

The classical term ***logos*** is most adequate for the second principle, that of meaning and structure. It unites meaningful structure with creativity. Long before the Christian Era- i n a way already in Heraclitus—***logos*** received connotations of ultimacy as well as the meaning of being as being. According to Parmenides, being and the logos of being cannot be separated. The logos opens the divine ground, its infinity and its darkness, and it ***makes*** its fulness distinguishable, definite, finite. The logos has been called the mirror of the divine depth, the principle of God's self-objectification. In the logos God speaks his "word," both in himself and beyond himself. Without the second principle the first principle would be chaos, burning fire, but it would not be the creative ground. Without the second principle God is demonic, is characterized by absolute seclusion, is the "naked absolute" (Luther).

As the actualization of the other two principles, the Spirit is the third principle. Both power and meaning are contained in it and united in it. It makes them creative. The third principle is in a way the whole (God ***is*** Spirit), and in a way it is a special principle (God has the Spirit as he has the logos). It is the Spirit in whom God "goes out from" himself, the Spirit proceeds from the divine ground. He gives actuality to that which is potential in the divine ground and "outspoken" in the divine ***logos.*** Through the Spirit the divine fulness is posited in the divine life as something definite, and at the same time it is reunited in the divine ground. The finite is posited as finite within the process of the divine life, but it is reunited with the infinite within the same process. It is distinguished from the infinite, but it is not separated from it. The divine life is infinite mystery, but it is not infinite emptiness. It is the ground of all abundance, and it is abundant itself.

The consideration of the trinitarian principles is not the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is a preparation for it, nothing more. The dogma of the Trinity can be discussed only after the christological dogma has been elaborated. But the trinitarian principles appear whenever one speaks meaningfully of the living God.

The divine life is infinite, but in such a way that the finite is posited

in it in a manner which transcends potentiality and actuality. Therefore, it is not precise to identify God with the infinite. This can be done on some levels of analysis. If man and his world are described as finite, God is infinite in contrast to them. But the analysis must go beyond this level in both directions. Man is aware of his finitude because he has the power of transcending it and of looking at it. Without this awareness he could not call himself mortal. On the other hand, that which is infinite would not be infinite if it were limited by the finite. God is infinite because he has the finite (and with it that element of nonbeing which belongs to finitude) within himself united with his infinity. One of the functions of the symbol "divine life" is to point to this situation.

5. God as Creating

Introduction : creation and finitude.—The divine life is creative, actualizing itself in inexhaustible abundance. The divine life and the divine creativity are not different. God is creative because he is God. Therefore, it is meaningless to ask whether creation is a necessary or a contingent act of God. Nothing is necessary for God in the sense that he is dependent on a necessity above him. His aseity implies that everything which he is he is through himself. He eternally "creates himself," a paradoxical phrase which states God's freedom. Nor is creation contingent. It does not "happen" to God, for it is identical with his life. Creation is not only God's freedom but also his destiny. But it is not a fate; it is neither a necessity nor an accident which determines him.

The doctrine of creation is not the story of an event which took place "once upon a time." It is the basic description of the relation between God and the world. It is the correlate to the analysis of man's finitude. It answers the question implied in man's finitude and in finitude generally. In giving this answer, it discovers that the meaning of finitude is creatureliness. The doctrine of creation is the answer to the question implied in the creature as creature. This question is asked continually and is always answered in man's essential nature. The question and the answer are beyond potentiality and actuality, as all things are in the process of the divine life. But actually the question is asked and is ***not*** answered in man's existential situation. The character of existence is that man asks the question of his finitude without receiving an answer. It follows that even if there were such a thing as natural theology, it could not reach the truth of God's creativity and man's creatureliness. The doctrine of creation does not describe an event. It points to the situation of creatureliness and to its correlate, the divine creativity.

Since the divine life is essentially creative, all three modes of time must be used in symbolizing it. God ***has*** created the world, he ***is*** creative in the present moment, and he ***will*** creatively fulfil his ***telos.*** Therefore, we must speak of originating creation, sustaining creation, and directing creation. This means that not only the preservation of the world but also providence is subsumed under the doctrine of the divine creativity.

a) God's originating creativity.-(l) Creation and Nonbeing: The classical Christian doctrine of creation uses the phrase ***creatio ex nihilo.*** The first task of theology is an interpretation of these words. Their obvious meaning is a critical negation. God finds nothing "given" to him which influences him in his creativity or which resists his creative ***telos.*** The doctrine of ***creatio ex nihilo*** is Christianity's protection against any type of ultimate dualism. That which concerns man ultimately can only be that on which he ultimately depends. Two ultimates destroy the ultimacy of concern. This negative meaning of ***creatio ex nihilo*** is clear and decisive for every Christian experience and assertion. It is the mark of distinction between paganism, even in its most refined form, and Christianity, even in its most primitive form.

The question arises, however, whether the term ***ex nihilo*** points to more than the rejection of dualism. The word ***ex*** seems to refer to the origin of the creature. "Nothing" is what (or where) it comes from. Now "nothing" can mean two things. It can mean the absolute negation of being (***ouk*** on), or it can mean the relative negation of being (me on). If ***ex nihilo*** meant the latter, it would be a restatement of the Greek doctrine of matter and form against which it is directed. If ***ex nihilo*** meant the absolute negation of being, it could not be the origin of the creature. Nevertheless, the term ***ex nihilo*** says something fundamentally important about the creature, namely, that it must take over what might be called "the heritage of nonbeing." Creatureliness implies nonbeing, but creatureliness is more than nonbeing. It carries in itself the power of being, and this power of being is its participation in being-itself, in the creative ground of being. Being a creature includes both the heritage of nonbeing (anxiety) and the heritage of being (courage). It does not include a strange heritage originating in a halfdivine power which is in conflict with the power of being-itself.

The doctrine of creation out of nothing expresses two fundamental truths. The first is that the tragic character of existence is not rooted in the creative ground of being; consequently, it does not belong to the

essential nature of things. In itself finitude is not tragic, that is, it is not doomed to selfdestruction by its very greatness. Therefore, the tragic is not conquered by avoiding the finite as much as possible, that is, by ontological asceticism. The tragic is conquered by the presence of being-itself within the finite.[6] The second truth expressed in this doctrine is that there is an element of nonbeing in creatureliness; this gives insight into the natural necessity of death and into the potentiality but not necessity of the tragic.

Two central theological doctrines are based on the doctrine of creation, namely, incarnation and eschatology. God can appear within finitude only if the finite as such is not in conflict with him. And history can be fulfilled in the *eschaton* only if salvation does not presuppose elevation above finitude. The formula *creatio ex nihilo* is not the title of a story. It is the classical formula which expresses the relation between God and the world.

(2) Creation, Essence, and Existence : In the Nicene Creed, God is called the creator of "everything visible and invisible." Like the formula just discussed, this phrase also has, first of all, a protective function. It is directed against the Platonic doctrine that the creator-god is dependent on the eternal essences or ideas, the powers of being which make a thing what it is. These eternal powers of being could receive a kind of divine honor in opposition to, or at least in distinction from, the adoration due God alone. They could be identified with the angels of Middle Eastern tradition (who often are dispossessed gods) and made the objects of a cult. This occurred even within Christianity, as the New Testament shows. Neo-Platonism, and with it much Christian theology, taught that the essences are ideas in the divine mind. They are the patterns according to which God creates. They are themselves dependent on God's internal creativity; they are not independent of him, standing in some heavenly niche as models for his creative activity. The essential powers of being belong to the divine life in which they are rooted, created by him who is everything he is "through himself."

There is no difference in the divine life between potentiality and actuality. This solves one of the most difficult problems connected with the ontology of essences, namely, how essences are related to universals, on the one hand, and to individuals, on the other hand. The more individualized the conception of the essences, the more they constitute a

6. Christian asceticism is functional rather than ontological; it serves self-discipline and self-surrender; it does not seek an escape from finitude.

duplicate of reality. This is radically carried through in the view which the later Platonists taught that there is an idea of every individual thing in the divine mind. Here the ideas lose the function they had in the original conception, which was to describe the eternally true within the flux of reality. It is understandable that nominalism abolished this duplication of the world and attributed being only to individual things, but nominalism cannot deny the power of the universals which reappear in every individual exemplar and which determine its nature and its growth. And even in the individual, notably in the individual man, there is an inner *telos* which transcends the various moments of the process of his life.

The creative process of the divine life precedes the differentiation between essences and existents. In the creative vision of God the individual is present as a whole in his essential being and inner *telos* and, at the same time, in the infinity of the special moments of his life-process. Of course, this is said symbolically, since we are unable to have a perception or even an imagination of that which belongs to the divine life. The mystery of being beyond essence and existence is hidden in the mystery of the creativity of the divine life.

But man's being is not only hidden in the creative ground of the divine life; it also is manifest to itself and to other life within the whole of reality. Man does exist, and his existence is different from his essence. Man and the rest of reality are not only "inside" the process of the divine life but also "outside" it. Man is grounded in it, but he is not kept within the ground. Man has left the ground in order to "stand upon" himself, to actualize what he essentially is, in order to be ***finite freedom.*** This is the point at which the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of the fall join. It is the most difficult and the most dialectical point in the doctrine of creation. And, as every existential analysis of the human situation shows, it is the most mysterious point in human experience. Fully developed creatureliness is fallen creatureliness. The creature has actualized its freedom in so far as it is outside the creative ground of the divine life. This is the difference between being inside and being outside the divine life. "Inside" and "outside" are spatial symbols, but what they say is not spatial. They refer to something qualitative rather than quantitative. To be outside the divine life means to stand in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence. Seen from one side, this is the end of creation. Seen from the other side, it is the beginning of the fall. Freedom and destiny are correlates. The point

at which creation and fall coincide is as much a matter of destiny as it is a matter of freedom. The fact that it is a universal situation proves that it is not a matter of individual contingency, either in "Adam" or in anyone else. The fact that it separates existence from its unity with essence indicates that it is not a matter of structural necessity. It is the actualization of ontological freedom united with ontological destiny.

Every theologian who is courageous enough to face the twofold truth that nothing can happen to God accidentally and that the state of existence is a fallen state must accept the point of coincidence between the end of creation and the beginning of the fall. Those theologians who are not willing to interpret the biblical creation story and the story of the fall as reports about two actual events should draw the consequence and posit the mystery where it belongs-in the unity of freedom and destiny in the ground of being. The supralapsarian Calvinists, who asserted that Adam fell by divine decree, had the courage to face this situation. But they did not have the wisdom to formulate their insight in such a way that the seemingly demonic character of this decree was avoided.

To sum up the discussion : being a creature means both to be rooted in the creative ground of the divine life and to actualize one's self through freedom. Creation is fulfilled in the creaturely self-realization which simultaneously is freedom and destiny. But it is fulfilled through separation from the creative ground through a break between existence and essence. Creaturely freedom is the point at which creation and the fall coincide.

This is the background of what is called "human creativity." If creativity means "to bring the new into being," man is creative in every direction-with respect to himself and his world, with respect to being and with respect to meaning. However, if creativity means "to bring into being that which had no being," then divine and human creativity differ sharply. Man creates new syntheses out of given material. This creation really is transformation. God creates the material out of which the new syntheses can be developed. God creates man; he gives man the power of transforming himself and his world. Man can transform only what is given to him. God is primarily and essentially creative; man is secondarily and existentially creative. And, beyond this, in every act of human creativity the element of separation from the creative ground is effective. Human creation is ambiguous.'

(3) Creation and the Categories: The primacy of time as a category of

7. See Part IV, Sec. 1.

finitude is expressed in the fact that the question of creation and the categories usually is discussed as the question of the relation between creation and time. If creation is symbolized as a past event, it is natural to ask what happened before this event took place. Certainly the question is absurd; it has been rejected on philosophical as well as on religious grounds, with arguments as well as with "holy wrath" (Luther). But the absurdity does not lie in the question as such; it lies in its presupposition : creation is an event in the past. This presupposition subjects creation to time, and time inescapably implies "before" and "after." The traditional theological formula since Augustine has been that time was created *with* the world, of which it is the basic categorical form. Sometimes, however, theologians have suspected that this formula implies an eternal creation, that creation is coeternal with God although temporal in its content. They assert creation in time while rejecting a pre-creation time. Karl Barth is a contemporary example. Yet this position seems to differ from the Augustinian only in vocabulary, not in substance.

The answer to the question of creation and time must be derived from the creative character of the divine life. If the finite is posited within the process of the divine life, the forms of finitude (the categories) also are present in it. The divine life includes temporality, but it is not subject to it. The divine eternity includes time and transcends it. The time of the divine life is determined not by the negative element of creaturely time but by the present, not by the "no longer" and the "not yet" of our time. Our time, the time which is determined by nonbeing, is the time of existence. It presupposes the separation of existence from essence and the existential disruption of the moments of time which are essentially united within the divine life.

Time, then, has a double character with respect to creation. It belongs to the creative process of the divine life as well as to the point of creation which coincides with the fall. Time participates in the destiny of everything created to be rooted in the divine ground beyond essence and existence and to be separated from the divine ground through creaturely freedom and creaturely destiny. Therefore, if one speaks of time before creation, this can only mean the divine time which is not "before" in any sense of temporal existence. And if one speaks of creation in time, this can only mean the transformation of the time which belongs to the divine life into the time which belongs to creaturely existence. It is more adequate to speak of creation *with* time, for time is the form of finitude in the creative ground of the divine life as well as in creaturely existence.

Analogous statements can be made with regard to the other categories. All of them are present within the creative ground of the divine life in a manner which must be indicated symbolically. And all of them are present in the way we experience them in the existence of actualized freedom, in the fulfilment and the self-estrangement of creaturely being.

(4) The Creature: In maintaining that the fulfilment of creation is the actualization of finite freedom, we affirm implicitly that man is the *telos* of creation. Of no other being that is known can it be said that finite freedom is actualized within it. In other beings there are preformations of freedom, such as Gestalt and spontaneity, but the power of transcending the chain of stimulus and response by deliberation and decision is absent. No other being has a complete self and a complete world; no other being is aware of finitude on the basis of an awareness of potential infinity. If another being were found which, in spite of biological differences, had these qualities, it would be human. And if among men a being were found of a like biological nature, but without the previously mentioned qualities, it would not be called "man." But both cases are imaginary, since biological structure and ontological character cannot be separated.

Man as creature has been called the "image of God." This biblical phrase is interpreted as differently as the Christian doctrine of man. The discussion is complicated by the fact that the biblical report uses two terms for this idea, which were translated as *imago* and *similitudo.* These were distinguished in their meaning (Irenaeus). ***Imago*** was supposed to point to the natural equipment of man; ***similitudo,*** to the special divine gift, the ***donum superadditum,*** which gave Adam the power of adhering to God. Protestantism, denying the ontological dualism between nature and supranature, rejected the ***donum superadditum*** and with it the distinction between ***imago*** and *similitudo.* Man in his pure nature is not only the image of God; he has also the power of communion with God and therefore of righteousness toward other creatures and himself ***(justitia originalis).*** With the fall this power has been lost. Man is separated from God, and he has no freedom of return. For the Roman Catholic doctrine the power of communion with God is only weakened, and some freedom of turning toward God remains. The difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism here is dependent on a whole group of decisions, basically on the interpretation of grace. If grace is supranatural substance, the Catholic position is consistent. If it is forgiveness received in the center of one's personality, the Protestant position

is necessary. The criticism of an ontological supranaturalism in the previous chapters implies the rejection of the Catholic doctrine.

But two problems remain in spite of much discussion on Protestant soil, namely, the exact meaning of "image of God" and the nature of man's created goodness. An adequate handling of the first problem demands avoidance of a confusion between image of God and relation to God. Certainly man can have communion with God only because he is made in his image, but this does not mean that the image can be defined by communion with God. Man is the image of God in that in which he differs from all other creatures, namely, his rational structure. Of course, the term "rational" is subject to many misinterpretations. Rational can be defined as technical reason in the sense of arguing and calculating. Then the Aristotelian definition of man as ***animal rationale*** is as wrong as the description of the image of God in man in terms of his rational nature. But reason is the structure of freedom, and it implies potential infinity. Man is the image of God because in him the ontological elements are complete and united on a creaturely basis, just as they are complete and united in God as the creative ground. Man is the image of God because his logos is analogous to the divine logos, so that the divine logos can appear as man without destroying the humanity of man.

The second frequently discussed and differently answered question in Protestant theology is that of man's created goodness. The early theologians attributed to Adam as the representative of man's essential nature all perfections otherwise reserved for Christ or to man in his eschatological fulfilment. Such a description made the fall entirely unintelligible. Therefore, recent theology rightly attributes to Adam a kind of dreaming innocence, a stage of infancy before contest and decision. This interpretation of the "original state" of man makes the fall understandable and its occurrence existentially unavoidable. It has much more symbolic truth than the "praise of Adam" before the fall. The goodness of man's created nature is that he is given the possibility and necessity of actualizing himself and of becoming independent by his self-actualization, in spite of the estrangement unavoidably connected with it. Therefore, it is inadequate to ask questions concerning Adam's actual state before the fall; for example, if he was mortal or immortal, whether or not he was in communion with God, whether or not he was in a state of righteousness. The verb "was" presupposes actualization in time. But this is exactly what cannot be asserted of the state which transcends potentiality and actuality. This is true even if we use a psychological sym-

bol and speak of the state of dreaming innocence, or if we use a theological symbol and speak of the state of being hidden in the ground of the divine life. One can speak of "was" only after the moment in which the divine command threw Adam into self-actualization through freedom and destiny.

Man is the creature in which the ontological elements are complete. They are incomplete in all creatures, which (for this very reason) are called "subhuman." Subhuman does not imply less perfection than in the case of the human. On the contrary, man as the essentially threatened creature cannot compare with the natural perfection of the subhuman creatures. Subhuman points to a different ontological level, not to a different degree of perfection. The question has to be asked whether there are superhuman beings in an ontological sense. From the standpoint both of religious imagination and of philosophical construction (Neo-Platonism, Leibniz), an affirmative answer has to be given. In these approaches the universe has been pictured as populated with spirits, angels, higher monads. Whether such beings, if they exist, should be called "superhuman" depends on one's judgment about the ultimate significance of freedom and history. If, according to Paul, the angels desire to look into the mystery of salvation, they are certainly no higher than those who experience this mystery in their own salvation. The most adequate solution of this question is given by Thomas Aquinas when he declares that the angels transcend the polarity of individuality and universality. In our terminology we could say that the angels are concrete-poetic symbols of the structures or powers of being. They are not beings but participate in everything that is. Their "epiphany" is a revelatory experience determining the history of religion and culture. They underlie the figures of the great mythological gods as well as the decisive cultural symbolism before and within the Christian Era. They are subjected to the Christ. They must serve him, though they often revolt against him. They are as effective as when they first appeared. They appear again and again with different faces but with the same substance and power.[8]

A last question must be asked, namely, how does man participate in the subhuman creature and vice versa? The classical answer is that man is the microcosmos because in him all levels of reality are present. In the

8. Their rediscovery from the psychological side as archetypes of the collective unconscious and the new interpretation of the demonic in theology and literature have contributed to the understanding of these powers of being, which are not beings, but structures.

myths of the "original man," the "man from above," "The Man" (cf. especially the Persian tradition and I Corinthians, chap. 15) and in similar philosophical ideas (cf. Paracelsus, Böhme, Schelling) the mutual. participation of, man and nature is symbolically expressed. The myth of the curse overnature and its potential participation in salvation points in the same direction. All this is hard to understand in a culture which is determined by nominalism and individuals. But it belongs to a heritage which the Western mind is about to reconquer. The problem is most urgent when Christian theology deals with the fall and the salvation of the world. Does "world" refer to the human race alone? And, if so, can the human race be separated from other beings? Where is the boundary line in the general biological development; where is the boundary line in the development of the individual man? Is it possible to separate the nature which belongs to him through his body from universal nature? Does the unconscious realm of man's personality belong to nature or to man? Does the collective unconscious admit of the isolation of the individual from the other individuals and from the whole of the living substance? These questions show that the element of participation in the polarity of individualization and participation must be considered much more seriously with respect to the mutual participation of nature and man. Here theology should learn from modern naturalism, which at this point can serve as an introduction to a half-forgotten theological truth. What happens in the microcosm happens by mutual participation in the macrocosmos, for being itself is one.

b) God's *sustaining creativity.*—Man actualizes his finite freedom in unity with the whole of reality. This actualization includes structural independence, the power of standing upon one's self, and the possibility of resisting the return to the ground of being. At the same time, actualized freedom remains continuously dependent on its creative ground. Only in the power of being-itself is the creature able to resist nonbeing. Creaturely existence includes a double resistance, that is, resistance against nonbeing as well as resistance against the ground of being in which it is rooted and upon which it is dependent. Traditionally the relation of God to the creature in its actualized freedom is called the preservation of the world. The symbol of preservation implies the independent existence of that which is preserved as well as the necessity of protection against threats of destruction. The doctrine of the preservation of the world is the door through which deistic concepts easily creep into the theological system. The world is conceived as an independent

structure which moves according to its own laws. God certainly created the world "in the beginning" and gave it the laws of nature. But after its beginning he either does not interfere at all (consistent deism) or only occasionally through miracles and revelation (theistic deism), or he acts in a continual interrelationship (consistent theism). In these three cases, it would not be proper to speak of sustaining creation.

Since the time of Augustine, another interpretation of the preservation of the world is given. Preservation is continuous creativity, in that God out of eternity creates things and time together. Here is the only adequate understanding of preservation. It was accepted by the Reformers; it was powerfully expressed by Luther and radically worked out by Calvin, who added a warning against the deistic danger which he anticipated. This line of thought must be followed and made into a line of defense against the contemporary halfdeistic, half-theistic way of conceiving God as a being alongside the world. God is essentially creative, and therefore he is creative in every moment of temporal existence, giving the power of being to everything that has being out of the creative ground of the divine life. There is, however, a decisive difference between originating and sustaining creativity. The latter refers to the given structures of reality, to that which continues within the change, to the regular and calculable in things. Without the static element, finite being would not be able to identify itself with itself or anything with anything. Without it, neither expectation, nor action for the future, nor a place to stand upon would be possible; and therefore being would not be possible. The faith in God's sustaining creativity is the faith in the continuity of the structure of reality as the basis for being and acting.

The main current of the modern world view completely excluded the awareness of God's sustaining creativity. Nature was considered a system of measurable and calculable laws resting in themselves without beginning or end. The "well-founded earth" was a safe place within a safe universe. Although no one would deny that every special thing was threatened by nonbeing, the structure of the whole seemed beyond such a threat. Consequently, one could speak of *deus sive natura,* a phrase which indicates that the name "God" does not add anything to what is already involved in the name "nature." One may call such ideas "pantheistic"; but, if one does, one must realize that they are not much different from a deism which consigns God to the fringe of reality and relegates to the world the same independence which it has in naturalistic pantheism. The symbol of God's sustaining creativity has disappeared in

both cases. Today the main trend of the modern world view has been reversed. The foundations of the self-sufficient universe have been shaken. The questions of its beginning and end have become theoretically significant, pointing to the element of nonbeing in the universe as a whole. At the same time, the feeling of living in an ultimately secure world has been destroyed through the catastrophes of the twentieth century and the corresponding existentialist philosophy and literature. The symbol of God's sustaining creativity received a new significance and power.

The question whether the relation between God and the world should be expressed in terms of immanence or transcendence is usually answered by an "as well as." Such an answer, although it is correct, does not solve any problem. Immanence and transcendence are spatial symbols. God is in or above the world or both. The question is what does this mean in nonspatial terms? Certainly, God is neither in another nor in the same space as the world. He is the creative ground of the spatial structure of the world, but he is not bound to the structure, positively or negatively. The spatial symbol points to a qualitative relation: God is immanent in the world as its permanent creative ground and is transcendent to the world through freedom. Both infinite divinity and finite human freedom make the world transcendent to God and God transcendent to the world. The religious interest in the divine transcendence is not satisfied where one rightly asserts the infinite transcendence of the infinite over the finite. This transcendence does not contradict but rather confirms the coincidence of the opposites. The infinite is present in everything finite, in the stone as well as in the genius. Transcendence demanded by religious experience is the freedom-to-freedom relationship which is actual in every personal encounter. Certainly, the holy is the "quite other." But the otherness is not really conceived as otherness if it remains in the aesthetic-cognitive realm and is not experienced as the otherness of the divine "Thou," whose freedom may conflict with my freedom. The meaning of the spatial symbols for the divine transcendence is the possible conflict and the possible reconciliation of infinite and finite freedom.

c) God's directing creativity.-(1) Creation and Purpose: "The purpose of creation" is such an ambiguous concept that it should be avoided. Creation has no purpose beyond itself. From the point of view of the creature, the purpose of creation is the creature itself and the actualization of its potentialities. From the point of view of the creator, the purpose of creation is the exercise of his creativity, which has no purpose

beyond itself because the divine life is essentially creative. If "the glory of God" is designated as the purpose of creation, as it is in Calvinist theologies, it is necessary, first of all, to understand the highly symbolic character of such a statement. No Calvinist theologian will admit that God lacks something which he must secure from the creature he has created. Such an idea is rejected as pagan. In creating the world, God is the sole cause of the glory he wishes to secure through his creation. But if he is the sole cause of his glory, he does not need the world to give him glory. He possesses it eternally in himself. In Lutheran theologies God's purpose is to have a communion of love with his creatures. God creates the world because the divine love wishes an object of love in addition to itself. Here again the implication is that God needs something he could not have without creation. Reciprocal love is interdependent love. Yet, according to Lutheran theology, there is nothing which the created world can offer God. He is the only one who gives.

The concept "the purpose of creation" should be replaced by "the *telos* of creativity"—the inner aim of fulfilling in actuality what is beyond potentiality and actuality in the divine life. One function of the divine creativity is to drive every creature toward such a fulfilment. Thus directing creativity must be added to originating and sustaining creation. It is the side of the divine creativity which is related to the future. The traditional term for directing creativity is "providence."

(2) Fate and Providence: Providence is a paradoxical concept. Faith in providence is faith "in spite of"- i n spite of the darkness of fate and of the meaninglessness of existence. The term ***pronoia*** ("providence") ap pears in Plato in the context of a philosophy which has overcome the darkness of transhuman and transdivine fate by means of the idea of the good as the ultimate power of being and of knowing. Faith in historical providence is the triumph of the prophetic interpretation of history—an interpretation which gives meaning to historical existence in spite of never ending experiences of meaninglessness. In the late ancient world fate conquered providence and established a reign of terror among the masses; but Christianity emphasized the victory of Christ over the forces of fate and fear just when they seemed to have overwhelmed him at the cross. Here faith in providence was definitively established.

Within the Christian Era, however, there has been a development toward the transformation of providence into a rational principle at the expense of its paradoxical character. Although man does not know the reasons for God's providential activity, it was emphasized that there ***are***

reasons, known by God, and that man is able to participate in this knowledge at least fragmentarily. In modern philosophy the development moved beyond this point. It attempted to set itself on the throne of God and to lay down definitive descriptions of the reasons for God's providential activity. These have been expressed in three forms: the teleological, the harmonistic, and the dialectical.

The teleological way is an attempt to demonstrate that all things are so constructed and ordered that they serve the purpose of God's action, which purpose is human happiness. A careful analysis of everything teleological in nature and in man gives rise to innumerable arguments for divine providence. However, since man's happiness is the ultimate criterion, every event in nature which reveals its opposition to human happiness has a catastrophic effect on this teleological optimism.

The second way of pointing to providence in rational terms is the harmonistic. Most of the philosophers of the Enlightenment used this method implicitly or explicitly. In their thought harmony does not mean that everything is "sweetness and light." It means that a law of harmony works "behind the backs" of people and their egoistic intentions. The laws of the market, as developed by the classical economists, are the model of this type of secularized providence. But the principle has been effective in all realms of life. Liberalism, the doctrine of individual freedom, is a rational system of providence. The law of harmony regulates the innumerable conflicting trends, purposes, and activities of all individuals without human interference. Even Protestantism uses the principle of harmony when it opens the Bible to every Christian and denies ecclesiastical authorities the right to interfere. Behind the Protestant doctrine that the Bible interprets itself (*scriptura suae ipsium interpres)* lies an early liberal belief in harmony, which itself is a rationalized form of the faith in providence. The progressivistic optimism of the nineteenth century is a direct consequence of the general acceptance of the principle of harmony.

The third form of the rational idea of providence, both more profound and more pessimistic, is historical dialectics. It is aware of the depth of negativity in being and existence. This is true both of its idealistic and of its realistic modes of expression. Hegel introduces nonbeing and conflict into the process of divine self-realization. Marx points to the dehumanization and the self-estrangement of historical existence as a refutation of the liberal belief in an automatic harmony. Fate begins to appear again as the dark background of a rationalized providence and as its perennial

threat. Nevertheless, dialectics leads to synthesis, logically as well as actually. Providence still triumphs for both Hegel and Marx. For Hegel it triumphs in his own era; for Marx it will triumph in an indefinite future. For neither of them, however, does providence offer consolation to the individual. Marx sees no fulfilment of individual destiny except in the collective fulfilment, while Hegel does not look upon history as the locus for individual happiness in the past, present, or future.

The catastrophes of the twentieth century have shattered even this limited belief in rational providence. Fate overshadows the Christian world, as it overshadowed the ancient world two thousand years ago. The individual man passionately asks that he be allowed the possibility of believing in a personal fulfilment in spite of the negativity of his historical existence. And the question of historical existence again has become a struggle with the darkness of fate; it is the same struggle in which originally the Christian victory was won.

(3) The Meaning of Providence : Providence means a fore-seeing (*pro-videre*) which is a fore-ordering ("seeing to it"). This ambiguity of meaning expresses an ambiguous feeling toward providence, and it corresponds to different interpretations of the concept. If the element of foreseeing is emphasized, God becomes the omniscient spectator who knows what will happen but who does not interfere with the freedom of his creatures. If the element of foreordering is emphasized, God becomes a planner who has ordered everything that will happen "before the foundations of the world"; all natural and historical processes are nothing more than the execution of this supratemporal divine plan. In the first interpretation the creatures make their world, and God remains a spectator; in the second interpretation the creatures are cogs in a universal mechanism, and God is the only active agent. Both interpretations of providence must be rejected. Providence is a permanent activity of God. He never is a spectator; he always directs everything toward its fulfilment. Yet God's directing creativity always creates through the freedom of man and through the spontaneity and structural wholeness of all creatures. Providence works through the polar elements of being. It works through the conditions of individual, social, and universal existence, through finitude, nonbeing, and anxiety, through the interdependence of all finite things, through their resistance against the divine activity and through the destructive consequences of this resistance. All existential conditions are included in God's directing creativity. They are not increased or decreased in their power, nor are they canceled.

Providence is not interference; it is creation. It uses all factors, both those given by freedom and those given by destiny, in creatively directing everything toward its fulfilment. Providence is a *quality* of every constellation of conditions, a quality which "drives" or "lures" toward fulfilment. Providence is "the divine condition" which is present in every group of finite conditions and in the totality of finite conditions. It is not an additional factor, a miraculous physical or mental interference in terms of supranaturalism. It is the quality of inner directedness present in every situation. The man who believes in providence does not believe that a special divine activity will alter the conditions of finitude and estrangement. He believes, and asserts with the courage of faith, that no situation whatsoever can frustrate the fulfilment of his ultimate destiny, that nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans, chap. 8).

What is valid for the individual is valid for history as a whole. Faith in historical providence means the certainty that history in each of its moments, in eras of progress and eras of catastrophe, contributes to the ultimate fulfilment of creaturely existence, although this fulfilment does not lies in an eventual time-and-space future.

God's directing creativity is the answer to the question of the meaning of prayer, especially prayers of supplication and prayers of intercession. Neither type of prayer can mean that God is expected to acquiesce in interfering with existential conditions. Both mean that God is asked to direct the given situation toward fulfilment. The prayers are an element in this situation, a most powerful factor if they are true prayers. As an element in the situation a prayer is a condition of God's directing creativity, but the form of this creativity may be the complete rejection of the manifest content of the prayer. Nevertheless, the prayer may have been heard according to its hidden content, which is the surrender of a fragment of existence to God. This hidden content is always decisive. It is the element in the situation which is used by God's directing creativity. Every serious prayer contains power, not because of the intensity of desire expressed in it, but because of the faith the person has in God's directing activity-a faith which transforms the existential situation.

(4) Individual and Historical Providence: Providence refers to the individual as well as to history. Special providence (*providentia specialis*) gives the individual the certainty that under any circumstances, under any set of conditions, the divine "factor" is active and that therefore the road to his ultimate fulfilment is open. In the late ancient world special

providence was the practical meaning of providence. In a period in which for the individual history was nothing more than fortune and fate (*tychē* and *haimarmene*), a power above him which he could not change and to which he could contribute nothing, faith in special providence was a liberating faith cultivated in most of the philosophical schools. The only thing a man could do was to accept his situation and by this acceptance transcend it in Stoic courage, in skeptical resignation, or in mystical elevation. In Christianity providence is an element in the person-to-person relationship between God and man; it carries the warmth of belief in loving protection and personal guidance. It gives the individual the feeling of transcendent security in the midst of the necessities of nature and history. It is confidence in "the divine condition" within every set of finite conditions. This is its greatness, but it also is its danger. Confidence in divine guidance can become a conviction that God must change the conditions of a situation in order to make his own condition effective. And if this does not occur, confidence and faith break down. But it is the paradox of the belief in providence that, just, when the conditions of a situation are destroying the believer, the divine condition gives him a certainty which transcends the destruction.

Christianity has done more than change the meaning of special providence. Following Judaism, it has added to special providence faith in historical providence. This was impossible for the ancient world, but it was real for Jewish prophetism and is necessary for Christianity, for God establishes his kingdom through history. Experience of the great empires with their fateful power does not shake the Jewish and Christian confidence in God's historical providence. The empires are stages in the world historical process, whose fulfilment is the reign of God through Israel or through the Christ. Of course, this faith is no less paradoxical than the individual person's faith in God's directing creativity within his life. And whenever the paradoxical character of historical providence is forgotten, whenever historical providence is tied to special events or special expectations, whether in religious or in secular terms, disappointment follows as inescapably as it does in the life of the individual. The misunderstanding of historical providence which looks for the fulfilment of history in history itself is utopian. But that which fulfils history transcends it, just as that which fulfils the life of the individual transcends him. Faith in providence is paradoxical. It is an "in spite of." If this is not understood, faith in providence breaks down, taking with it faith in God

and in the meaning of life and of history. Much cynicism is the result of an erroneous and therefore disappointed confidence in individual or historical providence.

(5) Theodicy : The paradoxical character of faith in providence is the answer to the question of theodicy. Faith in God's directing creativity always is challenged by man's experience of a world in which the conditions of the human situation seem to exclude many human beings from even an anticipatory and fragmentary fulfilment. Early death, destructive social conditions, feeble-mindedness and insanity, the undiminished horrors of historical existence-all these seem to verify belief in fate rather than faith in providence. How can an almighty God be justified (*theos-dikē*) in view of realities in which no meaning whatsoever can be discovered?

Theodicy is not a question of physical evil, pain, death, etc., nor is it a question of moral evil, sin, self-destruction, etc. Physical evil is the natural implication of creaturely finitude. Moral evil is the tragic implication of creaturely freedom. Creation is the creation of finite freedom; it is the creation of life with its greatness and its danger. God lives, and his life is creative. If God is creative in himself, he cannot create what is opposite to himself; he cannot create the dead, the object which is merely object. He must create that which unites subjectivity and objectivity—life, that which includes freedom and with it the dangers of freedom. The creation of finite freedom is the risk which the divine creativity accepts. This is the first step in arriving at an answer to the question of theodicy.

However, this does not answer the question why it seems that some beings are excluded from any kind of fulfilment, even from free resistance against their fulfilment. Let us first inquire by whom and under what conditions this central question of theodicy can be asked. All theological statements are existential; they imply the man who makes the statement or who asks the question. The creaturely existence of which theology speaks is "my" creaturely existence, and only on this basis is the consideration of creatureliness in general meaningful. This existential correlation is abandoned if the question of theodicy is raised with respect to persons other than the questioner. The situation here is the same as that encountered when the question of predestination is applied to persons other than the questioner. This question also breaks out of the existential correlation, which makes any theological assertion on the subject questionable. A man can say with the paradoxical confidence

of faith, "Nothing can separate me from the Love of God" (Romans, chap. 8), but he cannot say with any degree. of confidence that other persons are or are not separated from the Love of God or from ultimate fulfilment. No man can make a general or an individual judgment on this question when it falls outside the correlation of faith.

If we wish to answer the question of the fulfilment of other persons, and with it the questions of theodicy and predestination, we must seek the point at which the destiny of others becomes our own destiny. And this point is not hard to find. It is the participation of their being in our being. The principle of participation implies that every question concerning individual fulfilment must at the same time be a question concerning universal fulfilment. Neither can be separated from the other. The destiny of the individual cannot be separated from the destiny of the whole in which it participates. One might speak of a representative fulfilment and nonfulfilment, but beyond this one must refer to the creative unity of individualization and participation in the depth of the divine life. The question of theodicy finds its final answer in the mystery of the creative ground. This answer, however, involves a decision which is very definite. The division of mankind into fulfilled and unfulfilled individuals, or into objects of predestination either to salvation or to condemnation, is existentially and, therefore, theologically impossible. Such a division contradicts the ultimate unity of individualization and participation in the creative ground of the divine life.

The principle of participation drives us one step further. God himself is said to participate in the negativities of creaturely existence. This idea is supported by mystical as well as by christological thought. Nevertheless, the idea must be stated with reservations. Genuine patripassianism (the doctrine that God the Father has suffered in Christ) rightly was rejected by the early church. God as being-itself transcends nonbeing absolutely. On the other hand, God as creative life includes the finite and, with it, nonbeing, although nonbeing is eternally conquered and the finite is eternally reunited within the infinity of the divine life. Therefore, it is meaningful to speak of a participation of the divine life in the negativities of creaturely life. This is the ultimate answer to the question of theodicy. The certainty of God's directing creativity is based on the certainty of God as the ground of being and meaning. The confidence of every creature, its courage to be, is rooted in faith in God as its creative ground.

6. God as Related

***a*) The *divine holiness and the creature*.**—"Relation" is a basic ontological category. It is valid of the correlation of the ontological elements as well as of the interrelations of everything finite. The distinctly theological question is: "Can God be related and, if so, in what sense?" God as being-itself is the ground of every relation; in his life all relations are present beyond the distinctions between potentiality and actuality. But they are not the relations of God with something else. They are the inner relations of the divine life. The internal relations are, of course, not conditioned by the actualization of finite freedom. But the question is whether there are external relations between God and the creature. The doctrine of creation affirms that God is the creative ground of everything in every moment. In this sense there is no creaturely independence from which an external relation between God and the creature could be derived. If God is said to be in relation, this statement is as symbolic as the statement that God is a living God. And every special relation participates in this symbolic character. Every relation in which God becomes an object to a subject, in knowledge or in action, must be affirmed and denied at the same time. It must be affirmed because man is a centered self to whom every relation involves an object. It must be denied because God can never become an object for man's knowledge or action. Therefore, mystical theology, inside and outside Christian theology, speaks of God's recognizing and loving himself through man. This means that if God becomes an object, nevertheless he remains a subject.

The unapproachable character of God, or the impossibility of having a relation with him in the proper sense of the word, is expressed in the word "holiness." God is essentially holy, and every relation with him involves the consciousness that it is paradoxical to be related to that which is holy. God cannot become an object of knoweldge or a partner in action. If we speak, as we must, of the ego-thou relation between God and man, the thou embraces the ego and consequently the entire relation. If it were otherwise, if the ego-thou relation with God was proper rather than symbolic, the ego could withdraw from the relation. But there is no place to which man can withdraw from the divine thou, because it includes the ego and is nearer to the ego than the ego to itself. Ultimately, it is an insult to the divine holiness to talk about God as we do of objects whose existence or nonexistence can be discussed. It is an in-

sult to the divine holiness to treat God as a partner with whom one collaborates or as a superior power whom one influences by rites and prayers. The holiness of God makes it impossible to draw him into the context of the ego-world and the subject-object correlation. He himself is the ground and meaning of this correlation, not an element within it. The holiness of God requires that in relation to him we leave behind the totality of finite relations and enter into a relation which, in the categorical sense of the word, is not a relation at all. We can bring all our relations into the sphere of the holy; we can consecrate the finite, including its internal and external relations, through the experience of the holy; but to do so we must first transcend all these relations. Theology, which by its nature is always in the danger of drawing God into the cognitive relation of the subject-object structure of being, should strongly point to the holiness of God and his unapproachable character in judgment of itself.

Symbols for the "all-transcending" holiness of God are "majesty" and "glory." They appear most conspicuously in the exclusive monotheism of the Old Testament and of Calvinism. For Calvin and his followers the glory of God is the purpose of creation and fall, of damnation and salvation. The majesty of God excludes creaturely freedom and overshadows the divine love. This was and is a corrective against the sentimental picture of a God who serves as the fulfilment of human desires. But it was and is, at the same time, an object for justifiable criticism. An affirmation of the glory of God at the expense of the elimination of the divine love is not glorious. And a majesty which characterizes him as a suppressive tyrant is not majestic. The majesty and glory of God should not be separated from the other qualities of the divine life. God's holiness is not a quality in and of itself; it is that quality which qualifies all other qualities as divine. His power is holy power; his love is holy love. Men are never merely means for the divine glory; they are also ends. Since men are rooted in the divine life and are supposed to return to it, they participate in its glory. In the praise of the divine majesty, praise of creaturely destiny is included. This is why the praise of God plays such a decisive role in all liturgies, hymns, and prayers. Certainly, man does not praise himself when he praises God's majesty; but he praises the glory in which he participates through his praise.

b) The divine power and the creature.—(1) The Meaning of Omnipotence: God is the power of being, resisting and conquering nonbeing. In relation to the creature, the divine power is expressed in the

symbol of omnipotence. The "almighty God" is the first subject of the Christian credo. It separates exclusive monotheism from all religion in which God is less than being-itself or the power of being. Only the almighty God can be man's ultimate concern. A very mighty God may claim to be of ultimate concern; but he is not, and his claim comes to naught, because he cannot resist nonbeing and therefore he cannot supply the ultimate courage which conquers anxiety. The confession of the creed concerning "God the Father almighty" expresses the Christian consciousness that the anxiety of nonbeing is eternally overcome in the divine life. The symbol of omnipotence gives the first and basic answer to the question implied in finitude. Therefore, most liturgical and free prayers begin with the invocation "Almighty God."

This is the religious meaning of omnipotence, but how can it be expressed theologically? In popular parlance the concept "omnipotence" implies a highest being who is able to do whatever he wants. This notion must be rejected, religiously as well as theologically. It makes God into a being alongside others, a being who asks himself which of innumerable possibilities he shall actualize. It subjects God to the split between potentiality and actuality-a split which is actually the heritage of finitude. It leads to absurd questions about God's power in terms of logically contradictory possibilities. Opposing such a caricature of God's ominpotence, Luther, Calvin, and others interpreted omnipotence to mean the divine power through which God is creative in and through everything in every moment. The almighty God is the omniactive God. There is, however, a difficulty in such an interpretation. It tends to identify the divine power with actual happenings in time and space, and thereby it suppresses the transcendent element in God's omnipotence. It is more adequate to define divine omnipotence as the power of being which resists nonbeing in all its expressions and which is manifest in the creative process in all its forms.

Faith in the almighty God is the answer to the quest for a courage which is sufficient to conquer the anxiety of finitude. Ultimate courage is based upon participation in the ultimate power of being. When the invocation "Almighty God" is seriously pronounced, a victory over the threat of nonbeing is experienced, and an ultimate, courageous affirmation of existence is expressed. Neither finitude nor anxiety disappears, but they are taken into infinity and courage. Only in this correlation should the symbol of omnipotence be interpreted. It is magic and an

absurdity if it is understood as the quality of a highest being who is able to do what he wants.

With respect to time, omnipotence is eternity; with respect to space, it is omnipresence; and with respect to the subject-object structure of being, it is omniscience. These symbols must now be interpreted. Causality and substance in relation to being-itself were discussed in the symbol of God as the "creative ground" of being, in which the term "creative" contained and transcended causality, while the term "ground" contained and transcended substance. Their interpretation preceded the interpretation of the three other symbols because the divine creativity logically precedes the relation of God to the created.

(2) The Meaning of Eternity : "Eternity" is a genuine religious word. It takes the place of something like omni- or all-temporality, which would be the analogy to omnipotence, omnipresence, etc. This may be a consequence of the outstanding character of time as a category of finitude. Only that is divine which gives the courage to endure the anxiety of temporal existence. Where the invocation "Eternal God" means participation in that which conquers the nonbeing of temporality, there eternity is experienced.

The concept of eternity must be protected against two misinterpretations. Eternity is neither timelessness nor the endlessness of time. The meaning of *olim* in Hebrew and of *aiones* in Greek does not indicate timelessness; rather it means the power of embracing all periods of time. Since time is created in the ground of the divine life, God is essentially related to it. In so far as everything divine transcends the split between potentiality and actuality, the same must be said of time as an element of the divine life. Special moments of time are not separated from each other; presence is not swallowed by past and future; yet the eternal keeps the temporal within itself. Eternity is the transcendent unity of the dissected moments of existential time. It is not adequate to identify simultaneity with eternity. Simultaneity would erase the different modes of time; but time without modes is timelessness. It is not different from the timeless validity of a mathematical proposition. If we call God a living God, we affirm that he includes temporality and with this a relation to the modes of time. Even Plato could not exclude temporality from eternity; he called time the moving image of eternity. It would have been foolish to imply that time is the image of timelessness. For Plato eternity included time, even though it was the time of circular movement. Hegel was criticized on logical grounds by Trendelenburg and on religious

grounds by Kierkegaard for introducing movement into the realm of logical forms. But for Hegel the logical forms whose movement he described were powers of being, beyond actuality within the life of the "absolute spirit" (usually but unfortunately translated as "absolute mind"), but actualized in nature and history. Hegel pointed to a temporality within the Absolute, of which time as we know it is at once an image and a distortion. Nevertheless, Kierkegaard's criticism was justified in so far as Hegel did not realize that the human situation, which includes distorted temporality, invalidates his attempt to give a final and complete interpretation of history. But his idea of a dialectical movement within the Absolute is in agreement with the genuine meaning of eternity. Eternity is not timelessness.

And eternity is not the endlessness of time. Endless time, correctly called "bad infinity" by Hegel, is the endless reiteration of temporality. To elevate the dissected moments of time to infinite significance by demanding their endless reduplication is idolatry in the most refined sense. For every finite being, eternity in this sense would be identical with condemnation, whatever the content of never ending time (cf. the myth of the eternal Jew). For God it would mean his subjection to a superior power, namely, to the structure of dissected temporality. It would deprive him of his eternity and make him an everliving entity of subdivine character. Eternity is not the endlessness of time.

On the basis of these considerations and the assertion that eternity includes temporality, the question must still be asked: "What is the relation of eternity to the modes of time?" An answer demands use of the only analogy to eternity found in human experience, that is, the unity of remembered past and anticipated future in an experienced present. Such an analogy implies a symbolic approach to the meaning of eternity. In accord with the predominance of the present in temporal experience, eternity must first be symbolized as an eternal present (*nunc eternum*). But this *nunc eternum* is not simultaneity or the negation of an independent meaning of past and future. The eternal present is moving from past to future but without ceasing to be present. The future is genuine only if it is open, if the new can happen and if it can be anticipated. This is the motive which led Bergson to insist upon the absolute openness of the future to the point of making God dependent on the unforeseen that might happen. But in teaching the absolute openness of the future, Bergson devaluated the present by denying the possibility of its anticipation. A God who is not able to anticipate every possible future

is dependent on an absolute accident and cannot be the foundation of an ultimate courage. This God would himself be subject to the anxiety of the unknown. He would not be being-itself. Therefore, a relative although not an absolute openness to the future is the characteristic of eternity. The new is beyond potentiality and actuality in the divine life and becomes actual as new in time and history. Without the element of openness, history would be without creativity. It would cease to be history. On the other hand, without that which limits openness, history would be without direction. It would cease to be history.

Further, God's eternity is not dependent on the completed past. For God the past is not complete, because through it he creates the future; and, in creating the future, he re-creates the past. If the past were only the sum total of what happened, such an assertion would be meaningless. But the past includes its own potentialities. The potentialities which will become actual in the future determine not only the future but also the past. The past becomes something different through everything new which happens. Its aspects change-a fact upon which the significance of the historical interpretation of the past is based. The potentialities included in the past, however, are not manifest before they determine the future. They may determine it through a new interpretation given by historical remembrance. Or they may determine it by developments which make effective some hidden potentialities. From the point of view of eternity, both past and future are open. The creativity which leads into the future also transforms the past. If eternity is conceived in terms of creativity, the eternal includes past and future without absorbing their special character as modes of time.

Faith in the eternal God is the basis for a courage which conquers the negativities of the temporal process. Neither the anxiety of the past nor that of the future remains. The anxiety of the past is conquered by the freedom of God toward the past and its potentialities. The anxiety of the future is conquered by the dependence of the new on the unity of the divine life. The dissected moments of time are united in eternity. Here, and not in a doctrine of the human soul, is rooted the certainty of man's participation in eternal life. The hope of eternal life is based not on a substantial quality of man's soul but on his participation in the eternity of the divine life.

(3) The Meaning of Omnipresence: God's relation to space, as his relation to time, must be interpreted in qualitative terms. God is neither endlessly extended in space nor limited to a definite space; nor is he

spaceless. A theology inclined toward pantheist formulation prefers the first alternative, while a theology with deistic tendencies chooses the second alternative. Omnipresence can be interpreted as an extension of the divine substance through all spaces. This, however, subjects God to dissected spatiality and puts him, so to speak, alongside himself sacrificing the personal center of the divine life. It must be rejected as much as the attempt to subject him to dissected temporality in terms of endless reiteration. Further, omnipresence can be interpreted to mean that God is present "personally" in a circumscribed place (in heaven above) but also simultaneously present with his power every place (in the earth beneath). But this is equally inadequate. The spatial symbols of above and below should not be taken literally in any respect. When Luther said that the "right hand of God" is not on a locus *circumscriptus* but everywhere, since God's power and creativity act at every place, he destroyed the traditional interpretation of God's omnipresence and expressed the doctrine of Nicolaus Cusandus that God is in everything, in that which is central as well as in that which is peripheral. In a vision of the universe which has no basis for a tripartite view of cosmic space in terms of earth, heaven, and underworld, theology must emphasize the symbolic character of spatial symbols, in spite of their rather literal use in Bible and cult. Almost every Christian doctrine has been shaped by these symbols and needs reformulation in the light of a spatially monistic universe. "God is in heaven"; this means that his life is qualitatively different from creaturely existence. But it does not mean that he "lives in" or "descends from" a special place.

Omnipresence, finally, is not spacelessness. We must reject punctuality in the divine life as much as simultaneity and timelessness. God creates extension in the ground of his life, in which everything spatial is rooted. But God is not subject to it; he transcends it and participates in it. God's omnipresence is his creative participation in the spatial existence of his creatures.

It has been suggested that because of his spirituality God has a relation to time but not to space. It is affirmed that extension characterizes bodily existence, which cannot be asserted of God, even symbolically. But such an argument is based on an improper ontology. Certainly one cannot say that God is body. But if it is said that he is Spirit, the ontological elements of vitality and personality are included and, with them, the participation of bodily existence in. the divine life. Both vitality and personality have a bodily basis. Therefore, it is legitimate for Christian art to

include the bodily resurrected Christ in the trinity; therefore, Christianity prefers the symbol of resurrection to other symbols of eternal life; therefore, some Christian mystics and philosophers have emphasized that "corporality is the end of the ways of God" (Ötinger). This is a necessary consequence of the Christian doctrine of creation, with the rejection of the Greek doctrine of *materia* as an antispiritual principle. Only on this basis can the eternal presence of God be affirmed, for presence combines time with space.@

God's omnipresence overcomes the anxiety of not having a space for one's self. It provides the courage to accept the insecurities and anxieties of spatial existence. In the certainty of the omnipresent God we are always at home and not at home, rooted and uprooted, resting and wandering, being placed and displaced, known by one place and not known by any place.

And in the certainty of the omnipresent God we are always in the sanctuary. We are in a holy place when we are in the most secular place, and the most holy place remains secular in comparison with our place in the ground of the divine life. Whenever omnipresence is experienced, it breaks down the difference between the sacred and the profane. The sacramental presence of God is a consequence of his omnipresence. It is an actual manifestation of his omnipresence, dependent of course on the history of revelation and the concrete symbols which have been created by it. His sacramental presence is not the appearance of somebody who is ordinarily absent and occasionally comes. If one always experienced the divine presence, there would be no difference between sacred and secular places. The difference does not exist in the divine life.

(4) The Meaning of Omniscience: The symbol of omniscience expresses the spiritual character of the divine omnipotence and omnipresence. It is related to the subject-object structure of reality and points to the divine participation in and transcendence over this structure.

The first theological task is the removal of absurdities in interpretation. Omniscience is not the faculty of a highest being who is supposed to know all objects, past, present, and future, and, beyond this, everything that might have happened if what has happened had not happened. The absurdity of such an image is due to the impossibility of subsuming God under the subject-object scheme, although this structure is grounded in the divine life. If one speaks, therefore, of divine knowledge and of the

9. The Latin word *presentia* as well as the German word *Gegenwart* contain a spatial image: "A thing which stands before one."

unconditional character of the divine knowledge, one speaks symbolically, indicating that God is not present in an all-permeating manner but that he is present spiritually. Nothing is outside the centered unity of his life; nothing is strange, dark, hidden, isolated, unapproachable. Nothing falls outside the logos structure of being. The dynamic element cannot break the unity of the form; the abysmal quality cannot swallow the rational quality of the divine life.

This certainty has implications for man's personal and cultural existence. In personal life it means that there is no absolute darkness in one's being. There is nothing absolutely hidden within it. The hidden, the dark, the unconscious, is present in God's spiritual life. There is no escape from it. And, on the other hand, the anxiety of the dark and the hidden is overcome in the faith of the divine omniscience. It excludes ultimate duality. It does not exclude pluralism of powers and forms; but it does exclude a split of being which makes things strange and unrelated to each other. Therefore, the divine omniscience is the logical (though not always conscious) foundation of the belief in the openness of reality to human knowledge. We *know* because we participate in the divine knowledge. Truth is not absolutely removed from the outreach of our finite minds, since the divine life in which we are rooted embodies all truth. In the light of the symbol of divine omniscience we experience the fragmentary character of all finite knowledge, but not as a threat against our participation in truth; and we experience the broken character of every finite meaning, but not as a cause for ultimate meaninglessness. The doubt about truth and meaning which is the heritage of finitude is incorporated in faith through the symbol of the divine omniscience.

c) The divine love and *the* creature.-(1) The Meaning of the Divine Love: Love is an ontological concept. Its emotional element is a consequence of its ontological nature. It is false to define love by its emotional side. This leads necessarily to sentimental misinterpretations of the meaning of love and calls into question its symbolic application to the divine life. But God is love. And, since God is being-itself, one must say that being-itself is love. This, however, is understandable only because the actuality of being is life. The process of the divine life has the character of love. According to the ontological polarity of individualization and participation, every life-process unites a trend toward separation with a trend toward reunion. The unbroken unity of these two trends is the ontological nature of love. Its awareness as fulfilment of life

is the emotional nature of love. Reunion presupposes separation, Love is absent where there is no individualization, and love can be fully realized only where there is full individualization, in man. But the individual also longs to return to the unity to which he belongs, in which he participates by his ontological nature. This longing for reunion is an element in every love, and its realization, however fragmentary, is experienced as bliss.

If we say that God ***is*** love, we apply the experience of separation and reunion to the divine life. As in the case of life and spirit, one speaks symbolically of God as love. He ***is*** love; this means that the divine life has the character of love but beyond the distinction between potentiality and actuality. This means therefore that it is mystery for finite understanding. The New Testament uses the term ***agapē*** for divine love. But it uses the same term also for man's love to man and man's love to God. There must be something in common in the three love relations. In order to discover it, one must compare the ***agapē*** type of love with the other types. One can say in abbreviated form : Love as ***libido*** is the movement of the needy toward that which fulfils the need. Love as ***philia*** is the movement of the equal toward union with the equal. Love as ***erōs*** is the movement of that which is lower in power and meaning to that which is higher. It is obvious that in all three the element of desire is present. This does not contradict the created goodness of being, since separation and the longing for reunion belong to the essential nature of creaturely life. But there is a form of love which transcends these, namely, the desire for the fulfilment of the longing of the other being, the longing for his ultimate fulfilment. All love, except ***agapē,*** is dependent on contingent characteristics which change and are partial. It is dependent on repulsion and attraction, on passion and sympathy. ***Agapē*** is independent of these states. It affirms the other unconditionally, that is, apart from higher or lower, pleasant or unpleasant qualities. ***Agapē*** unites the lover and the beloved because of the image of fulfilment which God has of both. Therefore, ***agapē*** is universal; no one with whom a concrete relation is technically possible ("the neighbor") is excluded; nor is anyone preferred. ***Agapē*** accepts the other in spite of resistance. It suffers and forgives. It seeks the personal fulfilment of the other. ***Caritas*** is the Latin translation of ***agape;*** from it comes the English word "charity," which has deteriorated to the level of "charitable enterprises." But, even in this dubious meaning, it points to the ***agapē*** type of love which seeks the

other because of the ultimate unity of being with being within the divine ground.

From what has been said about God's providential creativity, it is obvious that this type of love is the basis for the assertion that God is love. God works toward the fulfilment of every creature and toward the bringing-together into the unity of his life all who are separated and disrupted. Since ***agapē*** is usually (though not always and not necessarily) connected with the other types of love, it is natural that Christian symbolism has used these types in order to make the divine love concrete. In so far as devotional language speaks of the longing of God for his creature and in so far as mystical language speaks of the need that God has for man, the ***libido*** element is introduced into the notion of the divine love, but in poetic-religious symbolism, for God is not in need of anything. When biblical and devotional language suggest that the disciples are the "friends of God" (or Christ), the ***philia*** element is introduced into the notion of the divine love, although in a metaphorical symbolic way, for there is no equality between God and man. If God is described in religious and theological language as driving toward the ***eschaton,*** i.e., the ultimate fulfilment in which he is "all in all," it can be compared with the ***erōs*** type of love, the striving for the ***summum bonum;*** but it can only be compared, not equated, with ***erōs,*** for God in his eternity transcends the fulfilment and nonfulfilment of reality. The three types of love contribute to the symbolization of the divine love, but the basic and only adequate symbol is ***agapē.***

Agapē between men and the ***agapē*** of God toward man correspond with each other, since the one is the ground of the other. But the ***agapē*** of man toward God falls outside this strict correlation. Affirming God's ultimate meaning and longing for his ultimate fulfilment is not love in the same way as ***agapē.*** Here one does not love God "in spite of," or in forgiveness, as in ***agapē*** toward man. Therefore, the word can be used here only in the general sense of love, with an emphasis on voluntary union with the divine will. The Latin word ***dilectio,*** which points to the element of choice in the act of love, is more descriptive of this situation. Basically, however, one's love to God is of the nature of ***erōs.*** It involves elevation from the lower to the higher, from lower goods to the ***summum bonum.*** An affirmation concerning the irreconcilable conflict between ***erōs*** and ***agapē*** will not keep theologians from asserting that man reaches his highest good in God and that he longs for his fulfilment in God. If ***erōs*** and ***agapē*** cannot be united, ***agapē*** toward God is impossible.

It has been said that man's love of God is the love with which God loves himself. This is an expression of the truth that God is a subject even where he seems to be an object. It points directly to a divine self-love and indirectly, by analogy, to a divinely demanded human self-love. Where the relation of the trinitarian *personae* is described in terms of love (*amans, amatus, amor*-Augustine), it is a statement about God loving himself. The trinitarian distinctions (separation and reunion) make it possible to speak of divine self-love. Without separation from one's self, self-love is impossible. This is even more obvious, if the distinction within God includes the infinity of finite forms, which are separated and reunited in the eternal process of the divine life. The divine life is the divine self-love. Through the separation *within* himself God loves himself. And through separation from himself (in creaturely freedom) God fulfils his love of himself-primarily because he loves that which is estranged from himself.

This makes it possible also to apply the term *agape'* to the love wherein man loves himself, that is, himself as the eternal image in the divine life. Man can have the other forms of love toward himself, such as simple self-affirmation, *libido,* friendship, and *erōs.* None of these forms is evil as such. But they become evil where they are not under the criterion of self-love in the sense of *agapē.* Where this criterion is lacking, proper self-love becomes false self-love, namely, a selfishness which is always connected with self-contempt and self-hate. The distinction between these two contradictory forms of self-love is extremely important. The one is an image of the divine self-love; the other contradicts the divine self-love. The divine self-love includes all creatures; and proper human self-love includes everything with which man is existentially united.

(2) The Divine Love and the Divine Justice: Justice is that side of love which affirms the independent right of object and subject within the love relation. Love does not destroy the freedom of the beloved and does not violate the structures of the beloved's individual and social existence. Neither does love surrender the freedom of him who loves, and it does not violate the structures of his individual and social existence. Love as the reunion of those who are separate does not distort or destroy in its union. There is a love, however, which is chaotic self-surrender or chaotic self-imposition; it is not a real love but a "symbiotic" love (Erich Fromm). Much romantic love has this character. Nietzsche was right when he emphasized that a love relation is creative only if an independent self enters the relation from both sides. Divine love includes the justice which acknowledges and preserves the freedom and the unique character of the beloved. It does justice to man while it drives him toward fulfilment. It neither forces him nor leaves him; it attracts him and lures him toward reunion.

But in this process justice not only affirms and lures; it also resists and condemns. This fact has led to the theory of the conflict between love and justice in God. Jewish-Christian conversations often have suffered under this assumption. Political attacks upon the Christian idea of love are unaware of the relation between love and justice in God and man. And so is much Christian pacifism in its attacks on political struggles for justice.

It has been asked how divine love is related to divine power, especially to the power which carries through the demands of justice. And a conflict between the divine love and the divine wrath against those who violate justice has been noted. All these questions are answered in principle by the interpretation of love in ontological terms and of the divine love in symbolic terms. But special answers are demanded in systematic theology, and, although it cannot go into the actual problems of social ethics, it must show that every ethical answer is based on an implicit or explicit assertion about God.

It must be emphasized that it is not the divine power as such which is thought to be in conflict with the divine love. The divine power is the power of being-itself, and being-itself is actual in the divine life whose nature is love. A conflict can be imagined only in relation to the creature who violates the structure of justice and so violates love itself. When this happens-and it is the character of creaturely existence that it happens universally-judgment and condemnation follow. But they do not follow by a special act of divine wrath or retribution; they follow by the reaction of God's loving power against that which violates love. Condemnation is not the negation of love but the negation of the negation of love. It is an act of love without which nonbeing would triumph over being. It is the way in which that which resists love, namely, the reunion of the separated in the divine life, is left to separation, with an implied and inescapable selfdestruction. The ontological character of love solves the problem of the relation of love and retributive justice. Judgment is an act of love which surrenders that which resists love to self-destruction.

This again provides theology with the possibility of using the symbol "the wrath of God." For a long time it was felt that such a symbol meant ascribing human affects to God in the sense of the pagan stories of the

"anger of the gods." But what is impossible in a literal understanding is possible and often necessary in a metaphorical symbol. The wrath of God is neither a divine affect alongside his love nor a **motive** for action alongside providence; it is the emotional symbol for the work of love which rejects and leaves to self-destruction what resists it. The experience of the wrath of God is the awareness of the selfdestructive nature of evil, namely, of those acts and attitudes in which the finite creature keeps itself separated from the ground of being and resists God's reuniting love. Such an experience is real, and the metaphorical symbol "the wrath of God" is unavoidable.

Judgment, which includes condemnation and the wrath of God, has eschatological connotations, and the question arises of a possible limit to divine love. The threat of ultimate judgment and the symbols of eternal condemnation or eternal death point to such a limit. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between eternal and everlasting. Eternity as a quality of the divine life cannot be attributed to a being which as condemned is separated from the divine life. Where the divine love ends, being ends; condemnation can only mean that the creature is left to the nonbeing it has chosen. The symbol "eternal death" is even more expressive, where interpreted as self-exclusion from eternal life and consequently from being. If, however, one speaks of everlasting or endless condemnation, one affirms a temporal duration which is not temporal. Such a concept is contradictory by nature. An individual with concrete self-consciousness is temporal by nature. Self-consciousness as the possibility of experiencing either happiness or suffering includes temporality. In the unity of the divine life, temporality is united with eternity. If temporality is completely separated from eternity, it is mere nonbeing and is unable to give the form for experience, even the experience of suffering and despair.

It is true that finite freedom cannot be forced into unity with God because it is a unity of love. A finite being can be separated from God; it can indefinitely resist reunion; it can be thrown into selfdestruction and utter despair; but even this is the work of the divine love, as the inscription which Dante saw written over the entrance of hell so well shows (Canto III). Hell has being only in so far as it stands in the unity of the divine love. It is not the limit of the divine love. The only preliminary limit is the resistance of the finite creature.

The final expression of the unity of love and justice in God is the symbol of justification. It points to the unconditional validity of the structures of justice but at the same time to the divine act in which love conquers the immanent consequences of the violation of justice. The ontological unity of love and justice is manifest in final revelation as the justification of the sinner. The divine love in relation to the unjust creature is grace.

(3) The Divine Love as Grace and Predestination : The term "grace" (*gratia, charis*) qualifies all relations between God and man in such a way that they are freely inaugurated by God and in no way dependent on anything the creature does or desires. One may distinguish two basic forms of grace-the grace which characterizes God's threefold creativity and the grace which characterizes God's saving activity. The first form of grace is simple and direct; it provides participation in being to everything that is, and it gives unique participation to every individual being. The second form of grace is paradoxical; it gives fulfilment to that which is separated from the source of fulfilment, and it accepts that which is unacceptable. It is possible to distinguish a third form of grace, one which mediates between the two preceding ones and unites elements of both, namely, God's providential grace. On the one hand, it belongs to creative grace and, on the other hand, to saving grace, since the purpose of God's directing or providential creativity is fulfilmenr of the creature in spite of resistance. The classical term for this kind of grace is *gratia praeveniens* ("prevenient grace"). It prepares for the acceptance of saving grace through the processes of nature and history.

Not everyone is prepared to accept saving grace. This raises the problem of the relation of divine love to man's ultimate destiny; this is the question of predestination. It cannot be fully discussed here, since it presupposes the doctrine of justification by faith, a concept for which it is an affirmative protection against both human incertitude and human arrogance. Nevertheless, it has direct implications for the doctrine of the divine love and must therefore be partially discussed. First of all, it cannot be understood as double predestination, since that violates both the divine love and the divine power. Ontologically, eternal condemnation is a contradiction in terms. It establishes an eternal split within being-itself. The demonic, whose characteristic is exactly this split, has then reached coeternity with God; then nonbeing has entered the very heart of being and of love. Double predestination is not a genuine religious symbol; it is a logical consequence drawn from the religious idea of predestination. But it is a wrong consequence, as are all logical theological consequences which are not rooted in existential participation. There is

no existential participation in the eternal condemnation of others. There is the existential experience of the threat of one's own self-exclusion from eternal life. This is the basis of the symbol of condemnation. Predestination, as the religious correlate to "justification by faith alone," must, like providence, be seen in the light of the ontological polarity between freedom and destiny. Predestination is providence with respect to one's ultimate destiny. It has nothing to do with determination in terms of a deterministic metaphysics, the inadequate and obsolete character of which has already been shown. Nor is the notion of predestination related to indeterminism. Rather, it shows that the relation of God and the creature must be interpreted in symbolic terms. Thinking is demanded on two levels. On the creaturely level, ontological elements and categories are applicable in a proper and literal sense. On the level of God's relation to the creature, the categories are affirmed and negated at the same time. The word "predestination," taken literally, includes causality and determination. When it is understood in this sense, God is conceived as a physical or psychological cause of a deterministic character. Therefore, the word must be taken in the symbolic sense of pointing to the existential experience that, in relation to God, God's act always precedes and, further, that, in order to be certain of one's fulfilment, one can and must look at God's activity alone. Taken in this way, predestination is the highest affirmation of the divine love, not its negation.

The divine love is the final answer to the questions implied in human existence, including finitude, the threat of disruption, and estrangement. Actually this answer is given only in the manifestation of the divine love under the conditions of existence. It is the christological answer to which the doctrine of the divine love gives the systematic foundation, although one would not be able to speak of this foundation without having received the christological answer. But what is existentially first may be systematically last and vice versa. This is also true of the doctrine of the trinity. Its logical foundation in the structure of life has been given, but its existential foundation, the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, has not been discussed. Only after such a discussion can a fully developed doctrine of the trinity be presented.

d) God *as* Lord *and as* Father.-The symbols "life," "spirit," "power," "love," "grace," etc., as applied to God in devotional life are elements of the two main symbols of a person-to-person relationship with God, namely, God as Lord and God as Father. Other symbols which have this ego-thou character are represented by these two. Symbols like "King,"

"Judge," or the "Highest" belong to the symbolic sphere of God as Lord; symbols like "Creator," "Helper," "Savior," belong to the symbolic sphere of God as Father. There is no conflict between these two symbols or symbol spheres. If God is addressed as "My Lord," the fatherly element is included. If God is addressed as "Father in Heaven," the lordlike element is included. They cannot be separated; even the attempt to emphasize the one over against the other destroys the meaning of both. The Lord who is not the Father is demonic; the Father who is not the Lord is sentimental. Theology has erred in both directions.

God as Lord and the related symbols express the holy power of God. "Lord" is first of all a symbol for the unapproachable majesty of God, for the infinite distance between him and the creature, for his eternal glory. "Lord" is in the second place a symbol representing the Logos of being, the structure of reality, which in man's existential estrangement appears as the divine law and the expression of the divine will. In the third place, "Lord" is a symbol for God's governing of the whole of reality according to the inner *telos* of creation, the ultimate fulfilment of the creature. In these three respects, God is called the "Lord." Some theologians use the symbol "Lord" to the exclusion of all those in which the uniting love of God is expressed. But the God who is only the Lord easily becomes a despotic ruler who imposes laws on his subjects and demands heteronomous obedience and unquestioned acceptance of his sayings. Obedience to God prevails over against love of God. Man is broken by judgments and threats before he is accepted. Thus his rational autonomy as well as his will are broken. The Lord who is only Lord destroys the created nature of his subjects in order to save them. This is the authoritarian distortion of the symbol of God as Lord; but it is an almost inescapable distortion, if God is not also understood as Father.

While Lord is basically the expression of man's relation to the God who is holy power, Father is basically the expression of man's relation to the God who is holy love. The concept "Lord" expresses the distance; the concept "Father," the unity, In the first place, "Father" is a symbol for God as the creative ground of being, of man's being. God as Father is the origin upon which man is continuously dependent because he is eternally rooted in the divine ground. In the second place, "Father" is a symbol for God in so far as he preserves man by his sustaining creativity and drives him to his fulfilment by his directing creativity. In the third place, "Father" is a symbol for God in so far as he justifies man through grace and accepts him although he is unacceptable. Some theology, in-

cluding much popular thinking, is inclined to emphasize the symbol "Father" in such a way that it is forgotten that it is God the Lord who is the Father. If this side is neglected, God is conceived as a friendly Father who gives what men want him to give and who forgives all who would like to be forgiven. God then stands to man in a familial relation. Sin is a private act of hurting someone who easily forgives, as in the case of human fathers who themselves need forgiveness. But God does not stand in a private relation to man, whether a familial relation or an educational relation. He represents the universal order of being and cannot act as though he were a "friendly" father, showing sentimental love toward his children. Justice and judgment cannot be suspended in his forgiveness. The sentimental interpretation of the divine love is responsible for the assertion that Paul's interpretation of the Cross of Christ and his doctrine of atonement contradict the simple prayer for forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer. This assertion is false. The consciousness of guilt cannot be overcome by the simple assurance that man is forgiven. Man can believe in forgiveness only if justice is maintained and guilt is confirmed. God must remain Lord and Judge in spite of the reuniting power of his love. The symbol "Lord" and the symbol "Father" complete each other. This is true theologically as well as psychologically. He who is only Lord cannot be man's ultimate concern. And he who is only Father cannot be man's ultimate concern. The Lord who is only Lord evokes a justified revolutionary resistance which can be broken only by threats. And, if it is broken, the repression produces a type of humility which contradicts man's dignity and freedom. On the other hand, the Father who is only Father evokes a reverence which easily turns into the desire for independence, a gratefulness which easily turns into indifference, a sentimental love which easily turns into contempt, and a naïve confidence which easily turns into disappointment. The criticism by psychology and sociology of personalistic symbols for man's relation to God must be taken seriously by theologians. It must be acknowledged that the two central symbols, Lord and Father, are stumbling blocks for many people because theologians and preachers have been unwilling to listen to the often shocking insights into psychological consequences of the traditional use of these symbols. It must be emphasized that these symbols and all other symbolic descriptions of the divine life and of our relation to it are two-sided. On one side, they are determined by the transcendent reality they express; on the other side, they are influenced by the situation of those for whom they point to this reality. Theology must look at both sides and interpret the symbols in such a way that a creative correlation can be established between them.

"Lord" and "Father" are the central symbols for the ego-thou relationship to God. But the ego-thou relation, although it is the central and most dynamic relation, is not the only one, for God is being-itself. In appellations like "Almighty God" the irresistible power of God's creativity is felt; in "Eternal God" the unchangeable ground of all life is indicated. In addition to such appellative symbols, there are symbols used in meditation in which the ego-thou relation is less explicit, although it always is implicit. Contemplating the mystery of the divine ground, considering the infinity of the divine life, intuiting the marvel of the divine creativity, adoring the inexhaustible meaning of the divine self-manifestation-all these experiences are related to God without involving an explicit ego-thou relation. Often a prayer which starts with addressing itself to God as Lord or Father moves over into a contemplation of the mystery of the divine ground. Conversely, a meditation about the divine mystery may end in a prayer to God as Lord or Father.

Here again we must stress that the possibility of using the symbols "Lord" and "Father" without rebellion or submissiveness, without ideological deception or wishful sentimentality, is provided for us by the manifestation of the Lord and Father as Son and Brother under the conditions of existence. The question with which the doctrine of God concludes is the quest for a doctrine of existence and the Christ.

VOLUME TWO

EXISTENCE AND THE CHRIST

PREFACE

SO MANY have asked for and urged the speedy publication of the second volume of Systematic *Theology* that I am afraid that its actual appearance will be something of an anticlimax. It certainly will be a disappointment for those who expected that the second volume would contain the three remaining parts of the system. For some time I shared this expectation myself. But when I started the actual writing, it became obvious that such a project would delay the appearance of the book indefinitely and that the volume itself would grow to an unmanageable size. So I came to an agreement with the publisher that the third part of the system, "Existence and the Christ" should appear as the second volume, and that the fourth and fifth parts, "Life and the Spirit" and "History and the Kingdom of God," should follow-I hope in the not too distant future.

The problems discussed in this volume constitute the heart of every Christian theology-the concept of man's estrangement and the doctrine of the Christ. It is therefore justifiable that they be treated in a special volume in the center of the system. This volume is smaller than the first and the projected third one, but it contains the largest of the five parts of the system.

The content of this book, after many years of class lectures had prepared the way, was presented to the Theological Faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, as the first year's Gifford Lectures. The second year of the Gifford Lectures dealt with the fourth part of the system. The preparation of these lectures was a tremendous step toward the final formulation of the problems and their solutions. I want to express-for the first time in print-my deep gratitude for the honor and occasion which the Gifford lectureship presented me. Of course, a book is different from a series of lectures, especially if the book represents a part of a larger whole. The lectures had to be considerably enlarged and partly rewritten in the light of a critical rereading. But the basic ideas are unchanged. The publication of the second year's Gifford Lectures will follow in the third volume.

Here I want to say a word to the prospective critics of this volume.

PREFACE

I hope to receive much valuable criticism of the substance of my thought, as I did with the first volume and my smaller books. Whether or not I am able to agree with it, I gladly accept it as a valuable contribution to the continuous theological discussion between theologians and within each theologian. But I cannot accept criticism as valuable which merely insinuates that I have surrendered the substance of the Christian message because I have used a terminology which consciously deviates from the biblical or ecclesiastical language. Without such deviation, I would not have deemed it worthwhile to develop a theological system for our period.

My thanks go again to my friend who is now also my colleague, John Dillenberger, who this time, in collaboration with his wife Hilda, did the hard work of "Englishing" my style and who rephrased statements which otherwise might be obscure or difficult to understand. My appreciation also goes to Henry D. Brady, Jr., for reading the manuscript and suggesting certain stylistic changes. I also want to thank my secretary, Grace Cali Leonard, who worked indefatigably in typing and partially correcting my handwritten manuscript. Finally, my gratitude is expressed to the publisher who made possible the separate appearance of this volume.

The book is dedicated to the Theological Faculty of the Union Theological Seminary. This is justified not only by the fact that the seminary received me when I came as a German refugee in 1933; not only by the occasions which the faculty and administration abundantly gave me for teaching, writing, and, above all, learning; not only by the extremely friendly co-operation throughout more than twenty-two years of academic and personal contacts, but also because the content of this volume was a center of theological discussion with students and faculty during all those years. Those who participated in these discussions will recognize their influence on the formulations of this book.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. THE RELATION OF THE SECOND VOLUME OF *SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY* TO THE FIRST VOLUME AND TO THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE

A SYSTEM demands consistency, but one might well ask whether two volumes written seven years apart can be consistent with each other. If the systematic structure of the content is unchanged, they can be, even though the solutions to the special problems may differ. The many criticisms that have come and the new thoughts that have been developed in the interval have not changed the basic structure of the system. But they have certainly influenced the form and content in many respects. If the theological system were deductive, like a system in mathematics in which one assertion is derived from the other with rational necessity, changes in conception of thought would be damaging to the whole. Theology, however, does not have this character, and the present system is formulated in a way which expressly avoids this danger. After the central theological answer is given to any question, there is always a return to the existential question as the context in which a theological answer is again given. Consequently, new answers to new or old questions do not necessarily disrupt the unity between the earlier and later parts of the system. It is a dynamic unity, open for new insights, even after the whole has been formulated.

The third part of the system, covered in this second volume, clearly shows this characteristic. While the title of the second part of the system, "Being and God," is followed in this volume by that of "Existence and the Christ," there is no logically necessary or deductive step from being to existence or from God to the Christ. The way from essence to existence is "irrational"; the way from God to the Christ is "paradoxical." The exact meaning of these terms will be discussed later; at this point they only confirm the open character of the present system.

The transition from essential to existential being cannot be understood in terms of necessity. But, in the view of classical theology and of all the philosophers, artists, and writers who seriously look at the conflicts of man's existential situation, reality involves that step. Hence the jump

from the first to the second volume mirrors the leap from man's essential nature to its distortion in existence. But, in order to understand any distortion, one must know its undistorted or essential character. Therefore, the estrangement of existence (and the ambiguity of life) as delineated in this volume can be understood only if one knows the nature of finitude as developed in the first volume in the part on "Being and God." Further, in order to understand the answers given to the questions implied in estrangement and ambiguity, one must know not only the answer given to the question implied in finitude but also the theological method by which question and answer are related to each other. This does not mean that an intelligent reading of the second volume is entirely dependent upon reading the first; for, as has been indicated, in every part of the system the questions are developed anew and the answers related to them in a special way. Such independent reading of this volume will also be facilitated by a partial recapitulation and by a reformulation of ideas discussed in the first volume.

The fourth part of the system, "Life and the Spirit," will follow the third part, "Existence and the Christ," as the description of the concrete unity of essential finitude and existential estrangement in the ambiguities of life. The answer to be given in this part is the divine Spirit. But this answer is incomplete. Life remains ambiguous as long as there is life. The question implied in the ambiguities of life drives to a new question, namely, that of the direction in which life moves. This is the question of history. Systematically speaking, history, characterized as it is by its direction toward the future, is the dynamic quality of life. Therefore, the "riddle of history" is a part of the problem of life. But for all practical purposes it is useful to separate the discussion of history from the discussion of life generally and to relate the final answer, "eternal life," to the ambiguities and questions implied in man's historical existence. For these reasons a fifth part, entitled "History and the Kingdom of God," is added, even though, strictly speaking, this material belongs to categories of life. This decision is analogous to the practical reasons which dictated a first part, "Reason and Revelation," the material of which, systematically speaking, belongs to all the other parts. This decision also shows again the nondeductive character of the entire project. While there are disadvantages with respect to systematic strictness, the practical advantages are paramount.

The inclusion of the non-systematic elements in the system results in

an interdependence of all parts and of all three volumes. The second volume not only is dependent on the first but makes possible a fuller understanding of it. In the earlier parts there are many unavoidable anticipations of problems which are fully discussed only in the later ones. A system has circular character, just as do the organic processes of life. Those who stand within the circle of the Christian life will have no difficulty in understanding this. Those who feel like strangers in this respect may find the non-systematic elements in the presentation somewhat confusing. In any case, "non-systematic" does not mean inconsistent; it only means non-deductive. And life is non-deductive in all its creativity and eventfulness.

B. RESTATEMENTS OF ANSWERS GIVEN IN VOLUME I

1. Beyond Naturalism and Supranaturalism

The rest of this section will be devoted to a restatement and partial reformulation'of those concepts of the first volume which are especially basic to the ideas to be developed in the second. It would be unnecessary to do so if one could simply refer to what has been said in the earlier parts. This is not possible because questions have arisen in public and private discussions which must be answered first. In none of these cases has the substance of my earlier thought changed, but formulations have proved to be inadequate in clarity, elaboration, and emphasis.

Much criticism has been made concerning the doctrine of God as developed in the second part of the system, "Being and God." Since the idea of God is the foundation and the center of every theological thought, this criticism is most important and welcome. For many, the stumbling block was the use of the term "Being" in relation to God, especially in the statement that the first thing we must say about God is that he is being-itself or being as being. Before speaking directly on this issue, I want to explain in a different terminology the basic intention of my doctrine of God. This is more simply expressed in the title of this section: "Beyond Naturalism and Supranaturalism." An idea of God which overcomes the conflict of naturalism and supranaturalism could be called "self-transcendent" or "ecstatic." In order to make this (tentative and preliminary) choice of words understandable, we may distinguish three ways of interpreting the meaning of the term "God."

The first one separates God as a being, the highest being, from all other beings, alongside and above which he has his existence. In this position he has brought the universe into being at a certain moment (five thousand or five billion years ago), governs it according to a plan, directs it toward an end, interferes with its ordinary processes in order to overcome resistance and to fulfil his purpose, and will bring it to consummation in a final catastrophe. Within this framework the whole divine-human drama is to be seen. Certainly this is a primitive form of supranaturalism, but a form which is more decisive for the religious life and its symbolic expression than any theological refinement of this position.

The main argument against it is that it transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude. This is done in respect to space by establishing a supranatural divine world alongside the natural human world; in respect to time by determining a beginning and an end of God's creativity; in respect to causality by making God a cause alongside other causes; in respect to substance by attributing individual substance to him. Against this kind of supranaturalism the arguments of naturalism are valid and, as such, represent the true concern of religion, the infinity of the infinite, and the inviolability of the created structures of the finite. Theology must accept the antisupranatural criticism of naturalism.

The second way of interpreting the meaning of the term "God" identifies God with the universe, with its essence or with special powers within it. God is the name for the power and meaning of reality. He is not identified with the totality of things. No myth or philosophy has ever asserted such an absurdity. But he is a symbol of the unity, harmony, and power of being; he is the dynamic and creative center of reality. The phrase *deus* sive *natura,* used by people like Scotus Erigena and Spinoza, does not say that God is identical with nature but that he is identical with the *natura naturans,* the creative nature, the creative ground of all natural objects. In modern naturalism the religious quality of these affirmations has almost disappeared, especially among philosophizing scientists who understand nature in terms of materialism and mechanism. In philosophy proper, in so far as it became positivistic and pragmatistic, such assertions about nature as a whole were required. In so far as a whole philosophy of life involving dynamic processes developed, it again approached the religious forms of naturalism.

The main argument against naturalism in whatever form is that it denies the infinite distance between the whole of finite things and their infinite ground, with the consequence that the term "God" becomes interchangeable with the term "universe" and therefore is semantically superfluous. This semantic situation reveals the failure of naturalism to understand a decisive element in the experience of the holy, namely, the distance between finite man, on the one hand, and the holy in its numerous manifestations, on the other. For this, naturalism cannot account.

This criticism of the supranaturalistic and the naturalistic interpretations of the meaning of "God" calls for a third way which will liberate the discussion from the oscillation between two insufficient and religiously dangerous solutions. Such a third way is not new.

Theologians like Augustine, Thomas, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Schleiermacher have grasped it, although in a restricted form. It agrees with the naturalistic view by asserting that God would not be God if he were not the creative ground of everything that has being, that, in fact, he is the infinite and unconditional power of being or, in the most radical abstraction, that he is being-itself. In this respect God is neither alongside things nor even "above" them; he is nearer to them than they are to themselves. He is their creative ground, here and now, always and everywhere.

Up to this point, the third view could be accepted by some forms of naturalism. But then the ways part. At this point the terms "self-transcendent" and "ecstatic," which I use for the third way of understanding the term "God," become meaningful. The term "self-transcendent" has two elements: "transcending" and "self." God as the ground of being infinitely transcends that of which he is the ground. He stands against the world, in so far as the world stands against him, and he stands for the world, thereby causing it to stand for him. This mutual freedom from each other and for each other is the only meaningful sense in which the "supra" in "supranaturalism" can be used. Only in this sense can we speak of "transcendent" with respect to the relation of God and the world. To call God transcendent in this sense does not mean that one must establish a "superworld" of divine objects. It does mean that, within itself, the finite world points beyond itself. In other words, it is self-transcendent.

Now the need for the syllable "self" in "self-transcendent" has also

become understandable: the one reality which we encounter is experienced in different dimensions which point to one another. The finitude of the finite points to the infinity of the infinite. It goes beyond itself in order to return to itself in a new dimension. This is what "self-transcendence" means. In terms of immediate experience it is the encounter with the holy, an encounter which has an ecstatic character. The term "ecstatic" in the phrase "ecstatic idea of God" points to the experience of the holy as transcending ordinary experience without removing it. Ecstasy as a state of mind is the exact correlate to self-transcendence as the state of reality. Such an understanding of the idea of God is neither naturalistic nor supranaturalistic. It underlies the whole of the present theological system.

If, on the basis of this idea of God, we ask: "What does it mean that God, the ground of everything that is, can stand against the world and for the world?" we must refer to that quality of the world which expresses itself in finite freedom, the quality we experience within ourselves. The traditional discussion between the naturalistic and the supranaturalistic ideas of God uses the prepositions "in" and "above," respectively. Both are taken from the spatial realm and therefore are unable to express the true relation between God and the world-which certainly is not spatial. The self-transcendent idea of God replaces the spatial imagery-at least for theological thought-by the concept of finite freedom. The divine transcendence is identical with the freedom of the created to turn away from the essential unity with the creative ground of its being. Such freedom presupposes two qualities of the created: first, that it is substantially independent of the divine ground; second, that it remains in substantial unity with it. Without the latter unity, the creature would be without the power of being. It is the quality of finite freedom within the created which makes pantheism impossible and not the notion of a highest being alongside the world, whether his relation to the world is described in deistic or theistic terms.

The consequences of the self-transcendent idea of God for concepts like revelation and miracle (which are decisive for the christological problem) have been fully developed in the part entitled "Reason and Revelation." These do not need restatement, but they do show the far-reaching significance of the ecstatic interpretation of the relation between God and the world.

However, there is one problem which has moved into the center of

the philosophical interest in religion since the appearance of the first volume. This is the problem of the symbolic knowledge of God. If God as the ground of being infinitely transcends everything that is, two consequences follow: first, whatever one knows about a finite thing one knows about God, because it is rooted in him as its ground; second, anything one knows about a finite thing cannot he applied to God, because he is, as has been said, "quite other" or, as could be said, "ecstatically transcendent." The unity of these two divergent consequences is the analogous or symbolic knowledge of God. A religious symbol uses the material of ordinary experience in speaking of God, but in such a way that the ordinary meaning of the material used is both affirmed and denied. Every religious symbol negates itself in its literal meaning, but it affirms itself in its self-transcending meaning. It is not a sign pointing to something with which it has no inner relationship. It represents the power and meaning of what is symbolized through participation. The symbol participates in the reality which is symbolized. Therefore, one should never say "only a symbol." This is to confuse symbol with sign. Thus it follows that everything religion has to say about God, including his qualities, actions, and manifestations, has a symbolic character and that the meaning of "God" is completely missed if one takes the symbolic language literally.

But, after this has been stated, the question arises (and has arisen in public discussion) as to whether there is a point at which a non-symbolic assertion about God must be made. There is such a point, namely, the statement that everything we say about God is symbolic. Such a statement is an assertion about God which itself is not symbolic. Otherwise we would fall into a circular argument. On the other hand, if we make one non-symbolic assertion about God, his ecstatic-transcendent character seems to be endangered. This dialectical difficulty is a mirror of the human situation with respect to the divine ground of being. Although man is actually separated from the infinite, he could not be aware of it if he did not participate in it potentially. This is expressed in the state of being ultimately concerned, a state which is universally human, whatever the content of the concern may be. This is the point at which we must speak non-symbolically about God, but in terms of a quest for him. In the moment, however, in which we describe the character of this point or in which we try to formulate that for which we ask, a combination of symbolic with non-symbolic elements occurs.

If we say that God is the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time. These terms precisely designate the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide. Up to this point every statement is non-symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). Beyond this point every statement is symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). The point itself is both non-symbolic and symbolic. This dialectical situation is the conceptual expression of man's existential situation. It is the condition for man's religious existence and for his ability to receive revelation. It is another side of the self-transcendent or ecstatic idea of God, beyond naturalism and supranaturalism.

2. The Use of the Concept of Being in Systematic Theology

When a doctrine of God is initiated by defining God as being-itself, the philosophical concept of being is introduced into systematic theology. This was so in the earliest period of Christian theology and has been so in the whole history of Christian thought. It appears in the present system in three places: in the doctrine of God, where God is called being as being or the ground and the power of being; in the doctrine of man, where the distinction is carried through between man's essential and his existential being; and, finally, in the doctrine of the Christ, where he is called the manifestation of the New Being, the actualization of which is the work of the divine Spirit.

In spite of the fact that classical theology has always used the concept of "being," the term has been criticized from the standpoint of nominalistic philosophy and that of personalistic theology. Considering the prominent role which the concept plays in the system, it is necessary to reply to the criticisms and at the same time to clarify the way in which the term is used in its different applications.

The criticism of the nominalists and their positivistic descendants to the present day is based on the assumption that the concept of being represents the highest possible abstraction. It is understood as the genus to which all other genera are subordinated with respect to universality and with respect to the degree of abstraction. If this were the way in which the concept of being is reached, nominalism could interpret it as it interprets all universals, namely, as communicative notions which point to particulars but have no reality of their own. Only the completely particular, the thing here and now, has reality. Universals are

means of communication without any power of being. Being as such, therefore, does not designate anything real. God, if he exists, exists as a particular and could be called the most individual of all beings.

The answer to this argument is that the concept of being does not have the character that nominalism attributed to it. It is not the highest abstraction, although it demands the ability of radical abstraction. It is the expression of the experience of being over against non-being. Therefore, it can be described as the power of being which resists non-being. For this reason, the medieval philosophers called being the basic *transcendentale,* beyond the universal and the particular. In this sense the notion of being was understood alike by such people as Parmenides in Greece and Shankara in India. In this sense its significance has been rediscovered by contemporary existentialists, such as Heidegger and Marcel. This idea of being lies beyond the conflict of nominalism and realism. The same word, the emptiest of all concepts when taken as an abstraction, becomes the most meaningful of all concepts when it is understood as the power of being in everything that has being.

No philosophy can suppress the notion of being in this latter sense. It can be hidden under presuppositions and reductive formulas, but it nevertheless underlies the basic concepts of philosophizing. For "being" remains the content, the mystery, and the eternal *aporia* of thinking. No theology can suppress the notion of being as the power of being. One cannot separate them. In the moment in which one says that God is or that he has being, the question arises as to how his relation to being is understood. The only possible answer seems to be that God is being-itself, in the sense of the power of being or the power to conquer non-being.

The main argument of personalistic theology against the use of the concept of being is derived from the personalism of man's experience of the holy as expressed in the personal figures of the gods and the person-to-person relation of man to God in living piety. This personalism is most pronounced in biblical religion. In contrast to many Asiatic religions and to Christian mysticism, the question of being is not asked. For an extensive discussion of this problem I refer to my little book ***Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). The radical contrast of biblical personalism and philosophical ontology is elaborated without compromise. And it is emphasized that no ontological search can be found in

the biblical literature. At the same time, the necessity to ask the ontological question is taken with equal seriousness. There is no ontological thought in biblical religion; but there is no symbol or no theological concept in it which does not have ontological implications. Only artificial barriers can stop the searching mind from asking the question of the being of God, of the gap between man's essential and existential being, of the New Being in the Christ.

For some, it is mostly the impersonal sound of the word "being" which produces concern. But suprapersonal is not impersonal; and I would ask those who are afraid to transcend the personalistic symbolism of the religious language to think, even if only for a short moment, of the words of Jesus about the hairs on our head being counted-and, we could add, the atoms and electrons constituting the universe. In such a statement there is at least as much potential ontology as there is actual ontology in the whole system of Spinoza. To prohibit the transformation of the potential into an actual ontology-of course, within the theological circle-would reduce theology to a repetition and organization of biblical passages. It would be impossible to call the Christ "the Logos."

In the last chapter of my book ***The Courage To Be (New*** Haven: Yale University Press, 1952) I have written of the God above the God of theism. This has been misunderstood as a dogmatic statement of a pantheistic or mystical character. First of all, it is not a dogmatic, but an apologetic, statement. It takes seriously the radical doubt experienced by many people. It gives one the courage of self-affirmation even in the extreme state of radical doubt. In such a state the God of both religious and theological language disappears. But something remains, namely, the seriousness of that doubt in which meaning within meaninglessness is affirmed. The source of this affirmation of meaning within meaninglessness, of certitude within doubt, is not the God of traditional theism but the "God above God," the power of being, which works through those who have no name for it, not even the name God. This is the answer to those who ask for a message in the nothingness of their situation and at the end of their courage to be. But such an extreme point is not a space within which one can live. The dialectics of an extreme situation are a criterion of truth but not the basis on which a whole structure of truth can be built.

3. Independence and Interdependence of Existential Questions and Theological Answers

The method used in the theological system and described in the methodological introduction of the first volume is called the "method of correlation," namely, the correlation between existential questions and theological answers. "Correlation," a word with several meanings in scientific language, is understood as "interdependence of two independent factors." It is not understood in the logical sense of quantitative or qualitative co-ordination of elements without causal relation, but it is understood as a unity of the dependence and independence of two factors. Since this kind of relation has become an object of discussion, I want to try to give some clarification concerning the independence and interdependence of existential questions and theological answers in the method of correlation.

In this method, question and answer are independent of each other, since it is impossible to derive the answer from the question or the question from the answer. The existential question, namely, man himself in the conflicts of his existential situation, is not the source for the revelatory answer formulated by theology. One cannot derive the divine self-manifestation from an analysis of the human predicament. God speaks to the human situation, against it, and for it. Theological supranaturalism, as represented, for example, by contemporary neo-orthodox theology, is right in asserting the inability of man to reach God under his own power. Man is the question, not the answer. It is equally wrong to derive the question implied in human existence from the revelatory answer. This is impossible because the revelatory answer is meaningless if there is no question to which it is the answer. Man cannot receive an answer to a question he has not asked. (This is, by the way, a decisive principle of religious education.) Any such answer would be foolishness for him, an understandable combination of words -as so much preaching is-but not a revelatory experience. The question, asked by man, is man himself. He asks it, whether or not he is vocal about it. He cannot avoid asking it, because his very being is the question of his existence. In asking it, he is alone with himself. He asks "out of the depth," and this depth is he himself.

The truth of naturalism is that it insists on the human character of the existential question. Man as man knows the question of God. He is

estranged, but not cut off, from God. This is the foundation for the limited right of what traditionally was called “natural theology.” Natural theology was meaningful to the extent that it gave an analysis of the human situation and the question of God implied in it. One side of the traditional arguments for the existence of God usually does this, in so far as they elucidate the dependent, transitory, and relational nature of finite human existence. But, in developing the other side of these arguments, natural theology tried to derive theological affirmations from the analysis of man’s finitude. This, however, is an impossible task. None of the conclusions which argue for the existence of God is valid. Their validity extends as far as the questioning analysis, not beyond it. For God is manifest only through God. Existential questions and theological answers are independent of each other; this is the first statement implied in the method of correlation.

The second and more difficult problem is that of the mutual dependence of questions and answers. Correlation means that while in some respects questions and answers are independent, they are dependent in other respects. This problem was always present in classical theology (in scholasticism as well as in Protestant orthodoxy) when the influence of the substructure of natural theology upon the superstructure of revealed theology, and vice versa, was discussed. Since Schleiermacher, it has also been present whenever a philosophy of religion was used as an entering door into the theological system, and the problem arose of how far the door determines the structure of the house, or the house the door. Even the antimetaphysical Ritschlians did not escape this necessity. And the famous “No” of Karl Barth against any kind of natural theology, even of man’s ability to ask the question of God, in the last analysis is a self-deception, as the use of human language in speaking of revelation shows.

The problem of the interdependence of existential questions and theological answers can be solved only within what, in the introductory part, was called the “theological circle.” The theologian as theologian is committed to a concrete expression of the ultimate concern, religiously speaking, of a special revelatory experience. On the basis of this concrete experience, he makes his universal claims, as Christianity did in terms of the statement that Jesus as the Christ is the Logos. This circle can be understood as an ellipse (not as a geometrical circle) and described in terms of two central points—the existential question and the

theological answer. Both are within the sphere of the religious commitment, but they are not identical. The material of the existential question is taken from the whole of human experience and its manifold ways of expression. This refers to past and present, to popular language and great literature, to art and philosophy, to science and psychology. It refers to myth and liturgy, to religious traditions, and to present experiences. All this, as far as it reflects man’s existential predicament, is the material without the help of which the existential question cannot be formulated. The choice of the material, as well as the formulation of the question, is the task of the systematic theologian.

In order to do so, he must participate in the human predicament, not only actually-as he always does—but also in conscious identification. He must participate in man’s finitude, which is also his own, and in its anxiety as though he had never received the revelatory answer of “eternity.” He must participate in man’s estrangement, which is also his own, and show the anxiety of guilt as though he had never received the revelatory answer of “forgiveness.” The theologian does not rest on the theological answer which he announces. He can give it in a convincing way only if he participates with his whole being in the situation of the question, namely, the human predicament. In the light of this demand, the method of correlation protects the theologian from the arrogant claim of having revelatory answers at his disposal. In formulating the answer, he must struggle for it.

While the material of the existential question is the very expression of the human predicament, the form of the question is determined by the total system and by the answers given in it. The question implied in human finitude is directed toward the answer: the eternal. The question implied in human estrangement is directed toward the answer: forgiveness. This directedness of the questions does not take away their seriousness, but it gives them a form determined by the theological system as a whole. This is the sphere within which the correlation of existential questions and theological answers takes place.

The other side of the correlation is the influence of the existential questions on the theological answers. But it should be reaffirmed that the answers cannot be derived from the questions, that the substance of the answers-the revelatory experience-is independent of the questions. But the form of the theological answer is not independent of the form of the existential question. If theology gives the answer, “the

Christ," to the question implied in human estrangement, it does so differently, depending on whether the reference is to the existential conflicts of Jewish legalism, to the existential despair of Greek skepticism, or to the threat of nihilism as expressed in twentiethcentury literature, art, and psychology. Nevertheless, the question does not create the answer. The answer, 'the Christ," cannot be created by man, but man can receive it and express it according to the way he has asked for it.

The method of correlation is not safe from distortion; no theological method is. The answer can prejudice the question to such a degree that the seriousness of the existential predicament is lost. Or the question can prejudice the answer to such a degree that the revelatory character of the answer is lost. No method is a guaranty against such failures. Theology, like all enterprises of the human mind, is ambiguous. But this is not an argument against theology or against the method of correlation. As method, it is as old as theology. We have therefore not invented a new method, but have rather tried to make explicit the implications of old ones, namely, that of apologetic theology.

PART III
EXISTENCE AND THE CHRIST

I

EXISTENCE AND THE QUEST FOR THE CHRIST

A. EXISTENCE AND EXISTENTIALISM

1. THE ETYMOLOGY OF EXISTENCE

TODAY whoever uses terms like "existence," "existential," or "existentialism" is obliged to show the way in which he uses them and the reasons why. He must be aware of the many ambiguities with which these words are burdened, in part avoidable, in part unavoidable. Further, he must show to which past and present attitudes and works he applies these terms. Attempts to clarify their meaning are numerous and divergent. Therefore, none of these attempts can be taken as being finally successful. A theology which makes the correlation of existence and the Christ its central theme must justify its use of the word "existence" and indicate both its philological and its historical derivation.

One of the ways to determine the meaning of an abused word is the etymological one, namely, to go back to its root meaning and try to gain a new understanding out of its roots. This has been done in all periods of the history of thought but is exaggerated by some scholars to such a degree that a reaction has started against the whole procedure. The nominalists of our day, like the old nominalists, consider words as conventional signs which mean nothing beyond the way in which they are used in a special group at a special time. The consequence of this attitude is that some words are invariably lost and must be replaced by others. But the nominalistic presupposition-that words are only conventional signs—must be rejected. Words are the results of the encounter of the human mind with reality. Therefore, they are not only signs but also symbols and cannot be replaced, as in the case of conventional signs, by other words. Hence they can be salvaged. Without this possibility, new languages would continuously have had to be invented in the fields of religion and the humanities. One of the important tasks of

theology is to regain the genuine power of classical terms by looking at the original encounter of mind and reality which created them.

The root meaning of "to exist," in Latin, *existere,* is to "stand out." Immediately one asks: "To stand out of what?" On the one hand, in English, we have the word "outstanding," which means standing out of the average level of things or men, being more than others in power and value. On the other hand, "standing out" in the sense of *existere* means that existence is a common characteristic of all things, of those which are outstanding and of those which are average. The general answer to the question of what we stand out of is that we stand out of non-being. "Things do exist" means they have being, they stand out of nothingness. But we have learned from the Greek philosophers (what they have learned from the lucidity and sensitivity of the Greek language) that non-being can be understood in two ways, namely, as *ouk* on, that is, absolute non-being, or as me on, that is, relative non-being. Existing, "to stand out," refers to both meanings of non-being. If we say that something exists, we assert that it can be found, directly or indirectly, within the corpus of reality. It stands out of the emptiness of absolute non-being. But the metaphor "to stand out" logically implies something like "to stand in." Only that which in some respect stands in can stand out. He who is outstanding rises above the average in which he stood and partly still stands. If we say that everything that exists stands out of absolute non-being, we say that it is in both being and non-being. It does not stand completely out of non-being. As we have said in the chapter on finitude (in the first volume), it is a finite, a mixture of being and non-being. To exist, then, would mean to stand out of one's own non-being.

But this is not sufficient because it does not take into consideration this question: How can something stand out of its own non-being? To this the answer is that everything participates in being, whether or not it exists. It participates in potential being before it can come into actual being. As potential being, it is in the state of relative non-being, it is not-yet-being. But it is not nothing. Potentiality is the state of real possibility, that is, it is more than a logical possibility. Potentiality is the power of being which, metaphorically speaking, has not yet realized its power. The power of being is still latent; it has not yet become manifest. Therefore, if we say that something exists, we say that it has

left the state of mere potentiality and has become actual. It stands out of mere potentiality, out of relative non-being.

In order to become actual, it must overcome relative non-being, the state of me on. But, again, it cannot be completely out of it. It must stand out and stand in at the same time. An actual thing stands out of mere potentiality; but it also remains in it. It never pours its power of being completely into its state of existence. It never fully exhausts its potentialities. It remains not only in absolute non-being, as its finitude shows, but also in relative non-being, as the changing character of its existence shows. The Greeks symbolized this as the resistance of *me on,* of relative non-being, against the actualization of that which is potential in a thing.

Summarizing our etymological inquiry, we can say: Existing can mean standing out of absolute non-being, while remaining in it; it can mean finitude, the unity of being and non-being. And existing can mean standing out of relative non-being, while remaining in it; it can mean actuality, the unity of actual being and the resistance against it. But whether we use the one or the other meaning of non-being, existence means standing out of non-being.

2. The Rise of the Existentialist Problem

Etymological inquiries indicate directions, but they do not solve problems. The pointer given in the second answer to the question "Standing out of what?" is that of a split in reality between potentiality and actuality. This is the first step toward the rise of existentialism. Within the whole of being as it is encountered, there are structures which have no existence and things which have existence on the basis of structures. Treehood does not exist, although it has being, namely, potential being. But the tree in my back yard does exist. It stands out of the mere potentiality of treehood. But it stands out and exists only because it participates in that power of being which is treehood, that power which makes every tree a tree and nothing else.

This split in the whole of reality, expressed in the term "existence," is one of the earliest discoveries of human thought. Long before Plato, the prephilosophical and the philosophical mind experienced two levels of reality. We can call them the "essential" and the "existential" levels. The Orphics, the Pythagoreans, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides were driven to their philosophy by the awareness that the

world they encountered lacked ultimate reality. But only in Plato does the contrast between the existential and the essential being become an ontological and ethical problem. Existence for Plato is the realm of mere opinion, error, and evil. It lacks true reality. True being is essential being and is present in the realm of eternal ideas, i.e., in essences. In order to reach essential being, man must rise above existence. He must return to the essential realm from which he fell into existence. In this way man's existence, his standing out of potentiality, is judged as a fall from what he essentially is. The potential is the essential, and to exist, i.e., to stand out of potentiality, is the loss of true essentiality. It is not a complete loss, for man still stands in his potential or essential being. He remembers it, and, through his remembrance, he participates in the true and the good. He stands in and out of the essential realm. In this sense "standing out" has a meaning precisely opposite that of the usual English usage. It means falling away from what man essentially is.

This attitude toward existence dominated the later ancient world in spite of the attempt of Aristotle to close the gap between essence and existence through his doctrine of the dynamic interdependence of form and matter in everything. But Aristotle's protest could not succeed, partly because of the sociological conditions of later antiquity and partly because Aristotle himself in his *Metaphysics* contrasts the whole of reality with the eternal life of God, i.e., his self-intuition. Participation in the life of God requires the rise of the mind into the *actus purus* of the divine being, which is above everything which is mixed with non-being.

The scholastic philosophers, including both the Platonizing Franciscans and the Aristotelian Dominicans, accepted the contrast between essence and existence for the world, but not for God. In God there is no difference between essential and existential being. This implies that the split is ultimately not valid and that it has no relevance for the ground of being itself. God is eternally what he is. This was expressed in the Aristotelian phrase that God is *actus purus,* without potentiality. The logical consequence of this concept would have been the denial of a living God such as is mirrored in biblical religion. But this was not the intention of the Scholastics. The emphasis of Augustine and Scotus on the divine will made that impossible. But if God is symbolized as will, the term *actus purus* is obviously inadequate. Will implies

potentiality. The real meaning of the Scholastic doctrine-which I consider to be true-would have been expressed in the statement that essence and existence and their unity must be applied symbolically to God. He is not subjected to a conflict between essence and existing. He is not a being beside others, for then his essential nature would transcend himself, just as in the case of all finite beings. Nor is he the essence of all essences, the universal essence, for this would deprive him of the power of self-actualization. His existence, his standing out of his essence, is an expression of his essence. Essentially, he actualizes himself. He is beyond the split. But the universe is subject to the split. God alone is "perfect," a word which is exactly defined as being beyond the gap between essential and existential being. Man and his world do not have this perfection. Their existence stands out of their essence as in a "fall." On this point, the Platonic and the Christian evaluations of existence coincide.

This attitude changed when a new feeling for existence grew up in the Renaissance and Enlightenment. More and more the gap between essence and existence was closed. Existence became the place in which man was called to control and to transform the universe. Existing things were his material. To stand out of one's essential being was not a fall but the way to the actualization and fulfilment of one's potentialities. In its philosophical form this attitude could be called "essentialism." In this sense existence is, so to speak, swallowed by essence. The existing things and events are the actualization of essential being in a progressive development. There are preliminary shortcomings, but there is no existential gap as expressed in the myth of the Fall. In existence, man is what he is in essence-the microcosmos in whom the powers of the universe are united, the bearer of critical and constructive reason, the builder of his world, and the maker of himself as the actualization of his potentiality. Education and political organization will overcome the lags of existence behind essence.

This description fits the spirit of many philosophers of the Renaissance and of the entire Enlightenment. But in neither period did essentialism come to fulfilment. This happened only in a philosophy which was distinctly anti-enlightened and deeply influenced by Romanticism, namely, German classical philosophy and, in particular, the system of Hegel. The reason for this is not only the all-embracing and consistent character of Hegel's system but also that he was aware of

the existentialist problem and tried to take existential elements into his universal system of essences. He took non-being into the very center of his thought; he stressed the role of passion and interest in the movement of history; he created concepts like "estrangement" and "unhappy consciousness"; he made freedom the aim of the universal process of existence; he even brought the Christian paradox into the frame of his system. But he kept all these existential elements from undermining the essentialist structure of his thought. Non-being has been conquered in the totality of the system; history has come to its end; freedom has become actual; and the paradox of the Christ has lost its paradoxical character. Existence is the logically necessary actuality of essence. There is no gap, no leap, between them. This all-embracing character of Hegel's system made it a turning point in the long struggle between essentialism and existentialism. He is the classical essentialist, because he applied to the universe the scholastic doctrine that God is beyond essence and existence. The gap is overcome not only eternally in God but also historically in man. The world is the process of the divine self-realization. There is no gap, no ultimate incertitude, no risk, and no danger of self-loss when essence actualizes itself in existence. Hegel's famous statement that everything that is, is reasonable is not an absurd optimism about the reasonableness of man. Hegel did not believe that men are reasonable and happy. But it is the statement of Hegel's belief that, in spite of everything unreasonable, the rational or essential structure of being is providentially actualized in the process of the universe. The world is the self-realization of the divine mind; existence is the expression of essence and not the fall away from it.

3. Existentialism against Essentialism

It was in protest to Hegel's perfect essentialism that the existentialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries arose. It was not a special trait of his thought which was criticized by the existentialists, some of whom were his pupils. They were not interested in correcting him. They attacked the essentialist idea as such, and with it the whole modern development of man's attitude toward himself and his world. Their attack was and is a revolt against the self-interpretation of man in modern industrial society.

The immediate attack on Hegel came from several sides. In systematic theology we cannot deal with the individual rebels, such as Schelling, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, or Marx. Suffice it to state that in these decades (1830-50) was prepared the historical destiny and the cultural self-expression of the Western world in the twentieth century. In systematic theology we must show the character of the existentialist revolt and confront the meaning of existence which has developed in it with the religious symbols pointing to the human predicament.

The common point in all existentialist attacks is that man's existential situation is a state of estrangement from his essential nature. Hegel is aware of this estrangement, but he believes that it has been overcome and that man has been reconciled with his true being. According to all the existentialists, this belief is Hegel's basic error. Reconciliation is a matter of anticipation and expectation, but not of reality. The world is not reconciled, either in the individual-as Kierkegaard shows-or in society-as Marx shows-or in life as such-as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche show. Existence is estrangement and not reconciliation; it is dehumanization and not the expression of essential humanity. It is the process in which man becomes a thing and ceases to be a person. History is not the divine self-manifestation but a series of unreconciled conflicts, threatening man with self-destruction. The existence of the individual is filled with anxiety and threatened by meaninglessness. With this description of man's predicament all existentialists agree and are therefore opposed to Hegel's essentialism. They feel that it is an attempt to hide the truth about man's actual state.

The distinction has been made between atheistic and theistic existentialism. Certainly there are existentialists who could be called "atheistic," at least according to their intention; and there are others who can be called "theistic." But, in reality, there is no atheistic or theistic existentialism. Existentialism gives an analysis of what it means to exist. It shows the contrast between an essentialist description and an existentialist analysis. It develops the question implied in existence, but it does not try to give the answer, either in atheistic or in theistic terms. Whenever existentialists give answers, they do so in terms of religious or quasi-religious traditions which are not derived from their existentialist analysis. Pascal derives his answers from the Augustinian tradition, Kierkegaard from the Lutheran, Marcel from the Thomist, Dostoevski from the Greek Orthodox. Or the answers are derived from humanistic traditions, as with Marx, Sartre, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Jaspers. None of these men was able to develop answers out of his

questions. The answers of the humanists come from hidden religious sources. They are matters of ultimate concern or faith, although garbed in a secular gown. Hence the distinction between atheistic and theistic existentialism fails. Existentialism is an analysis of the human predicament. And the answers to the questions implied in man's predicament are religious, whether open or hidden.

4. Existential and Existentialist Thinking

For the sake of further philological clarification, it is useful to distinguish between existential and existentialist. The former refers to a human attitude, the latter to a philosophical school. The opposite of existential is detached; the opposite of existentialist is essentialist. In existential thinking, the object is involved. In non-existential thinking, the object is detached. By its very nature, theology is existential; by its very nature, science is nonexistential. Philosophy unites elements of both. In intention, it is non-existential; in reality, it is an ever changing combination of elements of involvement and detachment. This makes futile all attempts to create a so-called "scientific philosophy."

Existential is not existentialist, but they are related in having a common root, namely, "existence." Generally speaking, one can describe essential structures in terms of detachment, and existential predicament in terms of involvement. But this statement needs drastic qualifications. There is an element of involvement in the construction of geometrical figures; and there is an element of detachment in the observation of one's own anxiety and estrangement. The logician and mathematician are driven by *eros,* including desire and passion. The existentialist theologian, who analyzes existence, discovers structures through cognitive detachment, even if they are structures of destruction. And between these poles there are many mixtures of detachment and involvement, as in biology, history, and psychology. Nevertheless, a cognitive attitude in which the element of involvement is dominant is called "existential." The converse is also true. Since the element of involvement is so dominant, the most striking existentialist analyses have been made by novelists, poets, and painters. But even they could escape irrelevant subjectivity only by submitting themselves to detached and objective observation. As a result, the material brought out by the detached methods of therapeutic psychology are used in existentialist literature and art. Involvement and detachment are poles, not conflicting alternatives; there is no existentialist analysis without non-existential detachment.

5. Existentialism and Christian Theology

Christianity asserts that Jesus is the Christ. The term "the Christ" points by marked contrast to man's existential situation. For the Christ, the Messiah, is he who is supposed to bring the "new eon," the universal regeneration, the new reality. New reality presupposes an old reality; and this old reality, according to prophetic and apocalyptic descriptions, is the state of the estrangement of man and his world from God. This estranged world is ruled by structures of evil, symbolized as demonic powers. They rule individual souls, nations, and even nature. They produce anxiety in all its forms. It is the task of the Messiah to conquer them and to establish a new reality from which the demonic powers or the structures of destruction are excluded.

Existentialism has analyzed the "old eon," namely, the predicament of man and his world in the state of estrangement. In doing so, existentialism is a natural ally of Christianity. Immanuel Kant once said that mathematics is the good luck of human reason. In the same way, one could say that existentialism is the good luck of Christian theology. It has helped to rediscover the classical Christian interpretation of human existence. Any theological attempt to do this would not have had the same effect. This positive use refers not only to existentialist philosophy but also to analytic psychology, literature, poetry, drama, and art. In all these realms there is an immense amount of material which the theologian can use and organize in the attempt to present Christ as the answer to the questions implied within existence. In earlier centuries a similar task *was* undertaken mainly by monastic theologians, who analyzed themselves and the members of their small community so penetratingly that there are few present-day insights into the human predicament which they did not anticipate. The penitential and devotional literature impressively shows this. But this tradition was lost under the impact of the philosophies and theologies of pure consciousness, represented, above all, by Cartesianism and Calvinism. Notwithstanding differences, they were allies in helping to repress the unconscious and half-conscious sides of human nature, thus preventing a full understanding of man's existential predicament (in spite of Calvin's doctrine of man's total depravity and the Augustinianism of the Cartesian school). In recovering the elements of man's nature which were suppressed by the psychology of consciousness, existentialism and contemporary theology should become allies and analyze the character of exist-

ence in all its manifestations, the unconscious as well as the conscious.

The systematic theologian cannot do this alone; he needs the help of creative representatives of existentialism in all realms of culture. He needs the support of the practical explorers of man's predicament, such as ministers, educators, psychoanalysts, and counselors. The theologian must reinterpret the traditional religious symbols and theological concepts in the light of the material he receives from these people. He must be aware of the fact that terms like "sin" and "judgment" have lost not their truth but rather an expressive power which can be regained only if they are filled with the insights into human nature which existentialism (including depth psychology) has given to us. Now the biblicistic theologian is right in maintaining that all these insights can be found in the Bible. And the Roman Catholic is equally right in pointing to these insights in the Church Fathers. The question is not whether something can be found somewhere-almost everything can—but whether a period is ripe for rediscovering a lost truth. For example, he who reads Ecclesiastes or Job with eyes opened by existentialist analyses will see more in either than he was able to see before. The same is true of many other passages of the Old and New Testaments.

Existentialism has been criticized as being too "pessimistic." Terms like "non-being," "finitude," "anxiety," "guilt," "meaninglessness," and "despair" seem to justify such criticism. Criticism also has been directed against much biblical writing, as, for instance, Paul's description of the human predicament in Romans, chapters 1 and 7. But Paul is pessimistic (in the sense of hopeless) in these passages only if they are read in isolation and without the answer to the question implied in them.

Certainly this is not the case within a theological system. The word "pessimism" should be avoided in connection with descriptions of human nature, for it is a mood, not a concept or description. From the point of view of systematic structure, it must be added that the existential elements are only one part of the human predicament. They are always combined ambiguously with essential elements; otherwise they would have no being at all. Essential as well as existential elements are always abstractions from the concrete actuality of being, namely, "Life." This is the subject of the fourth part of Systematic Theology. For the sake of analysis, however, abstractions are necessary, even if they have a strongly negative sound. And no existentialist analysis of the human predicament can escape this, even if it is hard to bear-as the doctrine of sin always has been in traditional theology.

B. THE TRANSITION FROM ESSENCE TO EXISTENCE AND THE SYMBOL OF "THE FALL"

1. The Symbol of "the Fall" and Western Philosophy

The symbol of "the Fall" is a decisive part of the Christian tradition. Although usually associated with the biblical story of the "Fall of Adam," its meaning transcends the myth of Adam's Fall and has universal anthropological significance. Biblical literalism did a distinct disservice to Christianity in its identification of the Christian emphasis on the symbol of the Fall with the literalistic interpretation of the Genesis story. Theology need not take literalism seriously, but we must realize how its impact has hampered the apologetic task of the Christian church. Theology must clearly and unambiguously represent "the Fall" as a symbol for the human situation universally, not as the story of an event that happened "once upon a time."

In order to sharpen this understanding, the phrase "transition from essence to existence" is used in this system. It is, so to speak, a "half-way demythologization" of the myth of the Fall. The element of "once upon a time" is removed. But the demythologization is not complete, for the phrase "transition from essence to existence" still contains a temporal element. And if we speak in temporal terms about the divine, we still speak in mythical terms, even if such abstract concepts as "essence" and "existence" replace mythological states and figures. Complete demythologization is not possible when speaking about the divine. When Plato described the transition from essence to existence, he used a mythological form of expression-in speaking of the "Fall of the soul." He knew that existence is not a matter of essential necessity but that it is a fact and that therefore the "Fall of the soul" is a story to be told in mythical symbols. If he had understood existence to be a logical implication of essence, existence itself would have appeared as essential. Symbolically speaking, sin would be seen as created, as a necessary consequence of man's essential nature. But sin is not created, and the transition from essence to existence is a fact, a story to be told and not a derived dialectical step. Therefore, it cannot be completely demythologized.

At this point idealism as well as naturalism stand against the Christian (and Platonic) symbol of the Fall. Essentialism in Hegel's system was fulfilled in idealistic terms. In it, as in all idealism, the Fall is reduced to the difference between ideality and reality, and reality is then seen

as pointing toward the ideal. The Fall is not a break, but an imperfect fulfilment. It approximates fulfilment in the historical process or is fulfilled in principle in the present period of history. Christianity and existentialism consider the progressivistic (or revolutionary) form of the idealistic faith as utopianism, and the conservative form as ideology. Both are interpreted as self-deception and idolatry. Neither takes the self-contradicting power of human freedom and the demonic implication of history seriously.

The Fall, in the sense of the transition from essence to existence, is denied not only by idealism but also by naturalism-from the other side, so to speak. The latter takes existence for granted, without asking about the source of its negativity. It does not try to answer the question of why man is aware of negativity as something that should not be and for which he is responsible. Symbols such as the Fall, descriptions of the human predicament, and concepts such as "estrangement" and "man against himself" are strongly, even cynically, rejected. "Man has no predicament," I heard a naturalistic philosopher say. Naturalists, however, usually avoid resignation or cynicism by including elements of idealism either in their progressivistic form or in the more realistic form of Stoicism. In both forms, pure naturalism is transcended, but the symbol of the Fall is not reached. This is not even achieved in ancient Stoicism's belief in the deterioration of man's historical existence and in the gap between the fools and the wise ones. Neo-Stoicism is impregnated with so many idealistic elements that it does not reach the full depth of Christian realism.

When a Christian symbol such as the Fall is confronted with philosophies like idealism, naturalism, or neo-Stoicism, one may well ask whether it is possible to relate ideas which lie on different levels, the one on the level of religious symbolism, the other on the level of philosophical concepts. But, as explained in the section on philosophy and theology in the first volume, there is an interpenetration of levels between theology and philosophy. If the idealist or naturalist asserts that "there is no human predicament," he makes an existential decision about a matter of ultimate concern. In expressing his decision in conceptual terms, he is a theologian. And if the theologian says that existence is estranged from essence, not only does he make an existential decision, but, in expressing it in ontological concepts, he is a philosopher. The philosopher cannot avoid existential decisions, and the theologian cannot avoid ontological concepts. Although their intentions are opposite, their actual procedures are comparable. This justifies our comparison of the symbol of the Fall with Western philosophical thought and the alliance of existentialism and theology.

2. Finite Freedom as the Possibility of the Transition from Essence to Existence

The story of Genesis, chapters l-3, if taken as a myth, can guide our description of the transition from essential to existential being. It is the profoundest and richest expression of man's awareness of his existential estrangement and provides the scheme in which the transition from essence to existence can be treated. It points, first, to the possibility of the Fall; second, to its motives; third, to the event itself; and, fourth, to its consequences. This will be the order and scheme of the following sections.

In the part entitled "Being and God," the polarity of freedom and destiny was discussed in relation to being as such, as well as in relation to human beings. On the basis of the solution given there, we can answer the question of how the transition from essence to existence is possible in terms of "freedom," which is always in polar unity with destiny. But this is only a first step to the answer. In the same section of the first volume, we described man's awareness of his finitude and of finitude universally, and we analyzed the situation of being related to and excluded from infinity. This provides the second step toward an answer. It is not freedom as such, but finite freedom. Man has freedom in contrast to all other creatures. They have analogies to freedom but not freedom itself. But man is finite, excluded from the infinity to which he belongs. One can say that nature is finite necessity, God is infinite freedom, man is finite freedom. It is finite freedom which makes possible the transition from essence to existence.

Man is free, in so far as he has language. With his language, he has universals which liberate him from bondage to the concrete situation to which even the highest animals are subjected. Man is free, in so far as he is able to ask questions about the world he encounters, including himself, and to penetrate into deeper and deeper levels of reality. Man is free, in so far as he can receive unconditional moral and logical imperatives which indicate that he can transcend the conditions which determine every finite being. Man is free, in so far as he has the power

of deliberating and deciding, thus cutting through the mechanisms of stimulus and response. Man is free, in so far as he can play and build imaginary structures above the real structures to which he, like all beings, is bound. Man is free, in so far as he has the faculty of creating worlds above the given world, of creating the world of technical tools and products, the world of artistic expressions, the world of theoretical structures and practical organizations. Finally, man is free, in so far as he has the power of contradicting himself and his essential nature. Man is free even from his freedom; that is, he can surrender his humanity. This final quality of his freedom provides the third step toward the answer to the question of how the transition from essence to existence is possible.

Man's freedom is finite freedom. All the potentialities which constitute his freedom are limited by the opposite pole, his destiny. In nature, destiny has the character of necessity. In spite of analogies to human destiny, God is his own destiny. This means that he transcends the polarity of freedom and destiny. In man freedom and destiny limit each other, for he has finite freedom. This is true of every act of human freedom; it is true also of the final quality of human freedom, namely, the power of surrendering his freedom. Even the freedom of self-contradiction is limited by destiny. As finite freedom, it is possible only within the context of the universal transition from essence to existence. There is no individual Fall. In the Genesis story the two sexes and nature, represented by the serpent, work together. The transition from essence to existence is possible because finite freedom works within the frame of a universal destiny; this is the fourth step toward the answer.

Traditional theology discussed the possibility of the Fall in terms of Adam's *potuit peccare*—his freedom to sin. This freedom was not seen in unity with the total structure of his freedom and therefore was considered as a questionable divine gift. Calvin thought the freedom to fall to be a weakness of man, regrettable from the point of view of man's happiness, since it meant eternal condemnation for most human beings (e.g., all pagans). This gift is understandable only from the point of view of the divine glory, in that God decided to reveal his majesty not only through salvation but also through the condemnation of men. But the freedom of turning away from God is a quality of the structure of freedom as such. The possibility of the Fall is dependent on

all the qualities of human freedom taken in their unity. Symbolically speaking, it is the image of God in man which gives the possibility of the Fall. Only he who is the image of God has the power of separating himself from God. His greatness and his weakness are identical. Even God could not remove the one without removing the other. And if man had not received this possibility, he would have been a thing among things, unable to serve the divine glory, either in salvation or in condemnation. Therefore, the doctrine of the Fall has always been treated as the doctrine of the Fall of man, although it was also seen as a cosmic event.

3. "Dreaming Innocence" and Temptation

Having discussed how the transition from essence to existence is possible, we now come to the question of the motifs driving to the transition. In order to answer this, we must have an image of the state of essential being in which the motifs are working. The difficulty is that the state of essential being is not an actual stage of human development which can be known directly or indirectly. The essential nature of man is present in all stages of his development, although in existential distortion. In myth and dogma man's essential nature has been projected into the past as a history before history, symbolized as a golden age or paradise. In psychological terms one can interpret this state as that of "dreaming innocence." Both words point to something that precedes actual existence. It has potentiality, not actuality. It has no place, it is *ou topos* (utopia). It has no time; it precedes temporality, and it is suprahistorical. Dreaming is a state of mind which is real and non-real at the same time-just as is potentiality. Dreaming anticipates the actual, just as everything actual is somehow present in the potential. In the moment of awakening, the images of the dream disappear as images and return as encountered realities. Certainly, reality is different from the images of the dream, but not totally different. For the actual is present in the potential in terms of anticipation. For these reasons the metaphor "dreaming" is adequate in describing the state of essential being.

The word "innocence" also points to non-actualized potentiality. One is innocent only with respect to something which, if actualized, would end the state of innocence. The word has three connotations. It can mean lack of actual experience, lack of personal responsibility, and lack

of moral guilt. In the metaphorical use suggested here, it is meant in all three senses. It designates the state before actuality, existence, and history. If the metaphor "dreaming innocence" is used, concrete connotations appear, taken from human experience. One is reminded of the early stages of a child's development. The most striking example is the growth of his sexual consciousness. Up to a certain point, the child is unconscious of his sexual potentialities. In the difficult steps of transition from potentiality to actuality, an awakening takes place. Experience, responsibility, and guilt are acquired, and the state of dreaming innocence is lost. This example is evident in the biblical story, where sexual consciousness is the first consequence of the loss of innocence. One should not confuse this metaphorical use of the term "innocence" with the false assertion that the newborn human being is in a state of sinlessness. Every life always stands under the conditions of existence. The word "innocence," like the word "dreaming," is used not in its proper but in its analogical sense. But, if used in this way, it can provide a psychological approach to the state of essential or potential being.

The state of dreaming innocence drives beyond itself. The possibility of the transition to existence is experienced as temptation. Temptation is unavoidable because the state of dreaming innocence is uncontested and undecided. It is not perfection. Orthodox theologians have heaped perfection after perfection upon Adam before the Fall, making him equal with the picture of the Christ. This procedure is not only absurd; it makes the Fall completely unintelligible. Mere potentiality or dreaming innocence is not perfection. Only the conscious union of existence and essence is perfection, as God is perfect because he transcends essence and existence. The symbol "Adam before the Fall" must be understood as the dreaming innocence of undecided potentialities.

If we ask what it is that drives dreaming innocence beyond itself, we must continue our analysis of the concept "finite freedom." Man is not only finite, as is every creature; he is also aware of his finitude. And this awareness is "anxiety." In the last decade the term "anxiety" has become associated with the German and Danish word ***Angst,*** which itself is derived from the Latin ***angustiae,*** "narrows." Through Søren Kierkegaard the word Angst has become a central concept of existentialism. It expresses the awareness of being finite, of being a mixture of being and non-being, or of being threatened by non-being. All creatures are driven by anxiety; for finitude and anxiety are the same. But in

man freedom is united with anxiety. One could call man's freedom "freedom in anxiety" or "anxious freedom" (in German, ***sich ängstigende Freiheit***). This anxiety is one of the driving forces toward the transition from essence to existence. Kierkegaard particularly has used the concept of anxiety to describe (not to explain) the transition from essence to existence.

Using this idea and analyzing the structure of finite freedom, one may show in two interrelated ways the motifs of the transition from essence to existence. There is an element in the Genesis story which has often been overlooked-the divine prohibition not to eat from the tree of knowledge. Any command presupposes that what is commanded is not yet fulfilled. The divine prohibition presupposes a kind of split between creator and creature, a split which makes a command necessary, even if it is given only in order to test the obedience of the creature. This cleavage is the most important point in the interpretation of the Fall. For it presupposes a sin which is not yet sin but which is also no longer innocence. It is the desire to sin. I suggest calling the state of this desire "aroused freedom." In the state of dreaming innocence, freedom and destiny are in harmony, but neither of them is actualized. Their unity is essential or potential; it is finite and therefore open to tension and disruption-just like uncontested innocence. The tension occurs in the moment in which finite freedom becomes conscious of itself and tends to become actual. This is what could be called the moment of aroused freedom. But in the same moment a reaction starts, coming from the essential unity of freedom and destiny. Dreaming innocence wants to preserve itself. This reaction is symbolized in the biblical story as the divine prohibition against actualizing one's potential freedom and against acquiring knowledge and power. Man is caught between the desire to actualize his freedom and the demand to preserve his dreaming innocence. In the power of his finite freedom, he decides for actualization.

The same analysis can be made, so to speak, from the inside, namely, from man's anxious awareness of his finite freedom. At the moment when man becomes conscious of his freedom, the awareness of his dangerous situation gets hold of him. He experiences a double threat, which is rooted in his finite freedom and expressed in anxiety. Man experiences the anxiety of losing himself by not actualizing himself and his potentialities and the anxiety of losing himself by actualizing him-

self and his potentialities. He stands between the preservation of his dreaming innocence without experiencing the actuality of being and the loss of his innocence through knowledge, power, and guilt. The anxiety of this situation is the state of temptation. Man decides for self-actualization, thus producing the end of dreaming innocence.

Again it is sexual innocence which psychologically gives the most adequate analogy to the preceding. The typical adolescent is driven by the anxiety of losing himself, either in the actualization of himself sexually or in his non-actualization sexually. On the one hand, the taboos imposed on him by society have power over him in confirming his own anxiety about losing his innocence and becoming guilty by actualizing his potentiality. On the other hand, he is afraid of not actualizing himself sexually and of sacrificing his potentialities by preserving his innocence. He usually decides for actualization, as men universally do. Exceptions (e.g., for the sake of conscious asceticism) limit the analogy to the human situation generally, but they do not remove the analogy.

The analysis of temptation, as given here, makes no reference to a conflict between the bodily and the spiritual side of man as a possible cause. The doctrine of man indicated here implies a "monistic" understanding of man's nature in contrast to a dualistic one. Man is a whole man, whose essential being has the character of dreaming innocence, whose finite freedom makes possible the transition from essence to existence, whose aroused freedom puts him between two anxieties which threaten the loss of self, whose decision is against the preservation of dreaming innocence and for self-actualization. Mythologically speaking, the fruit of the tree of temptation is both sensuous and spiritual.

4. The Moral and the Tragic Element in the Transition from Essential to Existential Being

The transition from essence to existence is the original fact. It is not the first fact in a temporal sense or a fact beside or before others, but it is that which gives validity to every fact. It is the actual in every fact. We do exist and our world with us. This is the original fact. It means that the transition from essence to existence is a universal quality of finite being. It is not an event of the past; for it ontologically precedes everything that happens in time and space. It sets the conditions of spatial and temporal existence. It is manifest in every individual person in the transition from dreaming innocence to actualization and guilt.

If the transition from essence to existence is expressed mythologically -as it must be in the language of religion-it is seen as an event of the past, although it happens in all three modes of time. The event of the past to which traditional theology refers is the story of the Fall as told in the Book of Genesis. Perhaps no text in literature has received so many interpretations as the third chapter of Genesis. This is partly due to its uniqueness--even in biblical literature-partly to its psychological profundity, and partly to its religious power. In mythological language it describes the transition from essence to existence as a unique event which happened long ago in a special place to individual persons-first to Eve, then to Adam. God himself appears as an individual person in time and space as a typical "father figure." The whole description has a psychological-ethical character and is derived from the daily experiences of people under special cultural and social conditions. Nevertheless, it has a claim to universal validity. The predominance of psychological and ethical aspects does not exclude other factors in the biblical story. The serpent represents the dynamic trends of nature; there is the magical character of the two trees, the rise of sexual consciousness, the curse over the heredity of Adam, the body of the woman, the animals and the land.

These traits show that a cosmic myth is hidden behind the psychological-ethical form of the story and that the prophetic "demythologization" of this myth has not removed, but rather subordinated, the mythical elements to the ethical point of view. The cosmic myth reappears in the Bible in the form of the struggle of the divine with demonic powers and the powers of chaos and darkness. It reappears also in the myth of the Fall of the angels and in the interpretation of the serpent of Eden as the embodiment of a fallen angel. These examples all point to the cosmic presuppositions and implications of the Fall of Adam. But the most consistent emphasis on the cosmic character of the Fall is given in the myth of the transcendent Fall of the souls. While it probably has Orphic roots, it is first told by Plato when he contests essence and existence. It received a Christian form by Origen, a humanistic one by Kant, and is present in many other philosophies and theologies of the Christian Era. All have recognized that existence cannot be derived from within existence, that it cannot be derived from an individual event in time and space. They have recognized that existence has a universal dimension.

The myth of the transcendent Fall is not directly biblical, but neither does it contradict the Bible. It affirms the ethical-psychological element in the Fall and carries through the cosmic dimensions which we find in biblical literature. The motif of the myth of the transcendent Fall is the tragic-universal character of existence. The meaning of the myth is that the very constitution of existence implies the transition from essence to existence. The individual act of existential estrangement is not the isolated act of an isolated individual; it is an act of freedom which is imbedded, nevertheless, in the universal destiny of existence. In every individual act the estranged or fallen character of being actualizes itself. Every ethical decision is an act both of individual freedom and of universal destiny. This justifies both forms of the myth of the Fall. Obviously, both are myths and are absurd if taken literally instead of symbolically. Existence is rooted both in ethical freedom and in tragic destiny. If the one or the other side is denied, the human situation becomes incomprehensible. Their unity is the great problem of the doctrine of man. Of all the aspects of the cosmic myth of Genesis, the doctrine of "original sin" has been most violently attacked since the early eighteenth century. This concept was the first point criticized by the Enlightenment, and its rejection is one of the last points defended by contemporary humanism. Two reasons explain the violence with which the modern mind has fought against the idea of original sin. First, its mythological form was taken literally by attackers and defenders and therefore was unacceptable to an awakening, historical-critical way of thinking. Second, the doctrine of original sin seemed to imply a negative evaluation of man, and this radically contradicted the new feeling for life and world as it had developed in industrial society. It was feared that the pessimism about man would inhibit the tremendous impulse of modern man, technically, politically, and educationally to transform world and society. There was and still is the apprehension that authoritarian and totalitarian consequences could follow from a negative valuation of man's moral and intellectual power. Theology must join—and in most cases has done so-the historical-critical attitude toward the biblical and ecclesiastical myth. Theology further must emphasize the positive valuation of man in his essential nature. It must join classical humanism in protecting man's created goodness against naturalistic and existentialistic denials of his greatness and dignity. At the same time, theology should reinterpret the doctrine of original sin by

showing man's existential self-estrangement and by using the helpful existentialist analyses of the human predicament. In doing so, it must develop a realistic doctrine of man, in which the ethical and the tragic element in his self-estrangement are balanced. It may well be that such a task demands the definite removal from the theological vocabulary of terms like "original sin" or "hereditary sin" and their replacement by a description of the interpenetration of the moral and the tragic elements in the human situation.

The empirical basis for such a description has become quite extensive in our period. Analytic psychology, as well as analytic sociology, has shown how destiny and freedom, tragedy and responsibility, are interwoven in every human being from early childhood on and in all social and political groups in the history of mankind. The Christian church has maintained a stable balance of both sides in its description of the human situation, although frequently in inadequate language and always in, conflicting directions. Augustine fought for a way between Manichaeism and Pelagianism; Luther rejected Erasmus but was interpreted by Flacius Illyricus in a half-Manichaean way; the Jansenists were accused by the Jesuits of destroying man's rationality; liberal theology is criticized by neo-orthodoxy as well as by a kind of existentialism (e.g., Sartre, Kafka) which has some Manichaean traits. Christianity cannot escape these tensions. It must simultaneously acknowledge the tragic universality of estrangement and man's personal responsibility for it.

5. Creation and Fall

The unity of the moral and the tragic element in man's predicament leads to the question of the relationship of man with the universe in existence and consequently to the question of creation and the Fall. In nonbiblical as well as biblical myths man is held responsible for the Fall, though it is conceived as a cosmic event, as the universal transition from essential goodness to existential estrangement. In the myths subhuman and superhuman figures influence the decision of man. But man himself makes the decision and receives the divine curse for it. In the Genesis story it is the serpent which represents the dynamics of nature in and around man. But, alone, the serpent is without power. Only through man can transition from essence to existence occur. Later doctrines combined the symbol of rebellious angels with the symbol of the ser-

pent. But even this was not supposed to release man from his responsibility; for the Fall of Lucifer, though resulting in man's temptation, does not cause his Fall. The myth of the Fall of the angels does not help to solve the riddle of existence. It introduces an even darker riddle, namely, how "blessed spirits," who eternally perceive the divine glory, could be tempted to turn away from God. This way of interpreting the Fall of man needs more explanation than the Fall itself. The myth can be criticized because it confuses powers of being with beings. The truth of the doctrine of angelic and demonic powers is that there are **supra**-individual structures of goodness and supra-individual structures of evil. Angels and demons are mythological names for constructive and destructive powers of being, which are ambiguously interwoven and which fight with each other in the same person, in the same social group, and in the same historical situation. They are not beings but powers of being dependent on the whole structure of existence and involved in the ambiguous life. Man is responsible for the transition from essence to existence because he has finite freedom and because all dimensions of reality are united in him.

On the other hand, we have'seen that man's freedom is imbedded in universal destiny and that therefore the transition from essence to existence has both moral and tragic character. This makes it necessary to ask how universal existence is related to man's existence. In respect to the Fall, how is man related to nature? And if the universe participates in the Fall in the same way, what is the relation between creation and the Fall?

Biblical literalism would answer that the Fall of man changed the structures of nature. The divine curse upon Adam and Eve involves a change of nature in and around man. If such literalism is rejected as absurd, then what does the term "fallen world" mean? If the structures of nature were always what they are now, can one speak of the participation of nature, including man's natural basis, in his existential estrangement ? Has nature been corrupted by man? Does this combination of words have any meaning at all?

The first answer to these questions is that the transition from essence to existence is not an event in time and space but the **transhistorical** quality of all events in time and space. This is equally true of man and of nature. "Adam before the Fall" and "nature before the curse" are states of potentiality. They are not actual states. The actual

state is that existence in which man finds himself along with the whole universe, and there is no time in which this was otherwise. The notion of a moment *in* time in which man and nature were changed from good to evil is absurd, and it has no foundation in experience or revelation.

In view of this statement, one may ask whether it is not less confusing to drop the concept of the fallen world and to distinguish radically between man and nature. Is it not more realistic to state that man alone **is** able to become guilty because he is able to make responsible decisions and that nature is innocent? Such a division is accepted by many people because it seems to solve a rather **difficult** problem in a simple way. But it is too simple to be true. It leaves out the tragic element, the element of destiny, in man's predicament. If estrangement were based only on the responsible decisions of the individual person, each individual could always either contradict or not contradict his essential nature. There would be no reason to deny that people could avoid and have avoided sin altogether. This was the Pelagian view, even if Pelagius had to admit that bad examples influence the decisions of free and responsible individuals. There is no such thing as "bondage of the will" in this view. The tragic element of man's predicament, manifest from earliest infancy, is disregarded. In the Christian tradition men like Augustine, Luther, and Calvin have rejected this view. Pelagian ideas were rejected by the early church, and semi-Pelagian ideas, which have become strong in the medieval church, were rejected by the Reformers. The **neo-Pelagian** ideas of contemporary moralistic Protestantism are rejected by **neo-orthodox** and existentialist theologians. Christianity knows and can never give up its knowledge of the tragic universality of existential estrangement.

This means, however, that Christianity must reject the idealistic separation of an innocent nature from guilty man. Such a rejection has become comparatively easy in our period because of the insights gained about the growth of man and his relation to nature within and outside himself. First, it can be shown that in the development of man there is no absolute discontinuity between animal bondage and human freedom. There are leaps between different stages, but there is also a slow and continuous transformation. It is impossible to say at which point in the process of natural evolution animal nature is replaced by the nature which, in our present experience, we know as human, a **na-**

ture which is qualitatively different from animal nature. The possibility that both natures were in conflict with each other in the same being cannot be denied. Second, one cannot decide at which points in the development of the human individual responsibility begins and ends. Legal thought attributes it rather late to the individual. And even in the mature man there are limits to responsibility. Some of them are so drastic as to be acknowledged in morals and law. "Responsibility" presupposes the fully developed ability to "respond" as a person. But there are many stages of reduced centeredness caused by tiredness, sickness, intoxication, neurotic compulsions, and psychotic splits. All this does not remove responsibility, but it shows the element of destiny in every act of freedom. Third, we must refer to the present rediscovery of the unconscious and its determining power in man's conscious decisions. The way in which this happens has been described in past and present existentialist literature as well as in the psychoanalytic movements of our period. One of the most striking facts about the dynamics of the human personality is the intentional ignorance concerning one's real motives. The motives themselves are bodily and psychic strivings, often far removed from what appears as conscious reason in a centered decision. Such a decision is still free, but it is freedom within the limits of destiny. Fourth, the social dimension of unconscious strivings must be considered. The questionable term "collective unconscious" points to the reality of this dimension. The centered self is dependent not only on the influences of its social surroundings which are consciously given and received but also on those which are effective in a society without being apprehended and formulated. All this shows that the independence within an individual decision is only half the truth.

Biological, psychological, and sociological powers are effective in every individual decision. The universe works through us as part of the universe.

At this point someone may say that, while such considerations refute Pelagian moral freedom, they establish a Manichaean tragic destiny! But that is not the case. Moral freedom becomes "Pelagian" only if it is separated from tragic destiny; and tragic destiny becomes "Manichaean" only if it is separated from moral freedom. They belong to each other. Freedom is not the freedom of indeterminacy. That would make every moral decision an accident, unrelated to the person who acts. But freedom is the possibility of a total and centered act of the

personality, an act in which all the drives and influences which constitute the destiny of man are brought into the centered unity of a decision. None of these drives compels the decision in isolation. (Only in states of disintegration is the personality determined by compulsions.) But they are effective in union and through the deciding center. In this way the universe participates in every act of human freedom. It represents the side of destiny in the act of freedom.

Conversely, there are analogies to freedom effective in all parts of the universe. From the atomic structures to the most highly developed animals, there are total and centered reactions which can be called "spontaneous" in the dimension of organic life. Of course, structured and spontaneous reactions in the non-human nature are not responsible actions and do not constitute guilt. But it does not seem adequate, either, to apply the adjective "innocent" to nature. Logically, it is not correct to speak of innocence where there is no possibility of becoming guilty. And, as there are analogies to human freedom in nature, so there are also analogies to human good and human evil in all parts of the universe. It is worthy of note that Isaiah prophesied peace in nature for the new eon, thereby showing that he would not call nature "innocent." Nor would the writer who, in Genesis, chapter 3, tells about the curse over the land declare nature innocent. Nor would Paul do so in Romans, chapter 8, when he speaks about the bondage to futility which is the fate of nature. Certainly, all these expressions are poetic-mythical. They could not be otherwise, since only poetic empathy opens the inner life of nature. Nevertheless, they are realistic in substance and certainly more realistic than the moral utopianism which confronts immoral man with innocent nature. Just as, within man, nature participates in the good and evil he does, so nature, outside man, shows analogies to man's good and evil doing. Man reaches into nature, as nature reaches into man. They participate in each other and cannot be separated from each other. This makes it possible and necessary to use the term "fallen world" and to apply the concept of existence (in contrast to essence) to the universe as well as to man.

The tragic universality of existence, the element of destiny in human freedom, and the symbol of the "fallen world" naturally raise the question as to whether sin is made ontologically necessary instead of a matter of personal responsibility and guilt. Does not the preceding description "ontologize away" the reality of the Fall and estrangement? These

questions become rather urgent if one states (and it must be stated) that there is a point in which creation and the Fall coincide, in spite of their logical difference.

The answer to these questions (which have been asked by several critics of the first volume, notably Reinhold Niebuhr in his contribution to the book *The Theology of Paul Tillich*) is an interpretation of the statement about the coincidence of creation and the Fall. Creation and the Fall coincide in so far as there is no point in time and space in which created goodness was actualized and had existence. This is a necessary consequence of the rejection of the literal interpretation of the paradise story. There was no "utopia" in the past, just as there will be no "utopia" in the future. Actualized creation and estranged existence are identical. Only biblical literalism has the theological right to deny this assertion. He who excludes the idea of a historical stage of essential goodness should not try to escape the consequence. This is even more obvious if one applies the symbol of creation to the whole temporal process. If God creates here and now, everything he has created participates in the transition from essence to existence. He creates the newborn child; but, if created, it falls into the state of existential estrangement. This is the point of coincidence of creation and the Fall. But it is not a logical coincidence; for the child, upon growing into maturity, affirms the state of estrangement in acts of freedom which imply responsibility and guilt. Creation is good in its essential character. If actualized, it falls into universal estrangement through freedom and destiny. The hesitation of many critics to accept these obviously realistic statements is caused by their justified fear that sin may become a rational necessity, as in purely essentialist systems. Against them theology must insist that the leap from essence to existence is the original fact-that it has the character of a leap and not of structural necessity. In spite of its tragic universality, existence cannot be derived from essence.

C. THE MARKS OF MAN'S ESTRANGEMENT AND THE CONCEPT OF SIN

1. Estrangement and Sin

The state of existence is the state of estrangement. Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings, and from himself. The transition from essence to existence results in personal guilt and

universal tragedy. It is now necessary to give a description of existential estrangement and its self-destructive implications. But, before doing so, we must answer the question which has already arisen : What is the relation of the concept of estrangement to the traditional concept of sin?

"Estrangement" as a philosophical term was created and applied by Hegel, especially in his doctrine of nature as estranged mind (*Geist*). But his discovery of estrangement happened long before he developed his philosophy of nature. In his early fragments he described life-processes as possessing an original unity which is disrupted by the split into subjectivity and objectivity and by the replacement of love by law. It is this concept of estrangement, rather than the one in his philosophy of nature, which was used against Hegel by some of his pupils, especially Marx. They rejected Hegel's contention that estrangement is overcome by reconciliation in history. The individual is estranged and not reconciled; society is estranged and not reconciled; existence is estrangement. In the strength of this insight, they become revolutionaries against the world as it existed and were existentialists long before the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the sense in which it was used by the anti-Hegelians, estrangement points to the basic characteristic of man's predicament. Man as he exists is not what he essentially is and ought to be. He is estranged from his true being. The profundity of the term "estrangement" lies in the implication that one belongs essentially to that from which one is estranged. Man is not a stranger to his true being, for he belongs to it. He is judged by it but cannot be completely separated, even if he is hostile to it. Man's hostility to God proves indisputably that he belongs to him. Where there is the possibility of hate, there and there alone is the possibility of love.

Estrangement is not a biblical term but is implied in most of the biblical descriptions of man's predicament. It is implied in the symbols of the expulsion from paradise, in the hostility between man and nature, in the deadly hostility of brother against brother, in the estrangement of nation from nation through the confusion of language, and in the continuous complaints of the prophets against their kings and people who turn to alien gods. Estrangement is implied in Paul's statement that man perverted the image of God into that of idols, in his classical description of "man against himself," in his vision of man's hostility against man as combined with his distorted desires. In all these

interpretations of man's predicament, estrangement is implicitly asserted. Therefore, it is certainly not unbiblical to use the term "estrangement" in describing man's existential situation.

Nevertheless, "estrangement" cannot replace "sin." Yet the reasons for attempts to replace the word "sin" with another word are obvious. The term has been used in a way which has little to do with its genuine biblical meaning. Paul often spoke of "Sin" in the singular and without an article. He saw it as a quasi-personal power which ruled this world. But in the Christian churches, both Catholic and Protestant, sin has been used predominantly in the plural, and "sins" are deviations from moral laws. This has little to do with "sin" as the state of estrangement from that to which one belongs-God, one's self, one's world. Therefore, the characteristics of sin are here considered under the heading of "estrangement." And the word "estrangement" itself implies a reinterpretation of sin from a religious point of view.

Nevertheless, the word "sin" cannot be overlooked. It expresses what is not implied in the term "estrangement," namely, the personal act of turning away from that to which one belongs. Sin expresses most sharply the personal character of estrangement over against its tragic side. It expresses personal freedom and guilt in contrast to tragic guilt and the universal destiny of estrangement. The word "sin" can and must be saved, not only because classical literature and liturgy continuously employ it but more particularly because the word has a sharpness which accusingly points to the element of personal responsibility in one's estrangement. Man's predicament is estrangement, but his estrangement is sin. It is not a state of things, like the laws of nature, but a matter of both personal freedom and universal destiny. For this reason the term "sin" must be used after it has been reinterpreted religiously. An important tool for this reinterpretation is the term "estrangement."

Reinterpretation is also needed for the terms "original" or "hereditary" with respect to sin. But in this case reinterpretation may demand the rejection of the terms. Both point to the universal character of estrangement, expressing the element of destiny in estrangement. But both words are so much burdened with literalistic absurdities that it is practically impossible to use them any longer.

If one speaks of "sins" and refers to special acts which are considered as sinful, one should always be conscious of the fact that "sins" are the expressions of "sin." It is not the disobedience to a law which makes an act sinful but the fact that it is an expression of man's estrangement from God, from men, from himself. Therefore, Paul calls everything sin which does not result from faith, from the unity with God. And in another context (following Jesus) all laws are summed up in the law of love by which estrangement is conquered. Love as the striving for the reunion of the separated is the opposite of estrangement. In faith and love, sin is conquered because estrangement is overcome by reunion.

2. Estrangement as "Unbelief"

The Augsburg Confession defines sin as the state of man in which he is "without faith in God and with concupiscence" (sine fide ***erga deum et cum concupiscentia).*** One could add to these two expressions of estrangement a third one, namely ***hubris*** (ὕβρις), ***the*** so-called spiritual sin of pride or self-elevation, which, according to Augustine and Luther, precedes the so-called sensual sin. This gives the three concepts of "unbelief," "concupiscence," and ***hubris*** as the marks of man's estrangement. Each of them needs reinterpretation in order to mediate insights into man's existential predicament.

Unbelief, in the view of the Reformers, is not the unwillingness or inability to believe the doctrines of the church, but, like faith, it is an act of the total personality, including practical, theoretical, and emotional elements. If there were such a word as "un-faith," it should be used instead of the word "unbelief." The latter has an unavoidable connotation associated with the term "belief," which came to mean the acceptance of statements without evidence. "Unbelief" for Protestant Christianity means the act or state in which man in the totality of his being turns away from God. In his existential self-realization he turns toward himself and his world and loses his essential unity with the ground of his being and his world. This happens both through individual responsibility and through tragic universality. It is freedom and destiny in one and the same act. Man, in actualizing himself, turns to himself and away from God in knowledge, will, and emotion. Unbelief is the disruption of man's cognitive participation in God. It should not be called the "denial" of God. Questions and answers, whether positive or negative, already presuppose the loss of a cognitive union with God. He who asks for God is already estranged from God, though not cut off from him. Unbelief is the separation of man's will from the will

of God. It should not be called "disobedience"; for command, obedience, and disobedience already presuppose the separation of will from will. He who needs a law which tells him how to act or how not to act is already estranged from the source of the law which demands obedience. Unbelief is also the empirical shift from the blessedness of the divine life to the pleasures of a separated life. It should not be called "self-love." In order to have a self which not only can be loved but can love God, one's center must already have left the divine center to which it belongs and in which self-love and love to God are united.

All this is implied in the term "unbelief." It is the first mark of estrangement, and its character justifies the term "estrangement." Man's unbelief is his estrangement from God in the center of his being. This is the religious understanding of sin as rediscovered by the Reformers and as lost again in most Protestant life and thought.

If unbelief is understood as man's estrangement from God in the center of his self, then the Augustinian interpretation of sin as love turned away from God to self can be accepted by Protestant theology. Un-faith is ultimately identical with un-love; both point to man's estrangement from God. For Augustine, sin is the love which desires finite goods for their own sake and not for the sake of the ultimate good. Love of one's self and one's world can be justified if it affirms everything finite as a manifestation of the infinite and wants to be united with it for this reason. Love of one's self and one's world is distorted if it does not penetrate through the finite to its infinite ground. If it turns away from the infinite ground to its finite manifestations, then it is unbelief. The disruption of the essential unity with God is the innermost character of sin. It is estrangement in terms of faith as well as in terms of love.

There is, however, a difference between the two definitions of sin. In the concept of faith an element of "in spite of" is implied, the courage to accept that one is accepted in spite of sin, estrangement, and despair. If this question is asked-and asked as passionately and desperately as the Reformers did-the primacy of faith is established. This reunion of the estranged with God is "reconciliation." It has the character of "in spite of," since it is God who wants us to be reconciled with him. For this reason Protestantism holds to the primacy of faith, both in the doctrine of sin and in the doctrine of salvation.

For Augustine the union between God and man is reestablished by

the mystical power of grace through the mediation of the church and its sacraments. Grace, as the infusion of love, is the power which overcomes estrangement. Therefore, for Augustine and the Roman Catholic church, love has primacy in the doctrine of sin as well as in the doctrine of salvation. For the Reformers, estrangement is overcome by personal reconciliation with God and by the love which follows this reconciliation. For Augustine, estrangement is overcome by the infused love of God and the faith which is doctrinally expressed by the Roman Catholic church. But in spite of this profound difference, there is a point at which the two doctrines converge. Both emphasize the religious character of sin, as indicated in the term "estrangement." The first mark of estrangement-unbelief-includes un-love. Sin is a matter of our relation to God and not to ecclesiastical, moral, or social authorities. Sin is a religious concept, not in the sense that it is used in religious contexts, but in the sense that it points to man's relation to God in terms of estrangement and possible reunion.

3. Estrangement as "Hubris"

In estrangement, man is outside the divine center to which his own center essentially belongs. He is the center of himself and of his world. The possibility of leaving his essential center-and, with this possibility, the temptation-is given because structurally he is the only fully centered being. He alone has not only consciousness (which is a high, but incomplete, centeredness) but self-consciousness or complete centeredness. This structural centeredness gives man his greatness, dignity, and being, the "image of God." It indicates his ability to transcend both himself and his world, to look at both, and to see himself in perspective as the center in which all parts of his world converge. To be a self and to have a world constitute the challenge to man as the perfection of creation.

But this perfection is, at the same time, his temptation. Man is tempted to make himself existentially the center of himself and his world. When looking at himself and his world, he realizes his freedom and, with it, his potential infinity. He realizes that he is not bound to any special situation or element in it. But, at the same time, he knows that he is finite. It was this situation which induced the Greeks to call men "the mortals" and to attribute man's potential infinity to the gods, calling them "the immortals." Man could create the images of the immortal

gods only because he was aware of his own potential infinity. Standing between actual finitude and potential infinity enables him to call men and only men "mortals" (although all beings have to die) and to call the divine images of men the "immortals." If man **does** not acknowledge this situation—the fact that he is excluded from the infinity of the gods-he falls into ***hubris.*** He elevates himself beyond the limits of his finite being and provokes the divine wrath which destroys him. This is the main subject of Greek tragedy.

The word hubris cannot be adequately translated, although the reality to which it points is described not only in Greek tragedy but also in the Old Testament. It is most distinctly expressed in the serpent's promise to Eve that eating from the tree of knowledge will make man equal to God. ***Hubris*** is the self-elevation of man into the sphere of the divine. Man is capable of such self-elevation because of his greatness. In Greek tragedy, human ***hubris*** is represented not by the small, ugly, and average but by heroes who are great, beautiful, and outstanding, who are the bearers of power and value. In the same way the prophets of the Old Testament threaten the great in the nation-the kings, the priests, the judges, the wealthy, and the beautiful. And they threaten the whole nation, that nation which they consider to be the greatest of all, the elected one, Israel. By its intrinsic dynamics, greatness drives toward ***hubris.*** Only a few men represent greatness in the tragedy of human history. But every human being participates in greatness and is represented by the few. The greatness of man lies in his being infinite, and it is just this temptation of ***hubris*** into which he universally falls through destiny and freedom. Therefore, one should not translate ***hubris*** as "pride." Pride is a moral quality, whose opposite is humility. ***Hubris*** is not the special quality of man's moral character. It is universally human; it can appear in acts of humility as well as in acts of pride. Although it is possible to enlarge the meaning of pride to include ***hubris,*** it seems to be less confusing to use the term "self-elevation" for ***hubris.***

Hubris has been called the "spiritual sin," and all other forms of sin have been derived from it, even the sensual ones. ***Hubris*** is not one form of sin beside others. It is sin in its total form, namely, the other side of unbelief or man's turning away from the divine center to which he belongs. It is turning toward one's self as the center of one's self and one's world. This turning toward one's self is not an act done by a special part of man, such as his spirit. Man's whole life, including his sensual life, is spiritual. And it is in the totality of his personal being that man makes himself the center of his world. This is his ***hubris;*** this is what has been called "spiritual sin." Its main symptom is that man does not acknowledge his finitude. He identifies partial truth with ultimate truth, as, e.g., Hegel did when he claimed to have created a final system containing the whole of possible truth. The existentialist and naturalist reactions against his system and the catastrophe in consequence of these attacks were the answer to his metaphysical ***hubris,*** his ignoring of man's finitude. In a similar way, people have identified their limited goodness with absolute goodness, as, for example, the Pharisees and their successors in Christianity and in secularism. Here also tragic self-destruction followed ***hubris,*** as the catastrophes of Judaism, Puritanism, and bourgeois moralism have shown. And man identifies his cultural creativity with divine creativity. He attributes infinite significance to his finite cultural creations, making idols of them, elevating them into matters of ultimate concern. The divine answer to man's cultural ***hubris*** comes in the disintegration and decay of every great culture in the course of history.

These examples are taken from forms of ***hubris*** which have historical significance and transcend individual destiny. They show irrefutably the universally human character of self-elevation. But the self-elevation of a group happens through the self-elevation of individuals. Every individual within and outside the group falls into moments of ***hubris.*** All men have the hidden desire to be like God, and they act accordingly in their self-evaluation and self-affirmation. No one is willing to acknowledge, in concrete terms, his finitude, his weakness and his errors, his ignorance and his insecurity, his loneliness and his anxiety. And if he is ready to acknowledge them, he makes another instrument of ***hubris*** out of his readiness. A demonic structure drives man to confuse natural self-affirmation with destructive self-elevation.

4. Estrangement as "Concupiscence"

The quality of all acts in which man affirms himself existentially has two sides, the one in which he removes his center from the divine center (unbelief) and the other in which he makes himself the center of himself and of his world ***(hubris).*** The question naturally arises concerning why man is tempted to become centered in himself. The an-

swer is that it places him in the position of drawing the whole of his world into himself. It elevates him beyond his particularity and makes him universal on the basis of his particularity. This is the temptation of man in his position between finitude and infinity. Every individual, since he is separated from the whole, desires reunion with the whole. His "poverty" makes him seek for abundance. This is the root of love in all its forms. The possibility of reaching unlimited abundance is the temptation of man who is a self and has a world. The classical name for this desire is *concupiscentia* "concupiscence''-the unlimited desire to draw the whole of reality into one's self. It refers to all aspects of man's relation to himself and to his world. It refers to physical hunger as well as to sex, to knowledge as well as to power, to material wealth as well as to spiritual values. But this all-embracing meaning of "concupiscence" has often been reduced to a rather special meaning, namely, the striving for sexual pleasure. Even theologians like Augustine and Luther, who considered the spiritual sin as basic, had the tendency to identify concupiscence with sexual desire. This is understandable in Augustine, who never overcame the Hellenistic and especially the Neo-Platonic devaluation of sex. But it is inconsistent and difficult to understand that remnants of this tradition appear in the theology and the ethics of the Reformers. They do not always clearly reject the un-Protestant doctrine that "hereditary" sin is rooted in sexual pleasure in the act of propagation. If "concupiscence" is used in this limited sense, it is certainly unable to describe the state of general estrangement, and it would be better to drop it completely. For the ambiguity of the word "concupiscence" is one of many expressions giving rise to the ambiguity of the Chris&an attitude toward sex. The church has never been able to deal adequately with this central ethical and religious problem. A restatement of the meaning of "concupiscence" may be a valuable help in overcoming this situation.

The doctrine of concupiscence—taken in its all-embracing sense—can be supported by much material and deeper insights from existentialist literature, art, philosophy, and psychology. It will suffice to mention first a few examples, some of them expressing the meaning of concupiscence in symbolic figures, others expressing it in analyses. When Kierkegaard describes the figure of the Emperor Nero, he takes up an early Christian motif and uses it for a psychology of concupiscence. Nero embodies the demonic implications of unlimited power; he represents the particular individual who has succeeded in drawing the universe into himself in terms of the power to use for himself whatever he wants to use. Kierkegaard describes the complete inner emptiness of this situation, which leads to the determination to bring death to everything he encounters, including himself. In a similar way he interprets the figure of Mozart's Don Juan, creating the additional figure of Johannes, the seducer. Here, with the same psychological penetration, he shows the emptiness and despair of that unlimited sexual striving which prevents a creative union of love with the sexual partner. Here, as in the symbol of Nero, the self-defying character of concupiscence is visible. One could add a third example, the figure of Goethe's Faust, whose unlimited striving is directed toward knowledge which subordinates both power and sex. In order to "know everything," he accepts the pact with the devil. It is the "everything," not knowledge as such, which produces the demonic temptation. Knowledge as such, just as power and sex as such, is not a matter of concupiscence, but it is the desire cognitively to draw the universe into one's self and one's finite particularity.

It is the unlimited character of the strivings for knowledge, sex, and power which makes them symptoms of concupiscence. This is elaborated in two conceptual descriptions of concupiscence, Freud's "libido" and Nietzsche's "will to power." Both these concepts have contributed immensely to a rediscovery of the Christian view of man's predicament. But both ignore the contrast between man's essential and his existential being and interpret man exclusively in terms of existential concupiscence, omitting any reference to man's essential *eros* which is related to a definite content.

Libido in Freud is the unlimited desire of man to get rid of his biological, especially his sexual, tensions and to get pleasure from the discharge of these tensions. Freud has shown that libidinous elements are present in the highest spiritual experiences and activities of man, and, in doing so, he has rediscovered insights which can be found in the monastic traditions of self-scrutiny as they had been developed in early and medieval Christianity. Freud's emphasis on these elements, which cannot be separated from man's sexual instincts, is justified and agrees with the realism of the Christian interpretation of man's predicament. It should not be rejected in the name of dishonest pseudo-Christian taboos against sex, Freud in his honest realism is more Christian than

are these taboos. He describes, from a special angle, exactly what concupiscence means. This is especially obvious in the way Freud describes the consequences of concupiscence and its never satisfied striving. When he speaks of the "death instinct" (*Todestrieb,* better translated by the "drive for death"), he describes the desire to escape the pain of the never satisfied libido. Like every higher being, man desires to return to the lower level of life out of which he has arisen. The pain inflicted by the higher level drives toward the lower. It is the never satisfied libido in man, whether repressed or unrestrained, which produces in him the desire to get rid of himself as man. In these observations concerning man's "discontent" with his creativity, Freud looks deeper into the human predicament than many of his followers and critics. Up to this point, a theological interpreter of man's estrangement is well advised to follow Freud's analyses.

But theology cannot accept Freud's doctrine of libido as a sufficient reinterpretation of the concept of concupiscence. Freud did not see that his description of human nature is adequate for man only in his existential predicament but not in his essential nature. The endlessness of libido is a mark of man's estrangement. It contradicts his essential or created goodness. In man's essential relation to himself and to his world, libido is not concupiscence. It is not the infinite desire to draw the universe into one's particular existence, but it is an element of love united with the other qualities of love—*eros, philia,* and *agape.* Love does not exclude desire; it receives libido into itself. But the libido which is united with love is not infinite. It is directed, as all love is, toward a definite subject with whom it wants to unite the bearer of love. Love wants the other being, whether in the form of libido, eros, *philia,* or *agape.* Concupiscence, or distorted libido, wants one's own pleasure through the other being, but it does not want the other being. This is the contrast between libido as love and libido as concupiscence. Freud did not make this distinction because of his puritanical attitude toward sex. Only through repression and sublimation of libido can man become creative. In Freud's thought there is no creative *eros* which includes sex. In comparison with a man like Luther, Freud is ascetic in his basic assumption about the nature of man. Classical Protestantism denies these assumptions in so far as man in his essential or created nature is concerned; for in man's essential nature the desire to be united with the object of one's love for its own sake is effective. And this desire is not infinite but definite. It is not concupiscence but love.

The analysis of Freud's concept of libido has produced important insights into the nature of concupiscence and its opposite. Another concept, equally important for Christian theology, is Nietzsche's "will to power." One of the ways in which it has influenced recent thought is through those depth psychologists who have interpreted human libido more in terms of power than in terms of sex. But there are other, more direct, ways in which Nietzsche's concept has influenced contemporary thought, especially in politics and in social theory. "Will to power" is partly a concept, partly a symbol. Therefore, it must not be understood literally. "Will to power" means neither will as a conscious psychological act nor power as the control of men by men. The conscious will to gain power over men is rooted in the unconscious desire to affirm one's own power of being. "Will to power" is an ontological symbol for man's natural self-affirmation in so far as man has the power of being. But it is not restricted to man, it is a quality of everything that is. It belongs to created goodness of the will to power and is a strong symbol of the dynamic self-realization which characterizes life.

But, like Freud's "libido," Nietzsche's "will to power" is also blurred if described in such a way that the distinction between man's essential self-affirmation and his existential striving for power of being without limit is not clearly established. Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will as the unlimited driving power in all life, producing in man the desire to come to rest through the self-negation of the will. In this respect the analogy between Schopenhauer and Freud is obvious. In both cases it is the infinite, never satisfied drive which leads to self-negation. Nietzsche tries to overcome this trend by emphatically proclaiming a courage which takes the negativities of being into itself. In this he is influenced by Stoicism and Protestantism. But, in contrast to both of them, he does not show the norms and principles by which the will to power can be judged. It remains unlimited and has demonic-destructive traits. It is another concept and symbol of concupiscence.

Neither libido in itself nor the will to power in itself is a characteristic of concupiscence. Both become expressions of concupiscence and estrangement when they are not united with love and therefore have no definite object.

5. Estrangement as Fact and as Act

Classical theology has distinguished between original and actual sin. "Original sin" is Adam's act of disobedience and the sinful disposition

produced by his act in every human being. Therefore, original sin has also been called hereditary sin (*Erbsünde* in German). Adam's fall, in this view, has corrupted the whole human race. The way in which this happened was described differently; but the result, i.e., that mankind as a whole lives in estrangement, was generally accepted. Therefore, no one can escape sin; estrangement has the character of universal human destiny. However, the combination of man's predicament with a completely free act by Adam is inconsistent as well as literally absurd. It exempts a human individual from the universal human character by ascribing freedom to him without destiny (just as destiny without freedom was asserted of the Christ in some types of Christology). But the former dehumanizes Adam, as the latter dehumanizes the Christ. Adam must be understood as essential man and as symbolizing the transition from essence to existence. Original or hereditary sin is neither original nor hereditary; it is the universal destiny of estrangement which concerns every man. When Augustine spoke of a *massa perditionis,* a "mass of perdition," he expressed the insight, in opposition to Pelagius, that man in his estrangement is a social being and cannot be isolated into a subject able to make free decisions. The unity of destiny and freedom must be preserved in the description of every condition of man.

Sin is a universal fact before it becomes an individual act, or more precisely, sin as an individual act actualizes the universal fact of estrangement. As an individual act, sin is a matter of freedom, responsibility, and personal guilt. But this freedom is imbedded in the universal destiny of estrangement in such a way that in every free act the destiny of estrangement is involved and, vice versa, that the destiny of estrangement is actualized by all free acts. Therefore, it is impossible to separate sin as fact from sin as act. They are interwoven, and their unity is an immediate experience of everyone who feels himself to be guilty. Even if one takes the full responsibility for an act of estrangement-as one should-one is aware that this act is dependent on one's whole being,, including free acts of the past and the destiny which is one's special, as well as mankind's universal, destiny.

Estrangement as fact has been explained in deterministic terms: physically, by a mechanistic determinism; biologically, by theories of the decadence of the biological power of life; psychologically, as the compulsory force of the unconscious; sociologically, as the result of class domination; culturally, as the lack of educational adjustment. None of these explanations accounts for the feeling of personal responsibility that man has for his acts in the state of estrangement. But each of these theories contributes to an understanding of the element of destiny in the human predicament. In this sense Christian theology must accept each of them; but it must add that no description of the element of destiny in the state of estrangement can remove the experience of finite freedom and, consequently, the responsibility for every act in which estrangement is actualized. Deterministic explanations of man's predicament do not necessarily deny his personal responsibility, as the determinist himself practically acknowledges in a situation in which, for instance, coercion is applied to make him recant his deterministic conviction. In this situation he feels his responsibility, whether he resists or submits. And it is this experience that matters in describing the human predicament, not a hypothetical explanation of the causes of his decision. The doctrine of the universality of estrangement does not make man's consciousness of guilt unreal; but it does liberate him from the unrealistic assumption that in every moment he has the undetermined freedom to decide in whatever way he chooses-for good or bad, for God or against him.

From the time of the biblical period the Christian church divided actual sins into mortal and venial sins, according to their seriousness. Later it added capital sins but always drew a sharp line between sins before and after baptism. These differences are decisive for the functioning of the priests in respect to the individual Christian's use of the sacraments and for his anticipation of eternal destiny; for the different kinds of sins are in strict correspondence to the different types of grace in this and the future life. The point of orientation for this conception and its practice is through the psychological and educational interest of the Roman Catholic church. The church looks at the extent of personal participation and guilt in a sinful act, and it is right in weighing the differences in guilt-just as the judge does if he weighs responsibility and punishment. But the whole scheme of quantities and relativities becomes irreligious the moment that it is applied to man's relation to God. Protestantism considered this issue in respect to both sin and grace. There is only "the Sin," the turning-away from God, and from "the Grace," or reunion with God. These are qualitative and absolute, not quantitative and relative, categories. Sin is estrangement; grace is reconciliation. Precisely because God's reconciling grace is uncondi-

tional, man does not need to look at his own condition and the degrees of his guilt. He has the certainty of total forgiveness in the situation of total guilt. This is the consoling power of the Protestant understanding of sin and grace concerning one's relation to God. It gives a certainty which the Catholic position can never acknowledge. At the same time, Protestantism must acknowledge that, under the impact of sin and grace as absolute categories, it has lost much of the psychological insight and the educational flexibility of the Catholic position. It has often deteriorated to a rigid moralism, which is just the opposite of the original Protestant intention. The breakdown of this moralism under the influence of depth psychology should be the first step toward a re-evaluation of the Catholic insights into the infinite complexities of man's spiritual life and toward the necessity of dealing with the relative, as well as the absolute, elements in sin and grace. The rise of "counseling" in the parish duties of the Protestant minister is an important step in this direction.

6. Estrangement Individually and Collectively

The description of estrangement given thus far deals exclusively with the individual person, his freedom and destiny, his guilt and possible reconciliation. In connection with recent events, as in the case of nations, the question of collective guilt has become urgent. It was never completely absent from human consciousness, for there were always ruling individuals, classes, and movements which committed acts against man's essential nature and brought destruction upon the group to which they belonged. Judaism and Christianity placed emphasis on the personal guilt of the individual, but they could not overlook issues such as the suffering of children due to the sins of the parents. Social condemnation of personally innocent descendants of morally condemned parents was not unknown in the Christian Era. And lately whole nations have been morally condemned for the atrocities of their rulers and of many individuals who were coerced into crime through their rulers. A confession of guilt was demanded of the whole nation, including those who resisted the ruling group and suffered because of their resistance.

The latter point shows that there is a fundamental difference between a person and a social group. In contrast to the centered individual whom we call a "person," the social group has no natural, deciding center. A social group is a power structure, and in every power structure certain individuals determine the actions of all individuals who are parts of the group. There is, therefore, always a potential or real conflict within the group, even if the outcome is the united action of the group as a whole. As such, a social group is not estranged, and, as such, a social group is not reconciled. There is no collective guilt. But there is the universal destiny of mankind, which, in a special group, becomes special destiny without ceasing to be universal. Every individual participates in this destiny and cannot extricate himself.

And destiny is inseparably united with freedom. Therefore, individual guilt participates in the creation of the universal destiny of mankind and in the creation of the special destiny of the social group to which a person belongs. The individual is not guilty of the crimes performed by members of his group if he himself did not commit them. The citizens of a city are not guilty of the crimes committed in their city; but they are guilty as participants in the destiny of man as a whole and in the destiny of their city in particular; for their acts in which freedom was united with destiny have contributed to the destiny in which they participate. They are guilty, not of committing the crimes of which their group is accused, but of contributing to the destiny in which these crimes happened. In this indirect sense, even the victims of tyranny in a nation are guilty of this tyranny. But so are the subjects of other nations and of mankind as a whole. For the destiny of falling under the power of a tyranny, even a criminal tyranny, is a part of the universal destiny of man to be estranged from what he essentially is.

If accepted, such considerations would restrain victorious nations from exploiting their victory in the name of the assumed "collective guilt" of the conquered nation. And they would constrain every individual within the conquered nation, even if he suffered in consequence of his resistance against the crimes committed by her, to accept part of the responsibility for the destiny of his nation. He himself, perhaps unwittingly and unwillingly but nevertheless responsibly, helped to prepare, or to retain, or to aggravate the conditions out of which the actual crime developed.

D. Existential Self-Destruction and the Doctrine of Evil

1. Self-Loss and World-Loss in the State of Estrangement

Man finds himself, together with his world, in existential estrangement, unbelief, *hubris,* and concupiscence. Each expression of the es-

tranged state contradicts man's essential being, his potency for goodness. It contradicts the created structure of himself and his world and their interdependence. And self-contradiction drives toward self-destruction. The elements of essential being which move against each other tend to annihilate each other and the whole to which they belong. Destruction under the conditions of existential estrangement is not caused by some external force. It is not the work of special divine or demonic interferences, but it is the consequence of the structure of estrangement itself. One can describe this structure with a seemingly paradoxical term, "structure of destruction"-pointing to the fact that destruction has no independent standing in the whole of reality but that it is dependent on the structure of that in and upon which it acts destructively. Here, as everywhere in the whole of being, non-being is dependent on being, the negative on the positive, death on life. Therefore, even destruction has structures. It "aims" at chaos; but, as long as chaos is not attained, destruction must follow the structures of wholeness; and if chaos is attained, both structure and destruction have vanished.

As previously shown, the basic structure of finite being is the polarity of self and world. Only in man is this polarity fulfilled. Only man has a completely centered self and a structured universe to which he belongs and at which he is able to look at the same time. All other beings within our experience are only partly centered and consequently bound to their environment. Man also has environment, but he has it as a part of his world. He can and does transcend it with every word he speaks. He is free to make his world into an object which he beholds, and he is free to make himself into an object upon which he looks. In this situation of finite freedom he can lose himself and his world, and the loss of one necessarily includes the loss of the other. This is the basic "structure of destruction," and it includes all others. The analysis of this structure is the first step to the understanding of what is often described as "evil."

The term "evil" can be used in a larger and in a narrower sense. The larger sense covers everything negative and. includes both destruction and estrangement—man's existential predicament in all its characteristics. If the word is used in this sense, sin is seen as one evil beside others. It is sometimes called "moral evil," namely, the negation of the morally good. One of the reasons for the use of "evil" in this larger sense is the fact that sin can appear in both functions, that is, as the

cause of self-destruction and as an element of self-destruction-as when self-destruction signifies increased sin as the result of sin. In classical language, God punishes sin by throwing the sinner into more sin. Here sin is both the cause of evil and the evil itself. It should always be remembered that, even in this case, sin is evil because of its self-destructive consequences.

In the light of the preceding, it might be more appropriate to use the word in a narrower sense, namely, as the consequences of the state of sin and estrangement. In that case one can distinguish the doctrine of evil from the doctrine of sin. This is the sense in which the word will be used in the following sections. Hence the doctrine of evil follows the doctrine of sin, delineated in previous chapters. This procedure has the additional advantage of clarifying the concepts dealing with the problem of theodicy. If one is asked how a loving and almighty God can permit evil, one cannot answer in the terms of the question as it was asked. One must first insist on an answer to the question How could he permit sin ?—a question which is answered the moment it is asked. Not permitting sin would mean not permitting freedom; this would deny the very nature of man, his finite freedom. Only after this answer can one describe evil as the structure of self-destruction which is implicit in the nature of universal estrangement.

Self-loss as the first and basic mark of evil is the loss of one's determining center; it is the disintegration of the centered self by disruptive drives which cannot be brought into unity. So long as they are centered, these drives constitute the person as a whole. If they move against one another, they split the person. The further the disruption goes, the more the being of man as man is threatened. Man's centered self may break up, and, with the loss of self, man loses his world.

Self-loss is the loss of one's determining center, the disintegration of the unity of the person. This is manifest in moral conflicts and in psychopathological disruptions, independently or interdependently. The horrifying experience of "falling to pieces" gets hold of the person. To the degree in which this happens, one's world also falls to pieces. It ceases to be a world, in the sense of a meaningful whole. Things no longer speak to man; they lose their power to enter into a meaningful encounter with man, because man himself has lost this power. In extreme cases the complete unreality of one's world is felt; nothing is left except the awareness of one's own empty self. Such experiences are

extreme, but extreme situations reveal possibilities in the ordinary situation. Possibilities of disruption are always present in man as a fully centered being. He cannot take his centeredness for granted. It is a form but not an empty one. It is actual only in unity with its content. The form of centeredness gives to the self the center which it needs to be what it is. There is no empty self, no pure subjectivity. Under the control of *hubris* and concupiscence, the self can approach the state of disintegration. The attempt of the finite self to be the center of everything gradually has the effect of its ceasing to be the center of anything. Both self and world are threatened. Man becomes a limited self, in dependence on a limited environment. He has lost his world; he has only his environment.

This fact includes the basic criticism of the environmental theories of man. They assert a view of man's essential nature which actually describes man's existential estrangement *from* his essential nature. Man essentially has a world because he has a fully centered self. He is able to transcend every given environment in the direction of his world. Only the loss of his world subjects him to the bondage of an environment which is not really *his* environment, namely, the result of a creative encounter with his world represented by a part of it. Man's true environment is the universe, and every special environment is qualified as a section of the universe. Only in estrangement can man be described as a mere object of environmental impact.

2. The Conflicts in the Ontological Polarities in the State of Estrangement

a) The *separation of freedom from* destiny.-The interdependence of self-loss and world-loss in the state of estrangement is manifest in the interdependent loss of the polar elements of being. The first of these are freedom and destiny. In essential being, i.e., the state of dreaming innocence, freedom and destiny lie within each other, distinct but not separated, in tension but not in conflict. They are rooted in the ground of being, i.e., the source of both of them and the ground of their polar unity. In the moment of aroused freedom a process starts in which freedom separates itself from the destiny to which it belongs. It becomes arbitrariness. Wilful acts are acts in which freedom moves toward the separation from destiny. Under the control of *hubris* and concupiscence, freedom ceases to relate itself to the objects provided by

destiny. It relates itself to an indefinite number of contents. When man makes himself the center of the universe, freedom loses its definiteness. Indefinitely and arbitrarily, freedom turns to objects, persons, and things which are completely contingent upon the choosing subject and which therefore can be replaced by others of equal contingency and ultimate unrelatedness. Existentialism, supported by depth psychology, described the dialectics of this situation in terms of the restlessness, emptiness, and meaninglessness connected with it. If no essential relation between a free agent and his objects exists, no choice is objectively preferable to any other; no commitment to a cause or a person is meaningful; no dominant purpose can be established. The indications coming from one's destiny remain unnoticed or are disregarded. This certainly is the description of an extreme situation; but in its radicalism it can reveal a basic trend in the state of universal estrangement.

To the degree to which freedom is distorted into arbitrariness, destiny is distorted into mechanical necessity. If man's freedom is not directed by destiny or if it is a series of contingent acts of arbitrariness, it falls under the control of forces which move against one another without a deciding center. What seems to be free proves to be conditioned by internal compulsions and external causes. Parts of the self overtake the center and determine it without being united with the other parts. A contingent motive replaces the center which is supposed to unite the motives in a centered decision; but it is unable to do so. This is the ontological character of the state described in classical theology as the "bondage of the will." In view of this "structure of destruction," one could say: Man has used his freedom to waste his freedom; and it is his destiny to lose his destiny.

The distortion of freedom into arbitrariness and of destiny into mechanical necessity is mirrored in the traditional controversy between indeterminism and determinism. Like the environmental theory of man, indeterminism as well as determinism is a theory of man's essential nature in terms which are descriptions of man's estranged nature. Indeterminism makes man's freedom a matter of contingency. In doing so, it removes the very responsibility which it tried to preserve against determinism. And determinism surrenders man's freedom to mechanical necessity, transforming him into a completely conditioned thing which, as such, has no destiny-not even the destiny of having a true theory of determinism; for under the control of mechanical neces-

sity there is neither truth nor destiny. Indeterminism, as well as determinism, is a mirror of man's state of estrangement (with respect to freedom and destiny!).

b) The separation of dynamics from form.-Every living being (and, in terms of analogy, every being) drives beyond itself and beyond the given form through which it has being. In man's essential nature, dynamics and form are united. Even if a given form is transcended, this happens in terms of form. In essential being there are forms of the self-transcendence of form. Their unity with the dynamics of being is never disrupted. One can see this unity fragmentarily in personalities in whom grace is effective, in the secular as well as the religious realm. In contrast to such "symbols of reunion," the existential disruption of dynamics and form is obvious. Under the control of ***hubris*** and concupiscence, man is driven in all directions without any definite aim and content. His dynamics are distorted into a formless urge for self-transcendence. It is not the new form which attracts the self-transcendence of the person; the dynamics has become an aim in itself. One can speak of the "temptation of the new," which in itself is a necessary element in all creative self-actualization but which in distortion sacrifices the creative for the new. Nothing real is created if the form is lacking, for nothing is real without form.

Yet form without dynamics is equally destructive. If a form is abstracted from the dynamics in which it is created and is imposed on the dynamics to which it does not belong, it becomes external law. It is oppressive and produces either legalism without creativity or the rebellious outbreaks of dynamic forces leading to chaos and often, in reaction, to stronger ways of suppression. Such experiences belong to man's predicament in individual as well as in social life, in religion as well as in culture. There is a continuous flight from law to chaos and from chaos to law. There is a continuous breaking of vitality by form and of form by vitality. But, if the one side disappears, the other does also. Dynamics, vitality, and the drive to form-breaking end in chaos and emptiness. They lose themselves in their separation from form. And form, structure, and law end in rigidity and emptiness. They lose themselves in their separation from dynamics.

This includes the basic criticism of all doctrines of man which describe man's essential nature either in terms of mere dynamics or in terms of mere form. We have already pointed to some of them in connection with the doctrine of concupiscence. If man is understood as essentially unlimited libido or unlimited will to power, the basis for such understanding is not man's essential nature but his state of existential estrangement. The inability to reach a form in which the dynamics of man's nature are preliminarily or lastingly satisfied is an expression of man's estrangement from himself and the essential unity of dynamics and form. The same criticism must be applied to interpretations of human nature which deprive him of the dynamics in his being by reducing his true being to a system of logical, moral, and aesthetic forms to which he must conform. Common-sense philosophies, as well as some rationalistic and idealistic doctrines of man, eliminate the dynamics in man's self-realization. Creativity is replaced by subjection to law-a characteristic of man in estrangement.

Both types of the doctrine of man-the dynamic and the formal—describe man's existential predicament. This is their truth and the limit of their truth.

c) ***The separation of individualization from participation.-life*** individualizes in all its forms; at the same time, mutual participation of being in "being" maintains the unity of being. The two poles are interdependent. The more individualized a being is, the more it is able to participate. Man as the completely individualized being participates in the world in its totality through perception, imagination, and action. In principle, there are no limits to his participation, since he is a completely centered self. In the state of estrangement man is shut within himself and cut off from participation. At the same time, he falls under the power of objects which tend to make him into a mere object without a self. If subjectivity separates itself from objectivity, the objects swallow the empty shell of subjectivity.

This situation has been described sociologically and psychologically. These descriptions have shown the interdependence of the loneliness of the individual and his submergence in the collective in a convincing way. However, they are directed toward a particular historical situation, predominantly our own. They give the impression that the situation to which they point is historically and sociologically conditioned and would change basically with a change in conditions. Theology must join existentialism in showing the universally human character of loneliness in interdependence with submergence in the collective. It is true that special situations reveal more sharply special elements in

man's existential situation. They reveal them, but they do not create them. The danger of depersonalization or "objectivization" (becoming a thing) is most outspoken in Western industrial society. But there are dangers of the same character in all societies; for the separation of individualization from participation is a mark of estrangement generally. These dangers belong to the structures of destruction and are grounded in the level of evil in all history.

This situation is also mirrored in those doctrines of man which claim to describe man's essential 'nature but which give a true account only about man's estrangement. Isolated subjectivity appears in idealistic epistemologies which reduce man to a cognitive subject (ens *cogitans*), who perceives, analyzes, and controls reality. The act of knowing is deprived of any participation of the total subject in the total object. There is no *eros* in the way in which the subject approaches the object and in which the object gives itself to the subject. On some levels of abstraction this is necessary; but if it determines the cognitive approach as a whole, it is a symptom of estrangement. And, since man is a part of his world, he himself becomes a mere object among objects. He becomes a part of the physically calculable whole, thus becoming a thoroughly calculable object himself. This is the case whether the psychological level is explained physiologically and chemically or whether it is described in terms of independent psychological mechanisms. In both cases a theoretical objectivation is carried through which can be and is being used for the practical dealing with men as though they were mere objects. The situation of estrangement is mirrored in both the theoretical and the practical encounter with man as a mere object. Both are "structures of selfdestruction," i.e., basic sources of evil.

3. Finitude and Estrangement

a) Death, finitude, and guilt.—Estranged from the ultimate power of being, man is determined by his finitude. He is given over to his natural fate. He came from nothing, and he returns to nothing. He is under the domination of death and is driven by the anxiety of having to die. This, in fact, is the first answer to the question about the relation of sin and death. In conformity with biblical religion, it asserts that man is naturally mortal. Immortality as a natural quality of man is not a Christian doctrine, though it is possibly a Platonic doctrine. But even Plato has Socrates put a question mark on the very arguments

for the immortality of the soul which Socrates develops in the discussions prior to his death. Certainly, the nature of the eternal life which he attributes to the soul has little resemblance to the popular beliefs of many Christians about the "hereafter." Plato speaks of the participation of the soul in the eternal realm of essences (ideas), of its fall from and possible return to this realm-though not a realm in any spatial or temporal sense. In the biblical story-of paradise a quite different interpretation of the relation of the Fall and death is given. The biblical symbols are even farther removed from the popular image of immortality. According to the Genesis account, man comes from dust and returns to dust. He has immortality only as long as he is allowed to eat from the tree of life, the tree which carries the divine food or the food of eternal life. The symbolism is obvious. Participation in the eternal makes man eternal; separation from the eternal leaves man in his natural finitude. It was therefore in line with these ideas that the early Church Fathers called the sacramental food of the Lord's Supper the "medicine of immortality," and that the Eastern church let the message of the Christ focus on his resurrection as the moment in which eternal life is provided for those who are otherwise left to their natural mortality. In estrangement man is left to his finite nature of having to die. Sin does not produce death but gives to death the power which is conquered only in participation in the eternal. The idea that the "Fall" has physically changed the cellular or psychological structure of man (and nature?) is absurd and unbiblical.

If man is left to his "having to die," the essential anxiety about non-being is transformed into the horror of death. Anxiety about non-being is present in everything finite. It is consciously or unconsciously effective in the whole process of living. Like the beating of the heart, it is always present, although one is not always aware of it. It belongs to the potential state of dreaming innocence, as well as to the contested and decided unity with God as expressed in the picture of Jesus as the Christ. The dramatic description of the anxiety of Jesus in having to die confirms the universal character of the relation of finitude and anxiety.

Under the conditions of estrangement, anxiety has a different character, brought on by the element of guilt. The loss of one's potential eternity is experienced as something for which one is responsible in spite of its universal tragic actuality. Sin is the sting of death, not its

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physical cause. It transforms the anxious awareness of one's having to die into the painful realization of a lost eternity. For this reason the anxiety about having to die can be connected with the desire to get rid of one's self. One desires annihilation in order to escape death in its nature, not only as end, but also as guilt. Under the condition of estrangement, anxiety about death is more than anxiety about annihilation. It makes death an evil, a structure of destruction.

The transformation of essential finitude into existential evil is a general characteristic of the state of estrangement. It has been depicted most recently in both Christian and non-Christian analyses of the human situation, recently and very powerfully in existentialist literature. Such descriptions are acceptable-and extremely important-for theology, if the sharp distinction between finitude and estrangement, as illustrated in the analysis of death, is maintained. If this is not done, the description, no matter how much valuable material it provides, must be revised in the light of the doctrine of creation and the distinction between essential and existential being.

b) ***Estrangement, time, and space.*** - *No* description of the structures of evil can be exhaustive. It is an infinite task. The pages of the world's literature are filled with it in every time and place. New discoveries about the workings of evil are continuously made. Biblical literature is full of them, but so also is the literature of other religions and the works of secular culture. Theology must be conscious of this universal awareness of forms of evil. It cannot enumerate them, but it can and must show some basic structures. As structures of evil, they are structures of self-destruction. They are based on the structures of finitude; but they add the destructive elements and transform them, as guilt transforms the anxiety of death.

The categorical nature of finitude, including time, space, causality, and substance, is valid as structure in the whole of creation. But the function of the categories of finitude is changed under the conditions of existence. In the categories, the unity of being and non-being in all finite beings is manifest. Therefore, they produce anxiety; but they can be affirmed by courage, if the predominance of being over non-being is experienced. In the state of estrangement, the relation to the ultimate power of being is lost. In that state, the categories control existence and produce a double reaction toward them-resistance and despair.

When time is experienced without the "eternal now" through the

presence of the power of being itself, it is known as mere transitoriness without actual presence. It is seen-as the myths concerning the gods of time indicate-as a demonic power, destroying what it has created. The attempts of man to resist it are of no avail. Man tries to prolong the small stretch of time given to him; he tries to fill the moment with as many transitory things as possible; he tries to create for himself a memory in a future which is not his; he imagines a continuation of his life after the end of his time and an endlessness without eternity.

These are forms of human resistance against the ultimate threat of non-being implied in the category of time. The breakdown of this resistance in its many forms is one element in the structure of despair. It is not the experience of time as such which produces despair; rather it is defeat in the resistance against time. In itself, this resistance stems from man's essential belonging to the eternal, his exclusion from it in the state of estrangement, and his desire to transform the transitory moments of his time into a lasting presence. His existential unwillingness to accept his temporality makes time a demonic structure of destruction for him.

When space is experienced without the '"eternal here" as the presence of the power of being itself, it is experienced as spatial contingency, i.e., without a necessary place to which man belongs. It is seen as the result of the play of divine-demonic powers (Heraclitus) which disregard any inner relation of the person to the physical, sociological, or psychological "place on which he stands." Man tries to resist this situation. He tries in an absolute sense to make a definite place his own. In all longing for a final "home," this desire is effective. But he does not succeed; he remains a "pilgrim on earth," and finally "his place does not know him any longer" (Job). This also is the outcome if he tries to make his own as many spaces as possible, whether by actual or by imaginary imperialism. He replaces the dimension of the "eternal here" by the dimension of the "universal here." He tries to resist the spatial "beside each other," which includes his finitude, and he is defeated and thrown into the despair of ultimate uprootedness.

Similar observations could be made about other categories, e.g., about man's attempt to make himself into an absolute cause in resistance to the endless chain of causes in which he is one among others, about his attempt to give to himself an absolute substance in resistance to the vanishing of the substance along with the accidents. These attempts

are expressions of man's awareness of his potential infinity. But they necessarily fail if they are attempted without the presence of the ground of all causal dependence and all accidental changes. Without the power of being itself, man cannot resist the element of non-being in both causality and substance, and his failure to resist is another element in the structure of despair.

c) *Estrangement, suffering, and* loneliness.-The conflicts in the ontological polarities and the transformation of the categories of finitude under the conditions of estrangement have consequences for man's predicament in all directions. Two outstanding examples of these consequences are discussed here-suffering and loneliness. The former concerns man in himself; the latter, man in relation to others. These two cannot be separated from each other; they are interdependent, though distinguishable.

Suffering, like death, is an element of finitude. It is not removed but is transformed into blessedness in the state of dreaming innocence. Under the conditions of existence, man is cut off from this blessedness, and suffering lays hold of him in a destructive way. Suffering becomes a structure of destruction-an evil. It is decisive for the understanding of Christianity and the great religions of the East, especially Buddhism, that suffering as an element of essential finitude is distinguished from suffering as an element of existential estrangement. If, as in Buddhism, this distinction is not made, finitude and evil are identified. Salvation becomes salvation from finitude and from the suffering it implies. But it is not-as it is in Christianity—salvation from the estrangement which transforms suffering into a structure of destruction. The Buddhist interpretation of suffering is right to the extent that it derives suffering from the will to be. Suffering is therefore overcome by the self-negation of the will's desire to be something particular. In Christianity the demand is made to accept suffering as an element of finitude with an ultimate courage and thereby to overcome that suffering which is dependent on existential estrangement, which is mere destruction. Christianity knows that such a victory over destructive suffering is only partly possible in time and space. But whether this fragmentary victory is fought for or not makes all the difference between Western and Eastern cultures, as a comparison shows. It changes the valuation of the individual, of personality, of community, and of history. It has, in fact, determined the historical destiny of mankind.

The distinction between suffering as an expression of finitude and as a result of estrangement is valid, in spite of the fact that it never can be concretely affirmed because of the ambiguity which characterizes life as life. But it is possible to speak of the type of suffering in which meaning can be experienced, in contrast, for example, to meaningless suffering. Suffering is meaningful to the extent that it calls for protection and healing in the being which is attacked by pain. It can show the limits and the potentialities of a living being. Whether it does so or not is dependent both on the objective character of suffering and on the way in which it is taken by the suffering subject. There are forms of suffering which destroy the possibility of the subject's acting as subject, as in cases of psychotic destruction, dehumanizing external conditions, or a radical reduction in bodily resistance. Existence is full of instances in which no meaning can be found in suffering on the part of the suffering subject. Such a situation, of course, is not implied in essential being. It is based on the transition from essence to existence and on the conflicts which follow from the self-actualization of being in encounters with beings. It is implied in existence.

One of the causes of meaningless suffering-indeed, the main cause -is the "aloneness" of the individual being, his desire to overcome it by union with other beings, and the hostility which results from the rejection of this desire. Here again it is necessary to distinguish essential and existential structures of aloneness. Every living being is structurally centered; man has a completely centered self. This centeredness cuts him off from the whole of reality which is not identified with himself. He is alone in his world and the more so, the more he is conscious of himself as himself. On the other hand, his complete centeredness enables him to participate in his world without limits; and love, as the dynamic power of life, drives him toward such participation. In the state of essential being the participation is limited by finitude, but participation is not prevented by rejection. The structure of finitude is good in itself, but under the conditions of estrangement it becomes a structure of destruction. Being alone in essential finitude is an expression of man's complete centeredness and could be called "solitude." It is the condition for the relation to the other one. Only he who is able to have solitude is able to have communion. For in solitude man experiences the dimension of the ultimate, the true basis for communion among those who are alone. In existential estrangement man is cut off

from the dimensions of the ultimate and is left alone-in loneliness. This loneliness, however, is intolerable. It drives man to a type of participation in which he surrenders his lonely self to the "collective."

But in this surrender the individual is accepted not by any other individual but only by that to which they have all surrendered their potential solitude, that is, the spirit of the collective. Therefore, the individual continues to seek for the other one and is rejected, in part or in full; for the other one is also a lonely individual, unable to have communion because he is unable to have solitude. Such rejection is the source of much hostility not only against those who reject one but also against one's self. In this way the essential structure of solitude and communion is distorted by existential estrangement into a source of infinite suffering. Destruction of others and self-destruction are interdependent in the dialectics of loneliness.

If the distinction between essential solitude and existential loneliness is not maintained, ultimate unity is possible only by the annihilation of the lonely individual and through his disappearance in an undifferentiated substance. The solution aspired to in radical mysticism is analogous to the answer to the problem of suffering given in Buddhism. There is no loneliness in the ultimate; but neither is there solitude or communion, because the centered self of the individual has been dissolved. This comparison shows how decisive for the Christian understanding of evil and salvation is the distinction between essential solitude and existential loneliness.

d) Estrangement, ***doubt,*** *and meaninglessness.*—Finitude includes doubt. The true is the whole (Hegel). But no finite being has the whole; therefore, it is an expression of the acceptance of his finitude that he accepts the fact that doubt belongs to his essential being. Even dreaming innocence implies doubt. Therefore, the serpent in the myth of the paradise story could evoke the doubt of man.

Essential doubt is present in the methodological doubt of science as well as in the uncertainty about one's self, one's world, and the ultimate meaning of both. No proof is needed to show that, without the radical questioning of everything, there is no cognitive approach to an encountered reality. The question indicates both a having (without which no question would be possible) and a not-having (without which no question would be necessary). This situation of essential doubt is given to man even in the state of estrangement and makes it possible

for him to analyze and control reality to the extent that he is willing to use it honestly and sacrificially.

But finitude also includes uncertainty in every other respect; it is an expression of the general insecurity of the finite being, the contingency of his being at all, the fact that he is not by himself but is "thrown into being" (Heidegger), the lack of a necessary place and a necessary presence. This insecurity also appears in the choices in personal relations and in other parts of encountered reality. It appears in the indefiniteness of feeling and in the risk in every decision. Finally, it appears in the doubt about one's self and one's world as such; it appears as the doubt or uncertainty about being as being.

All these forms of insecurity and uncertainty belong to man's essential finitude, to the goodness of the creative in so far as it is created. In the state of mere potentiality, insecurity and uncertainty are present, but they are accepted in the power of the dimension of the eternal. In this dimension there is an ultimate security or certainty which does not cancel out the preliminary insecurities and uncertainties of finitude (including the anxiety of their awareness). Rather it takes them into itself with the courage to accept one's finitude.

If in the state of estrangement the dimension of the ultimate is shut off, the situation changes. Insecurity becomes absolute and drives toward a despair about the possibility of being at all. Doubt becomes absolute and drives toward a despairing refusal to accept any finite truth. Both together produce the experience that the structure of finitude has become a structure of existential destruction.

The destructive character of existential insecurity and doubt is manifest in the way man tries to escape despair. He tries to make absolute a finite security or a finite certainty. The threat of a breakdown leads to the establishment of defenses, some of which are brutal, some fanatical, some dishonest, and all insufficient and destructive; for there is no security and certainty within finitude. The destructive force may be directed against those who represent the threat to false security and certainty, especially against those who compete or contradict. War and persecution are partly dependent on these dialectics. If, however, the defenses prove to be insufficient, the destructive force is directed against the subject himself. He is thrown into restlessness, emptiness, cynicism, and the experience of meaninglessness. And it may well be that, in order to escape this extreme, he negates his doubt not by a real or imag-

inary answer but by indifference toward any question or answer, In this way he destroys his genuine humanity and becomes a cog within the great machine of work and pleasure. He is deprived of meaning, even in the form of suffering udder meaninglessness. Not even the meaningfulness of a serious question of meaning is left for him.

In these descriptions it can be observed that the distinction between sin and evil is only partly valid. In evil as the self-destructive consequence of sin, sin itself is present. The element of responsibility is not lacking in structures of destruction, such as meaningless suffering, loneliness, cynical doubt, meaninglessness, or despair. On the other hand, each of these structures is dependent on the universal state of estrangement and its self-destructive conséquences. From this point of view, it is justifiable to speak of "sin" in the one context and of "evil" in the other. It is a difference more of focus than of content.

Another question has come to the fore in contemporary sociological and psychological analyses. It is the question of how far the structures of destruction are universally human and how far they are historically conditioned. The answer is that their historical appearance is possible only because of their universal, structural presence. Estrangement is a quality of the structure of existence, but the way in which estrangement is predominantly manifest is a matter of history. There are always structures of destruction in history, but they are possible only because there are structures of finitude which can be transformed into structures of estrangement. There are many sociological and existentialist analyses of man in industrial society which point to self-loss and world-loss, to mechanization and objectification, to loneliness and surrender to the collective, to the experience of emptiness and meaninglessness. These analyses are true as far as they go, but they are fallacious if in our period of history they derive the evil of man's predicament from the structure of industrial society. Such a derivation implies the belief that changes in the structure of our society would, as such, change man's existential predicament. All utopianism has this character; its main mistake is in not distinguishing man's existential situation from its manifestation in different historical periods. There are structures of destruction in all periods, and they provide many analogies with the particular structures of our period. Man's estrangement from his essential being is the universal character of existence. It is inexhaustibly productive of particular evils in every period.

Structures of destruction are not the only mark of existence. They are counterbalanced by structures of healing and reunion of the estranged. But this ambiguity of life is not a reason for the utopian derivation of the evils of a period from the structures of this period without reference to the situation of universal estrangement.

4. The Meaning of Despair and Its Symbols

a) Despair and the problem of suicide.-The structures of evil we have described drive man into the state of "despair." In several places we pointed to elements of despair but not to the nature of despair as a whole. The latter task must be undertaken in systematic theology. Despair is usually discussed as a psychological problem or as a problem of ethics. It certainly is both; but it is more than this: it is the final index of man's predicament; it is the boundary line beyond which man cannot go. In despair, not in death, man has come to the end of his possibilities. The word itself means "without hope" and expresses the feeling of a situation from which there is "no exit" (Sartre). In German the word *Verzweiflung* connects despair with doubt (*Zweifel*). The syllable *ver-* indicates a doubt without a possible answer. The most impressive description of the situation of despair has been given by Kierkegaard in *Sickness unto Death,* where "death" means beyond possible healing. And Paul points in a similar way to a sorrow which is the sorrow of this world and leads to death.

Despair is the state of inescapable conflict. It is the conflict, on the one hand, between what one potentially is and therefore ought to be and, on the other hand, what one actually is in the combination of freedom and destiny. The pain of despair is the agony of being responsible for the loss of the meaning of one's existence and of being unable to recover it. One is shut up in one's self and in the conflict with one's self. One cannot escape, because one cannot escape from one's self. It is out of this situation that the question arises whether suicide may be a way of getting rid of one's self. There can be no doubt that suicide has a much wider significance than seems warranted by the comparatively small number of actual suicidal acts. First of all, there is a suicidal tendency in life generally, the longing for rest without conflict. The human desire for intoxication is a consequence of this longing (compare Freud's doctrine of the death instinct and its evaluation above). Second, in every moment of intolerable, insuperable, and meaningless

pain there is the desire to escape the pain by getting rid of one's self. Third, the situation of despair is most conspicuously a situation in which the desire to get rid of one's self is awake and the image of suicide appears in a most tempting way. Fourth, there are situations in which the unconscious will to life is undermined and a psychological suicide takes place in terms of non-resistance to threatening annihilation. Fifth, whole cultures preach the self-negation of the will, not in terms of physical or psychological suicide, but in terms of the emptying of life of all finite contents so that the entrance into the ultimate identity is possible.

In view of these facts, the question of the self-negation of life should be taken more seriously than Christian theology usually does. The external act of suicide should not be singled out for special moral and religious condemnation. Such a practice is based on the superstitious idea that suicide definitively excludes the operation of saving grace. At the same time, the inner suicidal trends in everyone should be considered as an expression of human estrangement.

The decisive and theologically involved question is: Why cannot suicide be considered an escape from despair? Obviously, there is no problem for those who believe that such an escape is impossible because life goes on after death under essentially the same conditions as before, including the categories of finitude. But if death is taken seriously, one cannot deny that suicide removes the conditions of despair on the level of finitude. One can ask, however, whether this level is the only one or whether the element of guilt in despair points to the dimension of the ultimate. If this is affirmed-and Christianity certainly must affirm it-suicide is no final escape. It does not release us from the dimension of the ultimate and unconditional. One could express this in a somehow mythological way by saying that no personal problem is a matter of mere transitoriness but has eternal roots and demands a solution in relation to the eternal. Suicide (whether external, psychological, or metaphysical) is a successful attempt to escape the situation of despair on the temporal level. But it is not successful in the dimension of the eternal. The problem of salvation transcends the temporal level, and the experience of despair itself points to this truth.

b) The symbol of *the "wrath* of God."-The experience of despair is reflected in the symbol of the "wrath of God." Christian theologians have both used and criticized the term. Criticism has usually recalled

that in paganism the concept of the "anger of the gods" presupposes the idolatrous idea of a finite god whose emotions can be aroused by other finite beings. Such a concept obviously contradicts the divinity of the divine and its unconditional character. Therefore, the concept has to be reinterpreted or completely abandoned in Christian thought. The latter alternative was taken by Albrecht Ritschl, not only in the name of the divinity of the divine, but also in the name of the divine love which he believed to be the true nature of God. If one speaks of the "wrath" of God, one seems to create a split in God between love and wrath. God is, so to speak, caught in his wrath, and then his love must find a way out of this conflict. The atoning work of Christ is then construed as the solution which enables God to forgive what has aroused his wrath, because in the death of Christ his wrath is satisfied. Such an approach, which was frequently elaborated in quantitative and mechanical categories, indeed violated the majesty of God. Ritschl therefore interpreted the New Testament passages in which the wrath of God is mentioned in such a way as to point to the ultimate judgment. The wrath of God is an expression of the negative side of the final judgment. One must ask, however, whether the experience of despair does not justify the use of the symbol "wrath of God" to express an element in the relationship between God and man. One may refer to Luther, who showed an existential approach to the problem when he said: "As you believe him, so you have him." For those who are aware of their own estrangement from God, God is the threat of ultimate destruction. His face takes on demonic traits. However, those who are reconciled to him realize that, although their experience of the wrath of God was genuine, it was not the experience of a God other than the one to whom they are reconciled. Rather their experience was the way in which the God of love acted in relation to them. The divine love stands against all that which is against love, leaving it to its self-destruction, in order to save those who are destroyed; for, since that which is against love occurs in persons, it is the person which falls into self-destruction. This is the only way in which love can operate in the one who rejects love. In showing any man the self-destructive consequences of his rejection of love, love acts according to its own nature, although he who experiences it does so as a threat to his being. He perceives God as the God of wrath, rightly so in preliminary terms, wrongly so in ultimate terms. But the theoretical knowledge that his

experience of God as the God of wrath is not the final experience of God does not remove the reality of God as a threat to his being and nothing but a threat. Only the acceptance of forgiveness can transform the image of the wrathful God into the ultimately valid image of the God of love.

c) The symbol of "condemnation."-The experience of despair is also expressed in the symbol of "condemnation." Usually one speaks of "eternal condemnation." But this is a theologically untenable combination of words. God alone is eternal. Those who participate in the divine eternity and in the limitation of finitude have conquered the despair expressed in the experience of condemnation. In the theologically precise sense of the word, eternity is the opposite of condemnation. But if "eternal" is understood as "endless," one would ascribe endless condemnation to that which by its very nature has an end, namely, finite man. Man's time comes to an end with himself. Therefore, one should eliminate the term "eternal condemnation" from the theological vocabulary. Instead, one should speak of condemnation as removal from the eternal. This seems to be implied in the term "eternal death," which certainly cannot mean everlasting death, since death has no duration. The experience of separation from one's eternity is the state of despair. It points beyond the limits of temporality and to the situation of being bound to the divine life without being united with it in the central act of personal love. Neither experience nor language allows us to say more about it. For the negative can be experienced and spoken of only in union with the positive. Both for time and for eternity, one must say that even in the state of separation God is creatively working in us-even if his creativity takes the way of destruction. Man is never cut off from the ground of being, not even in the state of condemnation.

E. THE QUEST FOR THE NEW BEING AND THE MEANING OF "CHRIST"

1. EXISTENCE AS FATE OR THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL

In every act of existential self-realization, freedom and destiny are united. Existence is always both fact and act. From this it follows that no act within the context of existential estrangement can overcome existential estrangement. Destiny keeps freedom in bondage without eliminating it. This is expressed in the doctrine of the "bondage of the will" as developed by Luther in his fight with Erasmus. Before this it

was expressed by Augustine against Pelagius and, before that, by Paul against the Judaists. In these three instances and in many others the meaning of theological anti-Pelagianism has been misunderstood by being confused with philosophical determinism. The anti-Pelagian theologians have been accused of surrendering human freedom and making man into an object among objects. Sometimes their language (even in Paul) approximates this "Manichaean" error. And some theologians cannot be defended against such an accusation. But the anti-Pelagian emphasis does not necessarily lead to Manichaean tendencies; for the doctrine of the bondage of the will presupposes the freedom of the will. Only what is essentially free can come under existential bondage. In our experience "bondage of the will" is a term that can apply only to man. Nature, too, has spontaneity and centeredness, but it does not have freedom. Therefore, it cannot fall under the bondage of the will. Only man, because he is finite freedom, is open to the compulsions of existential estrangement.

On this level Erasmus is right when he quotes biblical passages against Luther's doctrine of the bondage of the will. He points to that moral responsibility which makes man, man. Yet this was not denied, either by Luther or by the other representatives of the concept of the bondage of the will. They did not deny that ***man,*** a being with finite freedom, is saved; they believed that he who is saved is a sinner, namely, the one who shows this by his freedom to contradict his essential nature. Grace does not create a being who is unconnected with the one who receives grace. Grace does not destroy essential freedom; but it does what freedom under the conditions of existence cannot do, namely, it reunites the estranged.

Nevertheless, the bondage of the will is a universal fact. It is the inability of man to break through his estrangement. In spite of the power of his finite freedom, he is unable to achieve the reunion with God. In the realm of finite relations, all decisions are expressions of man's essential freedom. But they do not bring reunion with God; they remain in the realm of "civil justice,)' of moral and legal norms. But even these decisions, despite the ambiguity of all the structures of life, are related to the unambiguous and ultimate. Man, in relation to God, cannot do anything without him. He must receive in order to act. New being precedes new acting. The tree produces the fruits, not the fruits the tree. Man cannot control his compulsions except by the power of that which

happens to him in the root of these compulsions. This psychological truth is also a religious truth, the truth of the "bondage of the will."

Attempts to overcome estrangement within the power of one's estranged existence lead to hard toil and tragic failure. They are without joy. Therefore, for Luther, the law is not fulfilled unless it is fulfilled joyfully. For the law is not strange to our being. It is our being itself, expressed in the form of commandment. And fulfilment of one's being is joy. Paul speaks of the obedience of the child in contrast to the obedience of the slave. But, in order to act like children, we must have received childhood; the union with God must have been reestablished. Only a New Being can produce a new action.

2. Ways of Self-salvation and Their Failure

a) Self-salvation and religion.-The principle that being precedes acting implies a basic criticism of the history of religion, to the extent that it is the history of man's attempts and failures to save himself. Although religion belongs to the functions of man's spiritual life and is therefore an expression of life generally, uniting essential and existential elements, we must refer to it in the present context which deals only with existence. For religion is not only a function of life; it is also the place where life receives the conqueror of the ambiguities of life, the divine Spirit. Therefore, it is the sphere in which the quest for the New Being appears over against the split between essential and existential being. The question of salvation can be asked only if salvation is already at work, no matter how fragmentarily. Pure despair-the state without hope-is unable to seek beyond itself. The quest for the New Being presupposes the presence of the New Being, as the search for truth presupposes the presence of truth. This necessary circle restates what has been said in the methodological part about the interdependence of all parts of the theological system. The theological circle follows from the nondeductive, existential character of theology. For our present purpose, this means that the concept of religion must be commented on prior to its systematic treatment. The quest for the Christ as well as the attempts at self-salvation appear in the religious sphere. It is equally wrong to identify religion with revelation, just as it is wrong to identify religion with the attempt at self-salvation. Religion, like all life, is ambiguous. On the basis of revelatory experiences, religion turns to self-salvation. It distorts what it has received and fails in what it tries to achieve. This is the tragedy of religion.

b) *Legalistic ways of self-salvation.-Most* conspicuous and important for the history of religion are the legalistic ways of self-salvation. Judaism is right in contending that obedience to the law is not legalism. The law is, first of all, a divine gift; it shows to man his essential nature, his true relationship to God, other men, and himself. Within existential estrangement it makes man's true nature manifest. But it does so in terms of commandments, just because man is estranged from what he ought to be. This is the possibility and the temptation of legalism. It is an almost irresistible temptation. Man, seeing what he ought to be, driven by the anxiety of losing himself, believing in his strength to actualize his essential being, disregarding the bondage of the will, tries to attain again what he has lost. But this situation of estrangement, in which the law becomes commandment, is just the situation in which the law cannot be fulfilled. The conditions of existence simultaneously make the commanding law necessary and its fulfilment impossible. This is true of every particular commandment and of the all-embracing law, the law of love. Necessarily, love has become commandment in the state of estrangement. But love cannot be commanded—even if it is not misunderstood as emotion. It cannot be commanded, because it is the power of that reunion which precedes and fulfils the command before it is given.

Whenever attempted, legalism as a way of self-salvation has come to catastrophe. In all forms of legalism, something which is good, namely, in agreement with man's essential nature, becomes distorted. All forms of legalism are based ultimately on a revelatory experience, received and taken seriously. Their greatness is their unconditional seriousness (which is manifest even in the obedience to the civil and conventional laws). Their distortion is their claim to overcome the state of estrangement by their serious obedience to the commanding law.

The failure of legalism to achieve the reunion of the separated can lead to an attitude of compromising half-seriousness, to a rejection of the law, to despair, or-through despair-to the quest for a New Being. In the last instance, that which is asked for even the radical seriousness under the law cannot attain.

c) ***Ascetic ways of self-salvation.***-Between legalism and its opposite, mysticism, stands asceticism. An ascetic element is to be found in all forms of legalism. In order to avoid the lawlessness of concupiscence, the ascetic tries to extinguish desire completely by eliminating as many objects of possible desire as he can within the limits of finite existence.

Here again a truth is distorted by the attempt to use it as a way to self-salvation.

The term "asceticism" is used in different ways. It designates self-restriction in connection with obedience to law. As such, it is a necessary element in every act of moral self-realization. It puts limits to the endlessness of libido and the will to power and turns them to an acceptance of one's finitude. As such, it is an implement of wisdom and a demand of love.

Asceticism is also a restriction which is not demanded in itself but is used as a means of selfdiscipline when self-restriction is objectively demanded. Such asceticism is admissible if it is a disciplinary exercise and does not claim to be more. It is, however, always in danger of being valued as a means to self-salvation. The voluntary putting-aside of something objectively good in itself often appears as a victory over estrangement.

There is a similar danger in using ascetic restriction in relation to one finite good in order to attain another finite good. This is "inner worldly asceticism" and is exemplified in the Puritan attitude toward work, pleasure, accumulation of money, etc. These qualities had their reward in the technical and economic control of nature and society, and this has been valued as an expression of divine blessing. Although, doctrinally, ascetic self-restriction does not earn the divine blessing, psychologically the ascetic self-control of the Puritan is inevitably turned into a cause of divine blessing. In this way, self-salvation through ascetic acts crept into Protestant churches, even though they are doctrinally based on the most radical rejection of self-salvation.

The main form of asceticism, which could be called "ontological asceticism," is based on the ontological devaluation of finite being. Finitude should not be, because it contradicts being itself. Finitude and Fall are identical, and the tragic state of finite reality is beyond salvation. The only way to salvation is through the complete negation of finite reality, emptying one's self of the manifold contents of the encountered world. The main ascetic ways of self-salvation as elaborated historically are usually part of a mystical type of religion in which self-salvation is attempted through mystical evaluation beyond finite reality.

Ascetic methods of self-salvation fail in so far as they try to force the reunion with the infinite by conscious acts of self-negation. But the objects of concupiscence in human nature do not actually disappear; they

are still present in the form of repression. Therefore, they often reappear in the form of overengrossing imagination or in such transformations as the will to domination, fanaticism, and sado-masochistic or suicidal tendencies. According to medieval art and literature, the demonic is most surely manifested in the medieval ascetics.

As an element in the processes of life, asceticism is necessary; as an attempt at self-salvation, asceticism is a dangerous distortion and a failure.

d) Mystical ways of self-salvation.—Ordinarily, the ontological form of asceticism appears in mysticism. Therefore, we must now deal with the mystical attempts at self-salvation. Since Protestant theologians have often accused mysticism of being ***only*** a way to self-salvation, it is necessary to distinguish the different meanings of the term "mystical." "Mystical" is, first of all, a category which characterizes the divine as being present in experience. In this sense, the mystical is the heart of every religion as religion. A religion which cannot say "God himself is present" becomes a system of moral or doctrinal rules which are not religious, even if they are derived from originally revelatory sources. Mysticism, or the "felt presence of God," is a category essential to the nature of religion and has nothing to do with self-salvation.

But self-salvation is evident if one tries to reach reunion through bodily and mental exercises. Much Eastern and parts of Western mysticism do have this character. In this sense, mysticism is largely, though not fully, an attempt at self-salvation, at trying to transcend all realms of finite being in order to unite the finite being with the infinite. But this attempt, like the other attempts at self-salvation, is a failure. A real union of the mystic with God is never reached. But, even if it were reached, it would not overcome the estrangement of ordinary existence. Long stretches of "dryness of the soul" follow moments of ecstasy, and the predicament of men generally is not changed because the conditions of existence are left untouched.

However, classical mysticism denies the possibility of self-salvation at the last stage of ecstasy. In spite of all the preparations, the ecstatic reunion with the ultimate cannot be forced when this point has been reached. It must be given, yet might not be given at all. This decisive limit to the self-saving methods of mysticism should curb the often very summary and unrefined criticism of the great mystics by Protestant theologians, Ritschlian as well as neo-orthodox.

If theologians paid more attention to the limits seen by the mystics

themselves, they would have to give a more positive evaluation of this great tradition. One would then understand that there is something one could call "baptized mysticism," in which the mystical experience depends on the appearance of the new reality and does not attempt to produce it. The form of this mysticism is concrete, in contrast to the abstract mysticism of the classical mystical systems. It follows Paul's experience of being ***"in*** Christ," namely, in the spiritual power which is Christ. In principle, such mysticism is beyond the attitude of self-salvation, although it is not protected against actual relapses; for self-salvation is a temptation in all religious forms, and relapses appear in the midst of Christianity.

e) ***Sacramental, doctrinal, emotional ways of self-satvation.-To*** the legalistic, ascetic, and mystical ways of self-salvation can be added the sacramental, the doctrinal, and the emotional.

Although the sacramental way is more characteristic of the Roman Catholic church and the doctrinal way more characteristic of the Protestant church, especially the Lutheran churches, it is possible to discuss both ways together. There is so much doctrinal self-salvation in Roman Catholicism and so much sacramental self-salvation in Lutheran Protestantism that a separate treatment would be inappropriate. In both cases a special manifestation of the New Being in visual or verbal form is distorted into a ritual or intellectual work which conquers existential estrangement through its very performance. Salvation is dependent upon the sacramental act performed by the priest and participated in by the Christian; or it is dependent upon the true doctrines formulated by the church and accepted by the Christian. In Roman Catholicism the sacramental work is justified because the Roman church is a synthesis of salvation by God and self-salvation. In Protestantism the Pelagian element of self-salvation was removed, but it nevertheless returned both in orthodoxy and in pietism (fundamentalism and revivalism). Classical orthodoxy established a kind of "sacramentalism of the pure doctrine." Under the title "obedience to the word of God," obedience was asked to the letter of the Bible, and, since the meaning of the Bible is not obvious, obedience to a special interpretation of the Bible by a special, historically dated theology was demanded (and is demanded in present-day fundamentalism). In many cases, especially in a period in which critical consciousness developed, this led to an intellectual asceticism or to the sacrifice of man's critical power. This demand is analogous to that made in monastic or Puritan asceticism, where all vital powers are sacrificed.

Having shown the interdependence of the sacramental and doctrinal in theory and in fact, it is still possible to delineate their shortcomings separately. Sacramental self-salvation is the distortion of sacramental receptivity. The sacramental presence of the divine, expressed in ways which go far beyond the so-called sacraments, is itself in opposition to self-salvation. But in religious actualization in rites, elements of self-salvation can enter the procedures and distort their original meaning. The mere performance of the accepted rites or the mere participation in a sacramental act is considered to have saving power. The sacrament is given, and, as such, it is understood to negate self-salvation. But the way in which it is used opens wide the door for a self-saving attitude. The anxious question of whether or not one has performed what one should perform or whether one has proceeded with the right form and with the right attitude shows that reunion with the divine source of the sacramental act has not been reached. Sacramental self-salvation is not only a highly dialectical concept; it is also an actual impossibility. It can never bring about a reunion with God.

The same is true of doctrinal self-salvation. In Lutheran Protestantism the phrase "justification by faith" was partly responsible for the distortion of doctrine into a tool of self-salvation. Faith as the state of being grasped by an ultimate was distorted and became the belief in doctrine. Thus faith as the reception of the message that one is accepted became a proposition for intellectual affirmation. But the demand for such an affirmation cannot help raising further questions. Do I really believe? Is not my belief a transitory suppression of doubt and of cognitive honesty? And, if I do not really believe, is my salvation lost? The terrible inner struggles between the will to be honest and the will to be saved show the failure of doctrinal self-salvation.

In contrast to both the sacramental and the doctrinal forms of self-salvation, as we have indicated, stands the emotional. For example, pietism demanded radical personal commitment in terms of a conversion experience and a devotional dedication of one's life (including legal and doctrinal elements of self-surrender). The temptation to self-salvation is present in pietism and in revivalism of all forms, for they provoke the desire for emotions which are not genuine but are artificially created. This happens through evangelists and through artificially

directing one's own emotional possibilities toward conversion and sanctification experiences. In that situation elements of self-salvation are brought into the orbit of the divine acts of salvation which one wishes to appropriate.

The personal encounter with God and the reunion with him are the heart of all genuine religion. It presupposes the presence of a transforming power and the turn toward the ultimate from all preliminary concerns. Yet, in its distorted form, "piety" becomes a tool with which to achieve a transformation within one's self. But anything which is imposed upon man's spiritual life by himself or by others remains artificial, producing anxiety, fanaticism, and the intensification of works of piety. It discloses the final failure of the pietistic way of self-salvation.

All ways of self-salvation distort the way of salvation. The general rule that the negative lives from the distortion of the positive is also valid in this case. This shows the inadequacy of a theology which identifies religion with the human attempt at self-salvation and derives both from man in his state of estrangement. Actually, even the awareness of estrangement and the desire for salvation are effects of the presence of saving power, in other words, revelatory experiences. The same is true of the ways of self-salvation. Legalism presupposes the reception of the law in a revelatory experience; asceticism, the awareness of the infinite as judging the finite; mysticism, the experience of ultimacy in being and meaning; sacramental self-salvation, the gift of the sacramental presence; doctrinal self-salvation, the gift of manifest truth; emotional self-salvation, the transforming power of the holy. Without these presuppositions, man's attempts at self-salvation could not even begin. *Falsa religio* is not identical with special historical religions but with the self-saving attempts in every religion, even in Christianity.

3. Non-historical and Historical Expectations of the New Being

The quest for the New Being is universal because the human predicament and its ambiguous conquest are universal. It appears in all religions. Even in the few cases in which a completely autonomous culture has developed-as in Greece, Rome, and the modern period of the Western world-utopian expectation of a new reality is present. The religious substance is effective under the secular form. The character of the quest for the New Being changes from religion to religion

and from culture to culture. However, one can distinguish two main types in polar relation, that is, partly conflicting with each other and partly in unity. The decisive difference refers to the role of history in both types : the New Being can be sought above history, and it can be understood as the aim of history. The first type is predominantly non-historical; the second type, predominantly historical.

For instance, most polytheistic religions are predominantly non-historical. The mystical reactions against polytheism found in Brahmanism and Buddhism and the humanistic reactions against polytheism in classical Greece are, however, also non-historical. In these, as in other expressions of ultimate concern, the New Being is divine power, appearing in many ways to overcome the human predicament, within the limits of finitude. Here the divine is equally near to and equally remote from each period of history. Certainly, salvation begins in history, because man lives in history. But salvation does not occur through history. If there is a vision of history at all, it is envisaged as a circular, self-repeating movement. Nothing new is created by it. The New Being is not the aim of history but appears in the epiphanies of the gods, in spiritual effects produced by ascetics and seers, in divine incarnations, in oracles, and in spiritual elevation. Such divine manifestations are received by individuals; they can be communicated to disciples, but they are not directed to groups. A group, whether a family or mankind as a whole, does not participate in the effects of the New Being. The misery of mankind in history is not to be changed, but individuals may transcend the whole sphere of existence-things, men, and gods. The New Being in this interpretation is the negation of all beings and the affirmation of the Ground of Being alone. One could say that the price paid for the New Being is the negation of everything that has being. This is the root of the difference in the East and West in the feeling for life.

In the West, religion and culture have been determined by the historical type, by the expectation of the New Being in the historical process. This belief is found in ancient Persia, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and also in a secularized form in some strains of modern humanism. The New Being is expected predominantly in a horizontal direction rather than from the vertical one. The whole of reality is affirmed because it is considered to be essentially good. Its essential goodness is not vitiated by its existential estrangement. But the expectation of the

New Being is the expectation of a transformed reality. The transformation occurs in and through a historical process which is unique, unrepeatable, irreversible. Bearers of this process are historical groups, such as families, nations, and the church; individuals bear it only in relation to historical groups. The actualization of the New Being occurs differently according to the forms of the historical type. It occurs either in a slow progress, in definite qualitative degrees, in the center of the whole process, or at its end when history is elevated to eternity. Some of the possibilities are frequent19 combined (this is not the place to discuss them systematically). But it can be stated that in Christianity the decisive event occurs in the center of history and that it is precisely the event that gives history a center; that Christianity is also aware of the "not-yet," which is the main emphasis in Judaism; and that Christianity knows the revelatory possibilities in every moment of history. All this is included in the title of the "Christ," the name which Christianity applied to the bearer of the New Being in its final manifestation.

4. The Symbol of "Christ," Its Historical and Its Transhistorical Meaning

The history of the symbol "Messiah" ("Christ") shows that its origin transcends both Christianity and Judaism, thus confirming the universal human expectation of a new reality. When Christianity used this symbol for what it believed to be the central event in history, it accepted-as the religion of the Old Testament had done before it-a large amount of symbolic material taken from the social organization of the Semitic and Egyptian world, especially from the political institution of kingship. The Messiah, the "anointed one," is the king. He conquers the enemies and establishes peace and justice. The more the political meaning of the idea was transcended, the more symbolic the figure of the king became. More and more mythological traits were affixed to it. But the Messiah always remained related to history, i.e., to a historical group, its past and its future. The Messiah does not save individuals in a path leading out of historical existence; he is to transform historical existence. The individual enters a new reality which embraces society and nature. In messianic thought, the New Being does not demand the sacrifice of finite being; instead, it fulfils all finite being by conquering its estrangement.

The strictly historical character of the messianic idea made it possible

to transfer the messianic function to a nation, a small group in a nation (the remnant), a social class (proletariat), etc. And it was possible to amalgamate the messianic figure with others, such as the "Servant of Jahweh," the "Son of Man," or the "Man from Above." Something even more important was possible: namely, that the historical type of the expectation of the New Being could include the non-historical type. In this respect Christianity could claim to be the universal type. The universal quest for the New Being is a consequence of universal revelation. If it claims universality, Christianity implicitly maintains that the different forms in which the quest for the New Being has been made are fulfilled in Jesus as the Christ. Christianity must show-and has always tried to show-that the historical type of the expectation of the New Being embraces itself and the non-historical type, while the non-historical is unable to embrace the historical type. Christianity, in order to be universally valid, must unite the horizontal direction of the expectation of the New Being with the vertical one. For this task Christian theology was provided with conceptual tools by late Judaism. In the period after the Exile, Jewish piety created symbols which combined historical and transhistorical elements and which could be applied to the event of "Jesus" in a universal way. In apocalyptic literature the Messiah is elevated to cosmic significance, the law is declared to have eternal reality, and the divine Wisdom, standing beside God, is a principle of creation and salvation. Other divine qualities have a kind of ontological independence under Jahweh. The figure of the Son of Man combines transcendent roots with historical functions. On this basis the Fourth Gospel strongly emphasized the vertical line in the Logos doctrine, in its stress upon the transhistorical character of Jesus and in its teaching of the presence of judgment and salvation in him. The receding of the eschatological consciousness of early Christianity led to an almost exclusive emphasis on individual salvation. This is already visible in Paul, whose Christ-mysticism and doctrine of the Spirit provided an important bridge across which the non-historical type could enter Christianity. Under these circumstances it is not astonishing that the horizontal line, derived from the Old Testament, was in danger of annihilation by the vertical line, derived from Hellenism. In the Gnostic mixture of religious motifs the danger became reality. The two interdependent symbols of creation and consummation were obliterated. In this situation Christianity was forced into a life-and-

death struggle to preserve the Old Testament within the church, the historical type of the expectation of the New Being. The church made this decision and saved the historical character of Christianity. This must be defended in all periods, but in such a way that the universal significance of Christianity is not lost and replaced by the conditioned validity of a contingent historical movement.

5. The Meaning of Paradox in Christian Theology

The Christian assertion that the New Being has appeared in Jesus as the Christ is paradoxical. It constitutes the only all-embracing paradox of Christianity. Whenever the words "paradox" and "paradoxical" are used, a semantic investigation' is necessary. These words are abused to such a degree that their application to the Christian event produces confusion and resentment. The paradoxical must be distinguished from the following: the reflective-rational, the dialectical-rational, the irrational, the absurd, and the nonsensical.

The reflective-rational can also be called the realm of technical reason, namely, the kind of thinking which not only follows the laws of formal logic (as all thinking must) but also believes that the only dimensions of being are those which can be totally grasped with the tool of formal logic. If "paradoxical" is understood as the destruction of formal logic, it obviously must be rejected; for even the destruction of formal logic demands the use of formal logic. It cannot be destroyed, but it must be limited to its legal use. The paradox is no exemption to such legal use. In order to place it rightly, one needs formal logic.

The paradoxical has often been confused with the dialectical. Dialectical thinking is rational, not paradoxical. Dialectic is not reflective, in so far as it does not reflect like a mirror the realities with which it deals. It does not look at them merely from the outside. It enters them, so to speak, and participates in their inner tensions. The tensions may appear first in contrasting concepts, but they must be followed down to their roots in the deeper levels of reality. In a dialectical description one element of a concept drives to another. Taken in this sense, dialectics determine all life-processes and must be applied in biology, psychology, and sociology. The description of tensions in living organisms, neurotic conflicts, and class struggles is dialectical. Life itself is dialectical. If applied symbolically to the divine life, God as a living God must be described in dialectical statements. He has the character of all life, namely, to go beyond himself and to return to himself. This is expressed in the Trinitarian symbols. It must be stated with great emphasis that Trinitarian thinking is dialectical and in this sense rational, not paradoxical. This implies a relation in God between the infinite and the finite. God is infinite, in so far as he is the creative ground of the finite and eternally produces the finite potentialities in himself. The finite does not limit him but belongs to the eternal process of his life. All this is dialectical and rational in character; yet in every statement it points to the divine mystery. In all its expressions theology refers to the divine mystery-the mystery of eternal being. The tools of theology are rational, dialectical, and paradoxical; they are not mysterious in speaking of the divine mystery.

The theological paradox is not "irrational." But the transition from essence to existence, from the potential to the actual, from dreaming innocence to existential guilt and tragedy, is irrational. In spite of its universality, this transition is not rational; in the last analysis it is irrational. We encounter the irrationality of this transition from essence to existence in everything, and its presence is irrational, not paradoxical. It is an undeniable fact which must be accepted, although it contradicts the essential structure of everything created.

It would be unnecessary to confront the paradoxical with the absurd if it were not for the confusing phrase, *credo quia absurdum,* which has been wrongly attributed to Tertullian, and if it were not for the fact that the paradoxical has been identified with the absurd. Combinations of logically compatible words become absurd when they contradict the meaningful order of reality. Therefore, the absurd lies in the neighborhood of the grotesque and the ridiculous. We have used this term several times in rejecting symbolic literalism and its grotesque consequences. Such absurdities, however, have no relation to the paradox of the Christian message.

Finally, the paradox is not nonsense. It should be unnecessary to state this, but it is not. Unfortunately, there are always theologians who indulge in the production of propositions which have no meaning semantically and who, in the name of the Christian faith, insist that one has to accept them in order to be a true Christian. They argue that divine truth is above human reason. But the divine truth cannot be expressed in meaningless propositions. Everybody could formulate sentences of this type indefinitely, but they would not make sense; and the paradox is not nonsense.

We have already touched on the relation of the divine mystery to the

different logical categories which were compared with paradox. Mystery does not belong in this series. It is present whenever one speaks of God and divine "things." It is based on the nature of the divine itself, its infinity and eternity, its unconditional and ultimate character, its transcendence of the subject-object structure of reality. This mystery of the divine is the presupposition of all theology. But it does not exclude the logos of *theos* and, with it, theology as such. The *logos* of *theos* must be expressed in reflective, dialetical, and paradoxical terms. But *theos,* the divine mystery, transcends all of them. Those who pile paradox upon paradox are not nearer to the divine mystery than those who, with the tools of reflective reason, give an account of the semantic meaning of religious concepts—supposing that both acknowledge the ultimate mystery of being.

After this limited discussion of the concept of the paradoxical, we must state in affirmative terms that the concept should be understood in the literal sense of the word. That is paradoxical which contradicts the *doxa,* the opinion which is based on the whole of ordinary human experience, including the empirical and the rational. The Christian paradox contradicts the opinion derived from man's existential predicament and all expectations imaginable on the basis of this predicament. The "offense" given by the paradoxical character of the Christian message is not against the laws of understandable speech but against man's ordinary interpretation of his predicament with respect to himself, his world, and the ultimate underlying both of them. It is an offense against man's unshaken reliance upon himself, his self-saving attempts, and his resignation to despair. Against each of these three attitudes the manifestation of the New Being in Christ is judgment and promise. The appearance of the New Being under the conditions of existence, yet judging and conquering them, is the paradox of the Christian message. This is the only paradox and the source of all paradoxical statements in Christianity. The paradoxical statement that the situation of the Christian is *simul peccator, simul justus* ("at the same time unjust and just," namely, justified) is not a paradox beside the christological paradox: that Jesus is the Christ. Historically and systematically, everything else in Christianity is a corroboration of the simple assertion that Jesus is the Christ. This is neither irrational nor absurd, and it is neither reflectively nor dialectically rational; but it is paradoxical, that is, against man's self-understanding and expectations. The paradox is a new reality and not a logical riddle.

6. God, Man, and the Symbol of the "Christ"

The right understanding of the paradox is essential for considering the meaning of "Christ" as the bearer of the New Being in his relation to God, man, and the universe. Obviously, answers to such considerations are not a matter of detached observation of pre-Christian ideas concerning the Messiah; they are the result of an existential interpretation of both pre-Christian ideas and their criticism and fulfilment in Jesus as the Christ. This corresponds to the method of correlation, in which questions and answers determine each other, and the question about the manifestation of the New Being is asked both on the basis of the human predicament and in the light of the answer which is accepted as *the* answer of Christianity.

The first concept often used for the Christ is "the Mediator." Mediator gods appear in the history of religion at the moment in which the highest God becomes increasingly abstract and removed. They appear in paganism as well as in Judaism and give expression to man's desire to experience his ultimate concern in a concrete manifestation. In paganism the mediator-gods can become gods in their own right; in Judaism they are subjected to Jahweh. "Mediating" in Christianity means bridging the infinite gap between the infinite and the finite, between the unconditional and the conditioned. But the function of mediating is more than merely making the ultimate concrete. Mediation is reunion. The mediator has a saving function; he is the savior. Of course, he is the savior not on his own account but by divine destiny, so that salvation and mediation really come from God. The savior does not save God from the necessity of condemning. Every mediating and saving activity comes from God. God is the subject, not the object, of mediation and salvation. He does not need to be reconciled to man, but he asks man to be reconciled to him.

Therefore, if the Christ is expected as mediator and savior, he is not expected as a third reality between God and man, but as him who represents God to man. He does not represent man to God but shows what God wants man to be. He represents to those who live under the conditions of existence what man essentially is and therefore ought to be under these conditions. It is inadequate and a source of a false Christology to say that the mediator is an ontological reality beside God and man. This could only be a half-god who at the same time is half-man. Such a third being could neither represent God to men nor man to

men. It is essential man who represents not only man to man but God to man; for essential man, by his very nature, represents God. He represents the original image of God embodied in man, but he does so under the conditions of estrangement between God and man. The paradox of the Christian message is not that essential humanity includes the union of God and man. This belongs to the dialectics of the infinite and the finite. The paradox of the Christian message is that in *one* personal life essential manhood has appeared under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them. One could also speak of essential God-manhood in order to indicate the divine presence in essential manhood; but this is redundant, and the clarity of thought is served best in speaking simply of essential manhood.

The second concept which needs revision in the light of our understanding of the Christian paradox is that of "Incarnation." The fact that it is not a biblical term is a possible argument against its use as a religious term, though it is not an argument against its theological use. As a theological interpretation of the event on which Christianity is based, it needs careful theological scrutiny and sharp delineation. The first question to consider is obviously : Who is the subject of Incarnation ? If the answer is "God," one often continues by saying that "God has become man" and that this is the paradox of the Christian message. But the assertion that "God has become man" is not a paradoxical but a nonsensical statement. It is a combination of words which makes sense only if it is not meant to mean what the words say. The word "God" points to ultimate reality, and even the most consistent Scotists had to admit that the only thing God cannot do is to cease to be God. But that is just what the assertion that "God has become man" means. Even if one speaks of God as "becoming," he still remains God in each moment. He does not become something that is not God. Therefore, it is preferable to speak of a divine being which has become man and to refer to the terms "Son of God" or the "Spiritual Man" or the "Man from Above," as they are used in biblical language. Any one of these designations so used is not nonsensical but is dangerous for two reasons: first, there is the polytheistic connotation of divine beings besides God, and, second, incarnation is interpreted in terms of a mythology in which divine beings are transmuted into natural objects or human beings. In this sense incarnation is far from being a characteristic of Christianity. It is, on the contrary, a characteristic of paganism in so far

as, within it, no god has overcome the finite basis on which he stands. Because of this, the mythological imagination within polytheism has had no difficulty in transforming divine beings into both natural objects and human beings. The unqualified use of the term "Incarnation" in Christianity creates pagan, or at least superstitious, connotations.

A modifying interpretation of the term "Incarnation" would have to follow the Johannine statement that the "Logos became flesh." "Logos" is the principle of the divine self-manifestation in God as well as in the universe, in nature as well as in history. "Flesh" does not mean a material substance but stands for historical existence. And "became" points to the paradox of God participating in that which did not receive him and in that which is estranged from him. This is not a myth of transmutation but the assertion that God is manifest in a personal life-process as a saving participant in the human predicament. If "Incarnation" is understood in this qualifying way, then the Christian paradox can be expressed by this term. But perhaps this is an unwise course, since it is practically impossible to protect the concept from superstitious connotations.

In discussing the character of the quest for and the expectation of the Christ, a question arises which has been carefully avoided by many traditional theologians, even though it is consciously or unconsciously alive for most contemporary people. It is the problem of how to understand the meaning of the symbol "Christ" in the light of the immensity of the universe, the heliocentric system of planets, the infinitely small part of the universe which man and his history constitute, and the possibility of other "worlds" in which divine self-manifestations may appear and be received. Such developments become especially important if one considers that biblical and related expectations envisaged the coming of the Messiah within a cosmic frame. The universe will be reborn into a new eon. The function of the bearer of the New Being is not only to save individuals and to transform man's historical existence but to renew the universe. And the assumption is that mankind and individual men are so dependent on the powers of the universe that salvation of the one without the other is unthinkable.

The basic answer to these questions is given in the concept of essential man appearing in a personal life under the conditions of existential estrangement. This restricts the expectation of the Christ to historical mankind. The man in whom essential man has appeared in existence

represents human history; more precisely, as its central event, he creates the meaning of human history. It is the eternal relation of God to man which is manifest in the Christ. At the same time, our basic answer leaves the universe open for possible divine manifestations in other areas or periods of being. Such possibilities cannot be denied. But they cannot be proved or disproved. Incarnation is unique for the special group in which it happens, but it is not unique in the sense that other singular incarnations for other unique worlds are excluded. Man cannot claim that the infinite has entered the finite to overcome its existential estrangement in mankind alone. Man cannot claim to occupy the only possible place for Incarnation. Although statements about other worlds and God's relation to them cannot be verified experientially, they are important because they help to interpret the meaning of terms like "mediator," "savior," "Incarnation," "the Messiah," and "the new eon."

Perhaps one can go a step further. The interdependence of everything with everything else in the totality of being includes a participation of nature in history and demands a participation of the universe in salvation. Therefore, if there are non-human "worlds" in which existential estrangement is not only real-as it is in the whole universe—but in which there is also a type of awareness of this estrangement, such worlds cannot be without the operation of saving power within them. Otherwise self-destruction would be the inescapable consequence. The manifestation of saving power in one place implies that saving power is operating in all places. The expectation of the Messiah as the bearer of the New Being presupposes that "God loves the universe," even though in the appearance of the Christ he actualizes this love for historical man alone.

In the last sections we have analyzed the expectation of the New Being, the meaning of the symbol "Christ," and the validity of the different concepts in which theology has interpreted this meaning. We have not yet spoken of the actual appearance of the Christ in Jesus, although, according to the theological circle, this is presupposed in the description of the expectation. We now turn to the event which, according to the Christian message, has fulfilled the expectations, namely, the event which is called "Jesus, the Christ."

II

THE REALITY OF THE CHRIST

A. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

1. The Name "Jesus Christ"

CHRISTIANITY is what it is through the affirmation that Jesus of Nazareth, who has been called "the Christ," is actually the Christ, namely, he who brings the new state of things, the New Being. Wherever the assertion that Jesus is the Christ is maintained, there is the Christian message; wherever this assertion is denied, the Christian message is not affirmed. Christianity was born, not with the birth of the man who is called "Jesus," but in the moment in which one of his followers was driven to say to him, "Thou art the Christ." And Christianity will live as long as there are people who repeat this assertion. For the event on which Christianity is based has two sides: the fact which is called "Jesus of Nazareth" and the reception of this fact by those who received him as the Christ. The first of those who received him as the Christ in the early tradition was named Simon Peter. This event is reported in a story in the center of the Gospel of Mark; it takes place near Caesarea Philippi and marks the turning point in the narrative. The moment of the disciples' acceptance of Jesus as the Christ is also the moment of his rejection by the powers of history. This gives the story its tremendous symbolic power. He who is the Christ has to die for his acceptance of the title "Christ." And those who continue to call him the Christ must assert the paradox that he who is supposed to overcome existential estrangement must participate in it and its self-destructive consequences. This is the central story of the Gospel. Reduced to its simplest form, it is the statement that the man Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ.

The first step demanded of christological thought is an interpretation of the name "Jesus Christ," preferably in the light of the Caesarea Philippi story. One must clearly see that Jesus Christ is not an individual name, consisting of a first and a second name, but that it is the

combination of an individual name-the name of a certain man who lived in Nazareth between the years 1 and 30—with the title "the Christ," expressing in the mythological tradition a special figure with a special function. The Messiah-in Greek, *Christos*—is the "anointed one" who has received an unction from God enabling him to establish the reign of God in Israel and in the world. Therefore, the name Jesus Christ must be understood as "Jesus who is called the Christ," or "Jesus who is the Christ," or "Jesus as the Christ," or "Jesus the Christ." The context determines which of these interpretative phrases should be used; but one of them should be used in order to keep the original meaning of the name "Jesus Christ" alive, not only in theological thought but also in ecclesiastical practice. Christian preaching and teaching must continually reemphasize the paradox that the man Jesus is called the Christ-a paradox which is often drowned in the liturgical and homiletic use of "Jesus Christ" as a proper name. "Jesus Christ" means-originally, essentially, and permanently-" Jesus who is the Christ."

2. EVENT, FACT, AND RECEPTION

Jesus as the Christ is both a historical fact and a subject of believing reception. One cannot speak the truth about the event on which Christianity is based without asserting both sides. Many theological mistakes could have been avoided if these two sides of the "Christian event" had been emphasized with equal strength. And Christian theology as a whole is undercut if one of them is completely ignored. If theology ignores the fact to which the name of Jesus of Nazareth points, it ignores the basic Christian assertion that Essential God-Manhood has appeared within existence and subjected itself to the conditions of existence without being conquered by them. If there were no personal life in which existential estrangement had been overcome, the New Being would have remained a quest and an expectation and would not be a reality in time and space. Only if the existence is conquered in *one* point-a personal life, representing existence as a whole-is it conquered in principle, which means "in beginning and in power." This is the reason that Christian theology must insist on the actual fact to which the name Jesus of Nazareth refers. It is why the church prevailed against competing groups in the religious movements of the first centuries. This is the reason that the church had to fight a vehement struggle with the gnostic-docetic elements within itself-elements

which entered Christianity as early as the New Testament. And this is the reason that anyone who takes seriously the historical approach to the New Testament and its critical methods becomes suspect of docetic ideas, however strongly he may emphasize the factual side of the message of Jesus the Christ.

Nevertheless, the other side, the believing reception of Jesus *as* the Christ, calls for equal emphasis. Without this reception the Christ would not have been the Christ, namely, the manifestation of the New Being in time and space. If Jesus had not impressed himself as the Christ on his disciples and through them upon all following generations, the man who is called Jesus of Nazareth would perhaps be remembered as a historically and religiously important person. As such, he would belong to the preliminary revelation, perhaps to the preparatory segment of the history of revelation. He could then have been a prophetic anticipation of the New Being, but not the final manifestation of the New Being itself. He would not have been the Christ even if he had claimed to be the Christ. The receptive side of the Christian event is as important as the factual side. And only their unity creates the event upon which Christianity is based. According to later symbolism, the Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. As such, they are necessarily interdependent.

3. HISTORY AND THE CHRIST

If the Christ is not the Christ without those who receive him as the Christ, what would it mean for the validity of this message if the continuity of the church as the group which receives him as the Christ were interrupted or destroyed? It could be imagined-and today more easily than ever—that the historical tradition in which Jesus appears as the center would break down completely. It could be imagined that a total catastrophe and a completely new beginning of the human race would leave no memory of the event "Jesus as the Christ." Can such a possibility-which is neither verifiable nor refutable-undercut the assertion that Jesus is the Christ, or does the Christian faith forbid such speculation? The latter alternative has become impossible for those who realize that today this possibility has become an actual threat! After mankind has gained the power to extinguish itself, this question cannot be repressed. Would the suicide of mankind be a refutation of the Christian message?

The New Testament is aware of the problem of historical continuity,

and it clearly indicates that so long as there is human history-namely, up to the end of the world-the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is present and effective. Jesus the Christ will be with those who believe in him every day up to the end of time. The "thresholds of hell," the demonic powers, will not conquer his church. And, before the end, he will establish his "reign of a thousand years" and will come as the judge of all beings. How can such assertions be combined with the possibility that mankind may destroy itself tomorrow? And even if human beings were left who were cut off from the historical tradition in which Jesus as the Christ has appeared, one must still ask: "What do the biblical assertions mean in view of such a development?" One cannot answer in terms of ordering God not to allow such catastrophes. For the structure of the universe clearly indicates that the conditions of life on earth are limited in time, and the conditions of human life even more so. If one dismisses a supranaturalistic literalism with respect to the eschatological symbols, one must understand in a different way the relation of Jesus as the Christ to human history.

We have discussed a similar problem in connection with the relation of the idea of the Christ to the universe. The question concerned the significance of the idea of the Christ in terms of spatial extension; the present question concerns the significance of the reality of Jesus as the Christ in terms of temporal extension. We have answered the first question by saying that the relation of Eternal God-Manhood to human existence does not exclude other relations of God to other sections or levels of the existing universe. The Christ is God-for-us! But God is not only for us, he is for everything created. In an analogous way one has to say that Jesus as the Christ is related to that historical development of which he is the center, determining its beginning and its end. It begins the moment human beings start realizing their existential estrangement and raise the question of the New Being. Obviously, such a beginning cannot be determined by historical research but must be told in legendary and mythical terms, as in the Bible and other religious literature. Corresponding to this beginning, the end is the moment in which the continuity of that history in which Jesus as the Christ is the center is definitely broken. This moment cannot be determined empirically, either in its nature or in its causes. Its nature may be the disappearance or a complete transformation of what once was historical mankind. Its causes may be historical, biological, or physical. In any case, it would be the end of that development of which Jesus as the Christ is the center. In faith it is certain that for historical mankind in its unique, continuous development, as experienced here and now, Christ is the center. But faith cannot judge about the future destiny of historical mankind and the way it will come to an end. Jesus is the Christ for us, namely, for those who participate in the historical continuum which he determines in its meaning. This existential limitation does not qualitatively limit his significance, but it leaves open other ways of divine self-manifestations before and after our historical continuum.

4. The Research for the Historical Jesus and Its Failure

From the moment that the scientific method of historical research was applied to biblical literature, theological problems which were never conipletely absent became intensified in a way unkown to former periods of church history. The historical method unites analytical-critical and constructive-conjectural elements. For the average Christian consciousness shaped by the orthodox doctrine of verbal inspiration, the first element was much more impressive than the second. One felt only the negative element in the term "criticism" and called the whole enterprise "historical criticism" or "higher criticism" or, with reference to a recent method, "form criticism." In itself, the term "historical criticism" means nothing more than historical research. Every historical research criticizes its sources, separating what has more probability from that which has less or is altogether improbable. Nobody doubts the validity of this method, since it is confirmed continuously by its success; and nobody seriously protests if it destroys beautiful legends and deeply rooted prejudices. But biblical research became suspect from its very beginning. It seemed to criticize not only the historical sources but the revelation contained in these sources. Historical research and rejection of biblical authority were identified. Revelation, it was implied, covered not only the revelatory content but also the historical form in which it had appeared. This seemed to be especially true of the facts concerning the "historical Jesus." Since the biblical revelation is essentially historical, it appeared to be impossible to separate the revelatory content from the historical reports as they are given in the biblical records. Historical criticism seemed to undercut faith itself.

But the critical part of historical research into biblical literature is

the less important part. More important is the constructive-conjectural part, which was the driving force in the whole enterprise. The facts behind the records, especially the facts about Jesus, were sought. There was an urgent desire to discover the reality of this man, Jesus of Nazareth, behind the coloring and covering traditions which are almost as old as the reality itself. So the research for the so-called "historical Jesus" started. Its motives were religious and scientific at the same time. The attempt was courageous, noble, and extremely significant in many respects. Its theological consequences are numerous and rather important. But, seen in the light of its basic intention, the attempt of historical criticism to find the empirical truth about Jesus of Nazareth was a failure. The historical Jesus, namely, the Jesus behind the symbols of his reception as the Christ, not only did not appear but receded farther and farther with every new step. The history of the attempts to write a "life of Jesus," elaborated by Albert Schweitzer in his early work, ***The Quest of the Historical Jesus,*** is still valid. His own constructive attempt has been corrected. Scholars, whether conservative or radical, have become more cautious, but the methodological situation has not changed. This became manifest when R. Bultmann's bold program of a "demythologization of the New Testament" aroused a storm in all theological camps and the slumber of Barthianism with respect to the historical problem was followed by an astonished awakening. But the result of the new (and very old) questioning is not a picture of the so-called historical Jesus but the insight that there is no picture behind the biblical one which could be made scientifically probable.

This situation is not a matter of a preliminary shortcoming of historical research which will some day be overcome. It is caused by the nature of the sources itself. The reports about Jesus of Nazareth are those of Jesus as the Christ, given by persons who had received him as the Christ. Therefore, if one tries to find the real Jesus behind the picture of Jesus as the Christ, it is necessary critically to separate the elements which belong to the factual side of the event from the elements which belong to the receiving side. In doing so, one sketches a "Life of Jesus"; and innumerable such sketches have been made. In many of them scientific honesty, loving devotion, and theological interest have worked together. In others critical detachment and even malevolent rejection are visible. But none can claim to be a probable picture which is the result of the tremendous scientific toil dedicated to this task for two hundred

years. At best, they are more or less probable results, able to be the basis neither of an acceptance nor of a rejection of the Christian faith.

In view of this situation, there have been attempts to reduce the picture of the historical Jesus to the "essentials," to elaborate a ***Gestalt*** while leaving the particulars open to doubt. But this is not a way out. Historical research cannot paint an essential picture after all the particular traits have been eliminated because they are questionable. It remains dependent on the particulars. Consequently, the pictures of the historical Jesus in which the form of a "Life of Jesus" is wisely avoided still differ from one another as much as those in which such self-restriction is not applied.

The dependence of the ***Gestalt*** on the valuation of the particulars is evident in an example taken from the complex of what Jesus thought about himself. In order to elaborate this point, one must know, besides many other things, whether he applied the title "Son of Man" to himself and, if so, in what sense. Every answer given to this question is a more or less probable hypothesis, but the character of the "essential" picture of the historical Jesus depends decisively on this hypothesis. Such an example clearly shows the impossibility of replacing the attempt to portray a "Life of Jesus" by trying to paint the ***"Gestalt*** of Jesus."

At the same time, this example shows another important point. People who are not familiar with the methodological side of historical research and are afraid of its consequences for Christian doctrine like to attack historical research generally and the research in the biblical literature especially, as being theologically prejudiced. If they are consistent, they will not deny that their own interpretation is also prejudiced or, as they would say, dependent on the truth of their faith. But they deny that the historical method has objective scientific criteria. Such an assertion, however, cannot be maintained in view of the immense historical material which has been discovered and often empirically verified by a universally used method of research. It is characteristic of this method that it tries to maintain a permanent self-criticism in order to liberate itself from any conscious or unconscious prejudice. This is never completely successful, but it is a powerful weapon and necessary for achieving historical knowledge.

One of the examples often given in this context is the treatment of the New Testament miracles. The historical method approaches the

miracle stories neither with the assumption that they have happened because they are attributed to him who is called the Christ nor with the assumption that they have not happened because such events would contradict the laws of nature. The historical method asks how trustworthy the records are in every particular case, how dependent they are on older sources, how much they might be influenced by the credulity of a period, how well confirmed they are by other independent sources, in what style they are written, and for what purpose they are used in the whole context. All these questions can be answered in an "objective" way without necessary interference of negative or positive prejudices. The historian never can reach certainty in this way, but he can reach high degrees of probability. It would, however, be a leap to another level if he transformed historical probability into positive or negative historical certainty by a judgment of faith (as will be shown at a later point). This clear distinction is often confused by the obvious fact that the understanding of the meaning of a text is partly dependent on the categories of understanding used in the encounter with texts and records. But it is not wholly dependent on them, since there are philological as well as other aspects which are open to an objective approach. Understanding demands one's participation in what one understands, and we can participate only in terms of what we are, including our own categories of understanding. But this "existential" understanding should never prejudice the judgment of the historian concerning facts and relations. The person whose ultimate concern is the content of the biblical message is in the same position as the one who is indifferent to it if such questions are discussed as the development of the Synoptic tradition, or the mythological and legendary elements of the New Testament. Both have the same criteria of historical probability and must use them with the same rigor, although doing so may affect their own religious or philosophical convictions or prejudices. In this process, it may happen that prejudices which close the eyes to particular facts open them to others. But this "opening of the eyes" is a personal experience which cannot be made into a methodological principle. There is only one methodological procedure, and that is to look at the subject matter and not at one's own looking at the subject matter. Actually, such looking is determined by many psychological, sociological, and historical factors. These aspects must be neglected intentionally by everyone who approaches a fact objectively. One must not formulate

a judgment about the self-consciousness of Jesus from the fact that one is a Christian--or an anti-Christian. It must be derived from a degree of plausibility based on records and their probable historical validity. This, of course, presupposes that the content of the Christian faith is independent of this judgment.

The search for the historical Jesus was an attempt to discover a minimum of reliable facts about the man Jesus of Nazareth, in order to provide a safe foundation for the Christian faith. This attempt was a failure. Historical research provided probabilities about Jesus of a higher or lower degree. On the basis of these probabilities, it sketched "Lives of Jesus." But they were more like novels than biographies; they certainly could not provide a safe foundation for the Christian faith. Christianity is not based on the acceptance of a historical novel; it is based on the witness to the messianic character of Jesus by people who were not interested at all in a biography of the Messiah.

The insight into this situation induced some theologians to give up any attempt to construct a "life" or a Gestalt of the historical Jesus and to restrict themselves to an interpretation of the "words of Jesus." Most of these words (though not all of them) do not refer to himself and can be separated from any biographical context. Therefore, their meaning is independent of the fact that he may or may not have said them. On that basis the insoluble biographical problem has no bearing on the truth of the words rightly or wrongly recorded as the words of Jesus. That most of the words of Jesus have parallels in contemporaneous Jewish literature is not an argument against their validity. This is not even an argument against their uniqueness and power as they appear in collections like the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, and the discussions with foes and followers alike.[1]

A theology which tries to make the words of Jesus into the historical foundation of the Christian faith can do so in two ways. It can treat the words of Jesus as the "teachings of Jesus" or as the "message of Jesus." As the teachings of Jesus, they are understood as refined interpretations of the natural law or as original insights into the nature of man. They have no relation to the concrete situation in which they are spoken. As such, they belong to the law, prophecy, or Wisdom litera-

1 This refers also to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which-in spite of much sensationalism in the publicity given to it-has opened the eyes of many people to the problem of biblical research but which has not changed the theological situation at all.

ture such as is found in the Old Testament. They may transcend all three categories in terms of depth and power; but they do not transcend them in terms of character. The retreat in historical research to the "teachings of Jesus" reduces Jesus to the level of the Old Testament and implicitly denies his claim to have overcome the Old Testament context.

The second way in which historical research restricts itself to the words of Jesus is more profound than the first. It denies that the words of Jesus are general rules of human behavior, that they are rules to which one has to subject one's self, or that they are universal and can therefore be abstracted from the situation in which they were spoken. Instead, they emphasize Jesus' message that the Kingdom of God is "at hand" and that those who want to enter it must decide for or against the Kingdom of God. These words of Jesus are not general rules but concrete demands. This interpretation of the historical Jesus, suggested especially by Rudolf Bultmann, identifies the meaning of Jesus with that of his message. He calls for a decision, namely, the decision for God. And this decision includes the acceptance of the Cross, by his own acceptance of the Cross. The historically impossible, namely, to sketch a "life" or a *Gestalt* of Jesus, is ingeniously avoided by using the immediately given-namely, his message about the Kingdom of God and its conditions-and by keeping as nearly as possible to the "paradox of the Cross of the Christ." But even this method of restricted historical judgment cannot give a foundation to the Christian faith. It does not show how the requirement of deciding for the Kingdom of God can be fulfilled. The situation of having to decide remains one of being under the law. It does not transcend the Old Testament situation, the situation of the quest for the Christ. One could call this theology "existentialist liberalism" in contrast to the "legalist liberalism" of the first. But neither method can answer the question of wherein lies the power to obey the teachings of Jesus or to make the decision for the Kingdom of God. This these methods cannot do because the answer must come from a new reality, which, according to the Christian message, is the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. The Cross is the symbol of a gift before it is the symbol of a demand. But, if this is accepted, it is impossible to retreat from the being of the Christ to his words. The last avenue of the search for the historical Jesus is barred, and the failure of the attempt to give a foundation to the Christian faith through historical research becomes obvious.

This result would probably have been more easily acknowledged if it had not been for the semantic confusion about the meaning of the term "historical Jesus." The term was predominantly used for the results of historical research into the character and life of the person who stands behind the Gospel reports. Like all historical knowledge, our knowledge of this person is fragmentary and hypothetical. Historical research subjects this knowledge to methodological skepticism and to continuous change in particulars as well as essentials. Its ideal is to reach a high degree of probability, but in many cases this is impossible.

The term "historical Jesus" is also used to mean that the event "Jesus as the Christ" has a factual element. The term in this sense raises the question of faith and not the question of historical research. If the factual element in the Christian event were denied, the foundation of Christianity would be denied. Methodological skepticism about the work of historical research does not deny this element. Faith cannot even guarantee the name "Jesus" in respect to him who was the Christ. It must leave that to the incertitudes of our historical knowledge. But faith does guarantee the factual transformation of reality in that personal life which the New Testament expresses in its picture of Jesus as the Christ. No fruitful and honest discussion is possible if these two meanings of the term "historical Jesus" are not clearly distinguished.

5. Historical Research and Theology

If the attempt to give a foundation to Christian faith and theology through historical research is a failure, the question arises as to whether historical research has other functions in Christianity. It certainly has. The historical approach to biblical literature is one of the great events in the history of Christianity and even of religion and human culture. It is one of the elements of which Protestantism can be proud. It was an expression of Protestant courage when theologians subjected the holy writings of their own church to a critical analysis through the historical method. It appears that no other religion in human history exercised such boldness and took upon itself the same risk. Certainly Islam, orthodox Judaism, and Roman Catholicism did not do so. This courage received its reward, in that Protestantism was able to join the general historical consciousness and was not forced into an isolated and narrow spiritual world without influence in the creative development of spiritual life. Protestantism (except in its fundamentalistic groups)

was not driven into that unconscious dishonesty wherein the results of historical research are rejected on the basis of dogmatic prejudice, not on the basis of evidence. This was a daring attitude and not without serious risk. But the Protestant groups which took this risk have kept alive, in spite of the various crises into which radical historical criticism threw them. It became more and more manifest that the Christian assertion that Jesus is the Christ does not contradict the most uncompromising historical honesty. Of course, the way in which this assertion is expressed has had to be changed under the impact of the historical approach.

The first and most important of these changes is that theology has learned to distinguish between the empirically historical, the legendary, and the mythological elements in the biblical stories of both Testaments. It discovered criteria for these different forms of semantic expression and applied them with the methodological strictness employed by every good historian. It is obvious that this distinction between three semantic forms has important consequences for the work of the systematic theologian. It prevents him from giving dogmatic validity to judgments which belong to the realm of higher or lower probability. If he makes historical decisions, he can do so only as a historian, not as an interpreter of the Christian faith. He cannot give dogmatic validity to historically probable judgments. Whatever faith can do in its own dimension, it cannot overrule historical judgments. It cannot make the historically improbable probable, or the probable improbable, or the probable or improbable certain. The certitude of faith does not imply certainty about questions of historical research. This insight is widespread today and is the greatest contribution of historical research to systematic theology. But it is not the only one; there are several others, one being the insight into the development of the christological symbols.

By analyzing the difference between historical, legendary, and mythical elements in the Gospel reports, historical research has given systematic theology a tool for dealing with the christological symbols of the Bible. Systematic theology cannot escape this task, since it is through these symbols that theology from the very beginning has tried to give the "logos" of the Christian message in order to show its rationality. Some christological symbols used in the New Testament are: Son of David, Son of Man, Heavenly Man, Messiah, Son of God, Kyrios, Logos. There are still others of less significance. They develop in the

following four steps: The first to be mentioned is that these symbols have arisen and grown in their own religious culture and language. The second is the use of these symbols by those to whom they had become alive as expressions of their self-interpretation and as answers to the questions implied in their existential predicament. The third is the transformation that these symbols underwent in meaning when used to interpret the event on which Christianity is based. The fourth is their distortion by popular superstition, supported by theological literalism and supranaturalism. Examples of these four steps in the development of the christological symbols will disclose the validity of this analysis.

The symbol "Son of Man," which is used most frequently by Jesus in pointing to himself in all Four Gospels, designates an original unity between God and man. Especially is this the case if one accepts a connection between the Persian symbol of the Original Man and the Pauline idea of the Spiritual Man. This is the first step delineated above or applied to the symbol "Son of Man." The second one follows from the way in which the Man from Above is contrasted with man's situation of existential estrangement from God, his world, and himself. This contrast includes the expectation that the Son of Man will conquer the forces of estrangement and re-establish the unity between God and man. In the third step the symbol "Son of Man" (or one of the corroborating symbols) is recorded as Jesus applying the term to himself, as, for instance, in the trial scene before the High Priest. The original vision of the function of the Son of Man is decisively transformed in this account. This is so much the case that the accusation of blasphemy for calling himself the Son of Man who will appear as the judge of this eon on the clouds of the sky was understandable. Literalism takes the fourth step by imagining a transcendent being who, once upon a time, was sent down from his heavenly place and transmuted into a man. In this way a true and powerful symbol becomes an absurd story, and the Christ becomes a half-god, a particular being between God and man.

The symbol "Son of God," applied to the Christ, can be dealt with in the same four steps. In biblical language, "sonship" means an intimate relationship between father and son. Man in his essential nature, in his "dreaming innocence," has such a relation to God. Israel has gained it by her election to sonship. In paganism certain divine or half-divine figures are sons of a god. Although these two ways of using the

symbol "Son of God" differ greatly, they have the presupposition in common that human nature makes possible a father-son relation between God and man. But this relation has been lost by man's estrangement from God, by his self-elevation against God, and by his turning away from God. Sonship to God has ceased to be a universal fact. Only special divine acts can reestablish it. Christianity considers the Christ as the "only begotten son of God," thus putting him in contrast to all other men and their natural, although lost, sonship to God. "Son of God" becomes the title of the one in whom the essential unity of God and man has appeared under the conditions of existence. The essentially universal becomes existentially unique. But this uniqueness is not exclusive. Everyone who participates in the New Being actualized in him receives the power of becoming a child of God himself. The son reestablishes the child character of every man in relation to God, a character which is essentially human. This use of the "Son of God" symbol transcends the Jewish as well as the pagan use. Being the Son of God means representing the essential unity between God and man under the conditions of existence and reestablishing this unity in all those who participate in his being. The symbol becomes distorted if it is taken literally and a human family situation is projected into the inner life of the divine. Literalists often ask whether one believes that "Jesus was the Son of God." Those who ask this question think that they know what the term "Son of God" means and that the only problem is whether this known designation can be attributed to the man Jesus of Nazareth. If the question is asked in this way, it cannot be answered, because either an affirmative or a negative answer would be wrong. The only way to answer the question is to ask another one, namely, What do you mean if you use the term "Son of God"? If one receives a literalistic answer to this question, one must reject it as superstitious. If one receives an answer which affirms the symbolic character of the term "Son of God," the meaning of this symbol can then be discussed. Much harm has been done in Christianity by a literalistic understanding of the symbol "Son of God."

We have already dealt with the symbol of "Messiah" or "Christ." But we must reinterpret the symbol in the light of the four steps we have outlined in relation to all christological symbols. The first step points to the historical-transhistorical figure through whom Jahweh will establish his kingdom in Israel and, through Israel, in the whole

world. The oscillation between inner-historical and suprahistorical qualities of the Messiah and his kingdom belongs to the essence of the symbol, but in such a way that in the prophetic period the historical emphasis prevailed and in the apocalyptic period the transhistorical element became decisive. The second step is the experience of man's predicament-and the predicament of his world-in actual existence. The actual kingdoms are full of injustice and misery. They stand under demonic rule. This side of the messianic idea was increasingly emphasized in the later period of Judaism and found a very strong expression in the apocalyptic literature. The present eon in its totality, including individuals, society, and nature, is perverted. A new eon, a new state of things in the universe, must be asked for. It is the Messiah who will bring it with divine power. These motifs are not restricted to Judaism. They have roots in Persia and resound everywhere in the ancient world. The third step is the reception and transformation of this set of symbols by Christianity : the Messiah who is supposed to bring the new eon is defeated by the powers of the old eon. The defeat of the Messiah on the Cross is the most radical transformation of the symbol of the Messiah, so radical that Judaism up to the present day denies the messianic character of Jesus just for this reason. A defeated Messiah is not a Messiah at all. Christianity acknowledges the paradox—and accepts it. The fourth step is the literalistic distortion of the messianic paradox. It starts with the way in which the title "the Christ" became a part of a proper name and ceased to be the symbolic designation of a function. "Christ" became an individual with supranatural powers who, through a voluntary sacrifice, made it possible for God to save those who believe in him. The paradox of the transformed messianic symbol disappeared.

The last example for the development of the christological symbols is that conceptual symbol which became the main tool for the christological work of the church, "the Logos." It can be called a conceptual symbol because the Logos, as conceived by Stoicism, unites cosmological and religious elements. It unites rational structure and creative power. In Philo and the Fourth Gospel the religious and symbolic quality of the idea of the Logos prevails. But the rational side does not disappear. The rational structure of the universe is mediated through the Logos. This is the first step in the consideration of the symbol of the Logos. In the second the existential background of this idea must

be considered. The answer is given by Heraclitus (the creator of the Logos doctrine) when he contrasts the universal logos and its laws with the foolishness of the people and the disorder in society. Stoicism took over this motif and pointed to the unbridgeable gap between the wise one who participates in the Logos and the mass of fools who are separated from, but try to come nearer to, the Logos. In Philo the motif is the unapproachable mystery of God which demands a mediating principle between God and man and drives him to his Logos doctrine. In Christianity-following the Fourth Gospel-both motifs are present. The Logos reveals the mystery and reunites the estranged by appearing as a historical reality in a personal life. And this is the third step in our consideration. The conceptual symbol of the Logos is received and transformed by Christianity. The universal principle of divine self-manifestation is, in its essential character, qualitatively present in an individual human being. He subjects himself to the conditions of existence and conquers existential estrangement within estranged existence. Participation in the universal Logos is dependent on participation in the Logos actualized in a historical personality. Christianity replaces the wise man of Stoicism with the Spiritual man. The Spiritual man is aware of his foolishness as overcome by the foolishness of the Cross, the paradox of him in whom the Logos was present without restriction. Here also a fourth step must be considered, the re-mythologization of the conceptual symbol "Logos" into the story of the metamorphosis of a divine being into the man Jesus of Nazareth. The term "Incarnation" is often misunderstood in this way, and some pictorial or artistic expressions of Trinitarian symbolism support such remythologization by identifying the universal principle of the divine self-manifestation with the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Traditional theology protested against this mythologizing by rejecting the absurd idea that the Logos element was lacking in divine life when the Logos was in history. Against such absurdities a demythologization of the symbol of the Logos has been and must be exercised.

Historical criticism is largely responsible for our understanding of the development of christological symbols. They can be used again by theology, for they are liberated from literalistic connotations which made them useless for theology and an unnecessary stumbling block for those who wanted to understand the meaning of the Christian symbols.

This is one of the great indirect contributions of scientific research to theology and faith. Neither faith nor theology is based on these insights, but both are protected by them against superstition and absurdity.

6. Faith and Historical Skepticism

The preceding evaluation of the historical approach to the biblical records led to a negative and a positive assertion. The negative assertion is that historical research can neither give nor take away the foundation of the Christian faith. The positive assertion is that historical research has influenced and must influence Christian theology, first, by giving an analysis of the three different semantic levels of biblical literature (and, analogously, of Christian preaching in all periods); second, by showing in several steps the development of the christological symbols (as well as the other systematically important symbols); and, finally, by providing a precise philological and historical understanding of the biblical literature by means of the best methods developed in all historical work.

But it is necessary systematically to raise once more a question which is continuously being asked with considerable religious anxiety. Does not the acceptance of the historical method for dealing with the source documents of the Christian faith introduce a dangerous insecurity into the thought and life of the church and of every individual Christian? Could not historical research lead to a complete skepticism about the biblical records? Is it not imaginable that historical criticism could come to the judgment that the man Jesus of Nazareth never lived? Did not some scholars, though only a few and not very important ones, make just this statement? And even if such a statement can never be made with certainty, is it not destructive for the Christian faith if the nonexistence of Jesus can somehow be made probable, no matter how low the degree of probability? In reply, let us first reject some insufficient and misleading answers. It is inadequate to point out that historical research has not yet given any evidence to support such skepticism. Certainly, it has not yet! But the anxious question remains of whether it could not do so sometime in the future! Faith cannot rest on such unsure ground. The answer, taken from the "not-yet" of skeptical evidence, is insufficient. There is another possible answer, which, though not false, is misleading. This is to say that the historical foundation of Christianity is an essential element of the Christian faith it-

self and that this faith, through its own power, can overrule skeptical possibilities within historical criticism. It can, it is maintained, guarantee the existence of Jesus of Nazareth and at least the essentials in the biblical picture. But we must analyze this answer carefully, for it is ambiguous. The problem is: Exactly what can faith guarantee? And the inevitable answer is that faith can guarantee only its own foundation, namely, the appearance of that reality which has created the faith. This reality is the New Being, who conquers existential estrangement and thereby makes faith possible. This alone faith is able to guarantee-and that because its own existence is identical with the presence of the New Being. Faith itself is the immediate (not mediated by conclusions) evidence of the New Being within and under the conditions of existence. Precisely that is guaranteed by the very nature of the Christian faith. No historical criticism can question the immediate awareness of those who find themselves transformed into the state of faith. One is reminded of the Augustinian-Cartesian refutation of radical skepticism. That tradition pointed to the immediacy of a self-consciousness which guaranteed itself by its participation in being. By analogy, one must say that participation, not historical argument, guarantees the reality of the event upon which Christianity is based. It guarantees a personal life in which the New Being has conquered the old being. But it does not guarantee his name to be Jesus of Nazareth. Historical doubt concerning the existence and the life of someone with this name cannot be overruled. He might have had another name. (This is a historically absurd, but logically necessary, consequence of the historical method.) Whatever his name, the New Being was and is actual in this man.

But here a very important question arises. How can the New Being who is called "the Christ" transform reality if no concrete trait of his nature is left? Kierkegaard exaggerates when he says that it is sufficient for the Christian faith nakedly to assert that in the years l-30 God sent his son. Without the concreteness of the New Being, its newness would be empty. Only if existence is conquered concretely and in its manifold aspects, is it actually conquered. The power which has created and preserved the community of the New Being is not an abstract statement about its appearance; it is the picture of him in whom it has appeared. No special trait of this picture can be verified with certainty. But it can be definitely asserted that through this picture the New Being has power to transform those who are transformed by it. This implies that

there is an *analogia imaginis,* namely, an analogy between the picture and the actual personal life from which it has arisen. It was this reality, when encountered by the disciples, which created the picture. And it was, and still is, this picture which mediates the transforming power of the New Being. One can compare the *analogia imaginis* suggested here with the *analogia entis*—not as a method of knowing God but as a way (actually the only way) of speaking of God. In both cases it is impossible to push behind the analogy and to state directly what can be stated only indirectly, that is, symbolically in the knowledge of God and mediated through faith in the knowledge of Jesus. But this indirect, symbolic, and mediated character of our knowledge does not diminish its truth-value. For in both cases what is given to us as material for our indirect knowledge is dependent on the object of our knowledge. The symbolic material through which we speak about God is an expression of the divine self-manifestation, and the mediated material which is given to us in the biblical picture of the Christ is the result of the reception of the New Being and its transforming power on the part of the first witnesses. The concrete biblical material is not guaranteed by faith in respect to empirical factuality; but it is guaranteed as an adequate expression of the transforming power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. Only in this sense does faith guarantee the biblical picture of Jesus. And it can be shown that, in all periods of the history of the church, it was this picture which created both the church and the Christian, and not a hypothetical description of what may lie behind the biblical picture. But the picture has this creative power, because the power of the New Being is expressed in and through it. This consideration leads to the distinction between an imaginary picture and a real picture. A picture imagined by the same contemporaries of Jesus would have expressed their untransformed existence and their quest for a New Being. But it would not have been the New Being itself. That is tested by its transforming power.

The word "picture" may lead to another analogy. Those who try to push behind the biblical picture to discover the "historical Jesus" with the help of the critical method try to provide a photograph (corroborated by a phonograph and, if possible, a psychograph). A good photograph is not without subjective elements, and no one would deny that every empirical description of a historical figure has such elements. The opposite attitude would be to interpret the New Testament picture as

the painted projection of the experiences and ideals of the most religiously profound minds in the period of the Emperor Augustus. The idealistic style of art is analogous to this attitude. The third way is that of an "expressionist" portrait ("expressionist" used in the sense of the predominant artistic style in most periods of history-rediscovered in our period). In this approach a painter would try to enter into the deepest levels of the person with whom he deals. And he could do so only by a profound participation in the reality and the meaning of his subject matter. Only then could he paint this person in such a way that his surface traits are neither reproduced as in photography (or naturalistically imitated) nor idealized according to the painter's ideal of beauty but are used to express what the painter has experienced through his participation in the being of his subject. This third way is meant when we use the term "real picture" with reference to the Gospel records of Jesus as the Christ. With Adolf Schlatter we can say that we know nobody as well as Jesus. In contrast to all other persons, the participation in him takes place not in the realm of contingent human individuality (which can never be approached completely by any other individual) but in the realm of his own participation in God, a participation which, in spite of the mystery of every person's relation to God, has a universality in which everyone can participate. Of course, in terms of historical documentation we do know many people better than Jesus. But in terms of personal participation in his being, we do not know anyone better because his being is the New Being which is universally valid for every human being.

A very interesting argument against the position taken here must be mentioned. It is based on the common assumption that faith, by its very nature, includes an element of risk and on the question asked by this argument: Why not take the risk of historical uncertainty as well? The affirmation that Jesus is the Christ is an act of faith and consequently of daring courage. It is not an arbitrary leap into darkness but a decision in which elements of immediate participation and therefore certitude are mixed with elements of strangeness and therefore incertitude and doubt. But doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith. Therefore, there is no faith without risk. The risk of faith is that it could affirm a wrong symbol of ultimate concern, a symbol which does not really express ultimacy (as, e.g., Dionysus or one's nation). But this risk lies in quite a different dimension from the risk of

accepting uncertain historical facts. It is wrong, therefore, to consider the risk concerning uncertain historical facts as part of the risk of faith. The risk of faith is existential; it concerns the totality of our being, while the risk of historical judgments is theoretical and open to permanent scientific correction. Here are two different dimensions which should never be confused. A wrong faith can destroy the meaning of one's life; a wrong historical judgment cannot. It is misleading, therefore, to use the word "risk" for both dimensions in the same sense.

7. The Biblical Witness to Jesus as the Christ

In all respects the New Testament is the document wherein there appears the picture of Jesus as the Christ in its original and basic form. All other documents, from the Apostolic Fathers to the writings of the present-day theologians, are dependent upon this original document. In itself the New Testament is an integral part of the event which it documents. The New Testament represents the receptive side of that event and provides, as such, a witness to its factual side. If this is true, one can say that the New Testament as a whole is the basic document of the event upon which the Christian faith rests. In this respect the several parts of the New Testament agree. In other respects there is much difference. All New Testament books are united, however, in the assertion that Jesus is the Christ. It was the desire of so-called ***liberal theology*** to go behind the biblical records of Jesus as the Christ. In such an attempt the first three Gospels emerge as by far the most important part of the New Testament, and this is what they became in the estimation of many modern theologians. But the moment when one realizes that the Christian faith cannot be built on such a foundation, the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles become equally important with the Synoptics. One then sees that there is no conflict between them in their one decisive point of pronouncing Jesus as the Christ. The difference beteween the Synoptic Gospels and the other literature of the New Testament-including the Fourth Gospel-is that the former give the picture on which the assertion that Jesus is ***the*** Christ is based, while the latter give the elaboration of this assertion and its implications for Christian thought and life. This distinction is not exclusive, for it is a difference in emphasis, not in substance. Harnack was wrong, therefore, when he contrasted the message given by Jesus with the message about Jesus. There is no substantial difference

between the message given by the Synoptic Jesus and the message about Jesus given in Paul's Epistles. This statement is independent of the attempts of liberal theology to deprive the first three Gospels of all Pauline elements. Historical criticism can do that with a certain degree of probability. But the more successfully this is done, the less remains of the Synoptic picture of Jesus as the Christ. This picture and Paul's message of the Christ do not contradict each other. The New Testament witness is unanimous in its witness to Jesus as the Christ. This witness is the foundation of the Christian church.

B. THE NEW BEING IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST

1. The New Being and the New Eon

According to eschatological symbolism, the Christ is the one who brings the new eon. When Peter called Jesus "the Christ," he expected the coming of a new state of things through him. This expectation is implicit in the title "Christ." But it was not fulfilled in accordance with the expectations of the disciples. The state of things, of nature as well as of history, remained unchanged, and he who was supposed to bring the new eon was destroyed by the powers of the old eon. This meant that the disciples either had to accept the breakdown of their hope or radically transform its content. They were able to choose the second way by identifying the New Being with the being of Jesus, the sacrificed. In the Synoptic records Jesus himself reconciled the messianic claim with the acceptance of a violent death. The same records show that the disciples resisted this combination. Only the experiences which are described as Easter and Pentecost created their faith in the paradoxical character of the messianic claim. It was Paul who gave the theological frame in which the paradox could be understood and justified. One approach to the solution of the problem was to state the distinction between the first and the second coming of the Christ. The new state of things will be created with the second coming, the return of the Christ in glory. In the period between the first and the second coming the New Being is present in him. He *is* the Kingdom of God. In him the eschatological expectation is fulfilled in principle. Those who participate in him participate in the New Being, though under the condition of man's existential predicament and, therefore, only fragmentarily and by anticipation.

New Being is essential being under the conditions of existence, conquering the gap between essence and existence. For the same idea Paul uses the term "new creature," calling those who are "in" Christ "new creatures." "In" is the preposition of participation; he who participates in the newness of being which is in Christ has become a new creature. It is a creative act by which this happens. Inasmuch as Jesus as the Christ is a creation of the divine Spirit, according to Synoptic theology, so is he who participates in the Christ made into a new creature by the Spirit. The estrangement of his existential from his essential being is conquered in principle, i.e., in power and as a beginning. The term "New Being," as used here, points directly to the cleavage between essential and existential being-and is the restorative principle of the whole of this theological system. The New Being is new in so far as it is the undistorted manifestation of essential being within and under the conditions of existence. It is new in two respects: it is new in contrast to the merely potential character of essential being; and it is new over against the estranged character of existential being. It is actual, conquering the estrangement of actual existence.

There are other ways of expressing the same idea. The New Being is new in so far as it is the conquest of the situation under the law—which is the old situation. The law is man's essential being standing against his existence, commanding and judging it. In so far as his essential being is taken into his existence and actualized in it, the law has ceased to be law for him. Where there is New Being, there is no commandment and no judgment. If, therefore, we call Jesus as the Christ the New Being, we say with Paul that the Christ is the end of the law.

In terms of the eschatological symbolism it can also be said that Christ is the end of existence. He is the end of existence lived in estrangement, conflicts, and self-destruction. The biblical idea that the hope of mankind for a new reality is fulfilled in Jesus as the Christ is an immediate consequence of the assertion that in him the New Being is present. His appearance is "realized eschatology" (Dodd). Of course, it is fulfilment "in principle," it is the manifestation of the power and the beginning of fulfilment. But it is realized eschatology in so far as no other principle of fulfilment can be expected. In him has appeared what fulfilment qualitatively means.

With the same qualification, one can say that in him history has come to an end, namely, that its preparatory period has reached its aim. Nothing qualitatively new in the dimension of the ultimate can be pro-

duced by history which is not implicitly present in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. The assertion that the Christ is the "end" of history seems to be absurd in the light of the history of the last two thousand years. But it is not absurd if one understands the double sense of "end," namely, "finish" and "aim." In the sense of "finish," history has not yet come to an end. It goes on and shows all the characteristics of existential estrangement. It is the place in which finite freedom is at work, producing existential distortion and the great ambiguities of life. In the sense of "aim," history has come to an intrinsic end qualitatively, namely, in the appearance of the New Being as a historical reality. But, quantitatively considered, the actualization of the New Being within history is drawn into the distortions and ambiguities of man's historical predicament. This oscillation between "already" and "not yet" is the experience which is symbolized in the tension between the first and second comings of the Christ; it belongs inseparably to the Christian existence.

2. The New Being Appearing in a Personal Life

The New Being has appeared in a personal life, and for humanity it could not have appeared in any other way; for the potentialities of being are completely actual in personal life alone. Only a person, within our experience, is a fully developed self, confronting a world to which it belongs at the same time. Only in a person are the polarities of being complete. Only a person is completely individualized, and for just this reason he is able to participate without limits in his world. Only a person has an unlimited power of self-transcendence, and for just this reason he has the complete structure, the structure of rationality. Only a person has freedom, including all its characteristics, and for just this reason he alone has destiny. Only the person is finite freedom, which gives him the power of contradicting himself and returning to himself. Of no other being can all this be said. And only in such a being can the New Being appear. Only where existence is most radically existence-in him who is finite freedom-can existence be conquered.

But what happens to man happens implicitly to all realms of life, for in man all levels of being are present. He belongs to physical, biological, and psychological realms and is subject to their manifold degrees and the various relations between them. For this reason the philosophers of the Renaissance called man the "microcosmos." He is a universe in himself. What happens in him happens, therefore, by mutual universal participation. This, of course, is said in qualitative, not quantitative terms. Quantitatively speaking, the universe is largely indifferent to what happens in man. Qualitatively speaking, nothing happens in man that does not have a bearing on the elements which constitute the universe. This gives cosmic significance to the person and confirms the insight that only in a personal life can the New Being manifest itself.

3. The Expressions of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ

Jesus as the Christ is the bearer of the New Being in the totality of his being, not in any special expressions of it. It is his being that makes him the Christ because his being has the quality of the New Being beyond the split of essential and existential being. From this it follows that neither his words, deeds, or sufferings nor what is called his "inner life" make him the Christ. They are all expressions of the New Being, which is the quality of his being, and this, his being, precedes and transcends all its expressions. This assertion can serve as a critical tool against several inadequate ways of describing his character as the Christ.

The first expression of the being of Jesus as the Christ is his words. The word is the bearer of spiritual life. The importance of the spoken word for the religion of the New Testament cannot be overestimated. The words of Jesus, to cite but two examples of many, are called "words of eternal life," and discipleship is made dependent upon "holding to his words." And he himself is called "the Word." It is just this last instance that shows it is not his words which make him the Christ but his being. This is metaphorically called "the Word" because it is the final self-manifestation of God to humanity. His being, which is called "the Word," expresses itself *also* in his words. But, as the Word, he is more than all the words he has spoken. This assertion is the basic criticism of a theology which separates the words of Jesus from his being and makes him into a teacher, preacher, or prophet. This theological tendency, as old as the church, is represented by ancient and modern rationalism. It came to the foreground in the so-called "liberal theology" of the nineteenth century. But its theological significance is surpassed by its influence on the popular mind. It plays a tremendous role in the piety of daily life, particularly in those groups for whom Christianity has become a system of conventional rules commanded by a divine

teacher. In educational contexts particularly, one speaks of "the teachings of Jesus" and makes them the basis for religious instruction. This is not necessarily wrong, because the term "teaching of Jesus"-better used in the singular-can cover his prophetic message of the presence of the Kingdom of God within himself. Ordinarily, the term is used (mostly in the plural) for doctrinal statements of Jesus about God, man, and, above all, what is demanded of man. If used in this sense, the term "the teachings of Jesus," makes him into another person, who gives doctrinal and ethical laws. This view is obviously a relapse to the legalistic type of self-salvation, the appearance of the New Being in the Christ. It is the replacement of Jesus as the Christ by the religious and moral teacher called Jesus of Nazareth. Against such theology and its popularized application, one must hold to the principle that "being precedes speaking." The words of Jesus have the power to create the New Being only because Jesus as the Christ *is* the Word, and only in the power of the New Being can his words be transformed into reality.

The second expression of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is his deeds. They also have been separated from his being and made into examples to be imitated. He is not considered to be a lawgiver but as himself being the new law. There is much justification for this idea. If Jesus as the Christ represents the essential unity between God and man appearing under the conditions of existential estrangement, every human being is, by this very fact, asked to take on the "form of the Christ." Being Christlike means participating fully in the New Being present in him. In this sense the Christ *is* the new law, and equality with him is implictly demanded. But if this is interpreted as the command to imitate the Christ, wrong consequences are inescapable. *Imitatio Christi* is often understood as the attempt to transform one's life into a copy of the life of Jesus, including the concrete traits of the biblical picture. But this contradicts the meaning of these traits as parts of his being within the picture of Jesus the Christ. These traits are supposed to make translucent the New Being, which is his being. As such, they point beyond their contingent character and are not instances to imitate. If they are used in this way, they lose their transparency and become ritualistic or ascetic prescriptions. If the word "imitation" is used at all in this context, it should indicate that we, in our concreteness, are asked to participate in the New Being and to be transformed

by it, not beyond, but within, the contingencies of our life. Not his actions but the being out of which his actions come makes him the Christ. If he is understood as the new law and the object of imitation, it is almost unavoidable that the new law will take on the character of copying or of imitation. Protestantism, therefore, rightly hesitated to use these terms after their patent abuse in Roman Catholicism. And Protestantism should resist pietistic and revivalist attempts to reintroduce those elements which separate the actions of the Christ from his being.

The third expression of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is his suffering. It includes his violent death and is a consequence of the inescapable conflict between the forces of existential estrangement and the bearer of that by which existence is conquered. Only by taking suffering and death upon himself could Jesus be the Christ, because only in this way could he participate completely in existence and conquer every force of estrangement which tried to dissolve his unity with God. The significance of the Cross in the New Testament picture of Jesus as the Christ induced orthodox theologians to separate both suffering and death from his being and to make these his decisive function as the Christ within the frame of a sacrificial theory. This is partially justifiable; for, without the continuous sacrifice of himself as a particular individual under the conditions of existence to himself as the bearer of the New Being, he could not have been the Christ. He proves and confirms his character as the Christ in the sacrifice of himself as Jesus to himself as the Christ. But it is not justifiable to separate this sacrificial function from his being, of which it is actually an expression. It has, however, been done in theories of atonement, such as that of Anselm of Canterbury. The sacrificial death of the Christ is, for him, the *opus supererogatorium* which makes it possible for God to overcome the conflict between his love and his wrath. This is not the place to deal with the Anselmian theory of atonement as such; but we must deal with the consequences which that theory has for the interpretation of Christ. His "divine nature" is always presupposed, and in this sense his character as the bearer of the New Being is affirmed (in terms of the christological dogma). But his being is treated only as a presupposition of his death and of its effect on God and man. It is not treated as the significant factor, as that which makes him the Christ and as that of which the necessary consequences are suffering and death. The suffering on the Cross is not something additional which

can be separated from the appearance of the eternal God-Manhood under the conditions of existence; it is an inescapable implication of this appearance. Like his words and his deeds, the suffering of Jesus as the Christ is an expression of the New Being in him. It is an astonishing abstraction when Anselm states that Jesus owed God active obedience but not suffering and death-as if the unity between God and the Christ could have been maintained under the conditions of existential estrangement without the continuous acceptance of his suffering and having to die.

With these considerations in mind, we must evaluate the rationalistic separation of the *words* of Jesus from his being, the pietistic separation of his *deeds* from his being, and the orthodox separation of the *suffering* of Jesus from his being. We must understand his being as the New Being and its expressions as manifestations of him as the Christ.

An attempt to think along this line was made by theologians such as W. Herrmann, who tried to penetrate into the inner life of Jesus, into his relation to God, men, and himself. It has been done in connection with the search for the "historical Jesus." It is certainly justifiable to say that if the New Being is actualized in a personal life, it is actual in those movements which cannot be externalized, even though they influence all expressions of the person. The only way of approaching the inner life of a person is through conclusions drawn from these expressions. Such conclusions are always questionable and especially so in the case of Jesus. This is so not only because of the character of our records but also because the uniqueness of his being makes conclusions from analogy extremely doubtful. Significantly, the biblical reports about Jesus do not psychologize. More correctly, one could say that they ontologize. They speak about the divine Spirit in him or about his unity with the Father. They speak about his resistance to demonic temptations, about his patient, yet critical, love toward disciples and sinners. They speak of his experience of loneliness and of meaninglessness and of his anxiety about the violent death which threatened him. But all this is neither psychology nor the description of a character structure. Nor is it an attempt to penetrate into the inner life of Jesus. Our records do not give a psychological description of his development, piety, or inner conflicts. They show only the presence of the New Being in him under the conditions of existence. Of course, everything that happens in a person happens in and through his psychological

structure. But, by recording his anxiety about having to die, the New Testament writers show his total participation in human finitude. Not only do they show the expression of a special form of anxiety, but they also show his conquest of anxiety. And, without that conquest, he could not have been the Messiah. In all cases it is an occasion of the encounter of the New Being with the forces of estrangement, not some specific psychological behavior which is involved. The attempt, then, to penetrate into the inner life of Jesus in order to describe his messianic qualities must be considered a failure, although it is an attempt to deal directly with the New Being in Jesus as the Christ.

At this point it may be recalled that the term "being," when applied to God as an initial statement about him, was interpreted as the "power of being" or, negatively expressed, as the power to resist non-being. In an analogous way the term "New Being," when applied to Jesus as the Christ, points to the power in him which conquers existential estrangement or, negatively expressed, to the power of resisting the forces of estrangement. To experience the New Being in Jesus as the Christ means to experience the power in him which has conquered existential estrangement in himself and in everyone who participates in him. "Being," if used for God or divine manifestations, is the power of being or, negatively expressed, the power of conquering non-being. The word "being" points to the fact that this power is not a matter of someone's good will but that it is a gift which precedes or determines the character of every act of the will. In this sense, one can say that the concept of the New Being reestablishes the meaning of grace. While "realism" was in danger of misinterpreting grace in a magical form, "nominalism" was in danger of completely losing the concept of grace. Without an understanding of "being" and "the power of being," it is impossible to speak meaningfully of grace.

4. The New Being in Jesus as the Christ as the Conquest of Estrangement

a) The New Being in the Christ and the marks of estrangement.— In all its concrete details the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ confirms his character as the bearer of the New Being or as the one in whom the conflict between the essential unity of God and man and man's existential estrangement is overcome. Point by point, not only in the Gospel records but also in the Epistles, this picture of Jesus as the

Christ contradicts the marks of estrangement which we have elaborated in the analysis of man's existential predicament. This is not surprising, since the analysis was partly dependent on the confrontation of man's existential predicament with the image of the New Being in the Christ.

According to the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ, there are, in spite of all tensions, no traces of estrangement between him and God and consequently between him and himself and between him and his world (in its essential nature). The paradoxical character of his being consists in the fact that, although he has only finite freedom under the conditions of time and space, he is not estranged from the ground of his being. There are no traces of unbelief, namely, the removal of his personal center from the divine center which is the subject of his infinite concern. Even in the extreme situation of despair about his messianic work, he cries to his God who has forsaken him. In the same way the biblical picture shows no trace of *hubris* or self-elevation in spite of his awareness of his messianic vocation. In the critical moment in which Peter first calls him the Christ, he combines the acceptance of this title with the acceptance of his violent death, including the warning to his disciples not to make his messianic function public. This is equally emphasized in Paul's christological hymn, Philippians, chapter 2, where he combines the divine form of the transcendent Christ with the acceptance of the form of a servant. The Fourth Gospel provides the theological foundation for this in the passage ascribed to Jesus: "He who believes in me does not believe in me, but in Him who has sent me." Nor is there any trace of concupiscence in the picture. This point is stressed in the story of the temptation in the desert. Here the desires for food, acknowledgment, and unlimited power are used by Satan as the possible weak spots in the Christ. As the Messiah, he could fulfil these desires. But then he would have been demonic and would have ceased to be the Christ.

The conquest of estrangement by the New Being in Jesus as the Christ should not be described in the term "the sinlessness of Jesus." This is a negative term and is used in the New Testament merely to show his victory over the messianic temptation (Letter to the Hebrews) to set forth the dignity of him who is the Christ in refusing to sacrifice himself by subjection to the destructive consequences of estrangement. There is, in fact, no enumeration of special sins which he did not commit, nor is there a day-by-day description of the ambiguities of life in

which he proved to be unambiguously good. He rejects the term "good" as applicable to himself in isolation from God and puts the problem in the right place, namely, the uniqueness of his relation to God. His goodness is goodness only in so far as he participates in the goodness of God. Jesus, like every man, is finite freedom. Without that, he would not be equal with mankind and could not be the Christ. God alone is above freedom and destiny. In him alone the tensions of this and all other polarities are eternally conquered; in Jesus they are actual. The term "sinlessness" is a rationalization of the biblical picture of him who has conquered the forces of existential estrangement within existence. As early as in the New Testament, such rationalizations appear in several places, as, for example, in some miracle stories-the story of the empty tomb, the virgin birth, the bodily ascendance, etc. Whether it appears in stories or concepts, their character is always the same. Something positive is affirmed concerning the Christ (and, later on, of other biblical figures) and is interpreted in terms of negations which, in principle, are open to empirical verification. In this way a religious statement of existential-symbolic character is transformed into a theoretical statement of rational-objectifying character.

The biblical picture is thoroughly positive in showing a threefold emphasis : first, the complete finitude of the Christ; second, the reality of the temptations growing out of it; third, the victory over these temptations in so far as the defeat in them would have disrupted his relation to God and ruined his messianic vocation. Beyond these three points, which are based on the actual experience of the disciples, no inquiry is possible and meaningful, and especially not if sin is used in the singular, as it should be.

b) The reality of the temptations of Christ.-Since Jesus as the Christ is finite freedom, he also confronts real temptation. Possibility is itself temptation. And Jesus would not represent the essential unity between God and man (Eternal God-Manhood) without the possibility of real temptation. A monophysitic tendency, which runs through all church history, including theologians and popular Christianity, has tacitly led many to deny that the temptations of the Christ were serious. They could not tolerate the full humanity of Jesus as the Christ, his finite freedom, and, with it, the possibility of defeat in temptation. Unintentionally, they deprived Jesus of his real finitude and attributed a divine transcendence to him above freedom and destiny. The church

was right, though never fully successful, in resisting the monophysitic distortion of the picture of Jesus as the Christ.

However, if one accepts the affirmation that the biblical story points to serious temptations, one must face a problem which is important for the doctrine of man generally, including the doctrine of the transition from essence to existence. Man's fall from dreaming innocence to self-actualization and estrangement poses the same anthropological problem as the victory of Christ over existential estrangement. One must ask: Under what conditions is a temptation serious? Is not one of the conditions an actual desire toward that which has the power to tempt? But if there is such a desire, is there not estrangement prior to a decision to succumb or not to succumb to the temptation? There is no doubt that under the conditions of existence this is the human situation. From the very beginning of life our desire pushes ahead, and possibilities appear. These possibilities become temptation if a prohibition (as in the paradise story) forces one into deliberation and decision. The question, then, is how to evaluate the desire, be it that of Adam with respect to knowledge and power, as in the paradise story, or be it that of Jesus with respect to glory and power in the temptation story. The answer can be given in terms of our analysis of concupiscence. The difference between the natural self-transcendence, which includes the desire for reunion with everything, and the distorted concupiscence, which does not want reunion with anything but the exploitation of everything through power and pleasure, is one which is decisive for the evaluation of desire in the state of temptation. Without desire, there is no temptation, but the temptation is that desire will become changed into concupiscence. The prohibition lays down the conditions which would prevent the transition from desire to concupiscence. In the paradise story these conditions are not given. It is not indicated that the desire for knowledge and power is justified if it does not become concupiscence. One can only derive an indication from his relation to the fruits of life to which Adam first is admitted and then excluded: he shall not have eternity without God. In the same way, one may draw the analogy that he shall not have knowledge without God. The desire in itself is not bad (the fruit is good to eat); but the conditions of its lawful fulfilment are not kept, and so the act of eating becomes an act of concupiscence. In the story of Jesus' temptations, the conditions of a lawful fulfilment of his desires are at least indicated. They are given

in the Old Testament quotations with which Jesus rejects Satan. And we find exactly the condition which appears in the paradise story: it is wrong to have the objects of justified desires without God. Jesus could have had them, but it would have meant surrendering his messianic quality.

The distinction between desire and concupiscence is the first step toward the solution of the problem raised by the seriousness of the temptations of Christ.

The second step must deal with the question of how desire is possible at all in the state of an unbroken unity with God. The word "desire" is the expression of unfulfilment. But religious literature is replete with descriptions of persons who are in unity with God and find complete fulfilment. If, however, man in essential unity with God (Adam) and man in actual unity with God under the conditions of existence (the Christ) are tempted on the basis of their desire for finite fulfilment, then desire and unity with God cannot contradict each other (this would include the statement that *eros* and *agape* cannot contradict each other). Positively expressed, this means that life in unity with God, like all life, is determined by the polarity of dynamics and form and, as such, is never without the risk implied in the tensions between dynamics and form. The unity with God is not the negation of the desire for reunion of the finite with the finite. But where there is unity with God, there the finite is not desired alongside this unity but within it. The temptation which is rooted in desire is that the finite is desired alongside God or that desire becomes concupiscence. This is the rationale which makes the object of desire a serious temptation even in Christ.

Yet we must take a third step in order to answer the questions arising from the reality of the temptations of Jesus. The suspicion of considerations like the preceding stem from the fear that they make the rejection of the temptations of Jesus a matter of contingency. If this were the case, the salvation of mankind would be dependent on the contingent decision of an individual man. But such an argument does not take into consideration the polar unity of freedom and destiny. The universality of existential estrangement and the uniqueness of the victory over estrangement are both matters of freedom as well as of destiny. The decision of the Christ against succumbing to the temptations is an act of his finite freedom and, as such, analogous to a decision by anyone who is finite freedom, i.e., by any man. As a free decision, it is

an act of his total personality and of the center of his own self. At the same time it is, as in anyone who is finite freedom, a consequence of his destiny. His freedom was imbedded in his destiny. Freedom without destiny is mere contingency, and destiny without freedom is mere necessity. But human freedom and, consequently, the freedom of Jesus as the Christ are united with destiny and therefore are neither contingency nor necessity.

The element of destiny in the picture of the Christ is taken very seriously in the New Testament. His heredity and bodily existence are matters of speculation and research into the Synoptic Gospels. He is not isolated; he is the central link in the chain of divine revelations. The importance of his mother is not diminished by the fact that she does not understand him. Many factors which help determine the destiny of a man are mentioned in the biblical records. What happens to him is always a consequence of his destiny as well as an act of his freedom. In the many references of the New Testament to the prophecies of the Old Testament, the element of destiny is clearly expressed. The appearance of Jesus as the Christ and his resistance to the attempts to deprive him of his Christ-character are both acts of decision by himself and results of a divine destiny. Beyond this unity we cannot go, either in the case of Jesus or in the case of man universally.

This insight answers the anxious question of whether the salvation of mankind is due to the contingent decision of an individual man (freedom in the sense of indeterminism) in the negative. The decisions of Jesus in which he resisted real temptation, like every human decision, stand under the directing creativity of God (providence). And God's directing creativity in the case of man works through his freedom. Man's destiny is determined *by* the divine creativity, but *through* man's selfdetermination, that is, through his finite freedom. In this respect the "history of salvation" and the "history of the Savior" are ultimately determined in the same way as history is generally and as the history of every individual man. This refers also to the state of estrangement in which mankind finds itself. Nobody can seriously defend the absurd idea that the universal cause of the human predicament was contingent upon the wrong decision of an individual man. In the same way the appearance of the Christ is at the same time freedom and destiny and is determined by God's directing creativity. There is no undetermined contingency in the negative and the positive situation of mankind, but

there is the unity of freedom and destiny under God's directing creativity.

c) ***The marks of his finitude***.-The seriousness of the temptation of the Christ is based on the fact that he is finite freedom. The degree to which the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ stresses his finitude is remarkable. As a finite being, he is subject to the contingency of everything that is not by itself but is "thrown" into existence. He has to die, and he experiences the anxiety of having to die. This anxiety is described by the evangelists in the most vivid way. It is not relieved by the expectation of resurrection "after three days," or by the ecstasy of a substitutional self-sacrifice, or even by the ideal of the heroism of wise men such as Socrates. Like every man, he experiences the threat of the victory of non-being over being, as, for instance, in the limits of the span of life given to him. As in the case of all finite beings, he experiences the lack of a definite place. From his birth on, he appears strange and homeless in his world. He has bodily, social, and mental insecurity, is subject to want, and is expelled by his nation. In relation to other persons, his finitude is manifest in his loneliness, both in respect to the masses and in respect to his relatives and disciples. He struggles to make them understand, but during his life he never succeeds. His frequent desire for solitude shows that many hours of his daily life were filled with various finite concerns produced by his encounter with the world. At the same time, he is deeply affected by the misery of the masses and of everyone who turns to him. He accepts them, even though he will be rejected by them. He experiences all the tensions which follow from the self-relatedness of every finite person and proves the impossibility of penetrating into the center of anyone else.

In relation to reality as such, including things and persons, he is subject to uncertainty in judgment, risks of error, the limits of power, and the vicissitudes of life. The Fourth Gospel says of him that he ***is*** truth, but this does not mean that he ***has*** omniscience or absolute certainty. He ***is*** the truth in so far as his being-the New Being in him-conquers the untruth of existential estrangement. But being the truth is not the same as knowing the truth about all finite objects and situations. Finitude implies openness to error, and error belongs to the participation of the Christ in man's existential predicament. Error is evident in his ancient conception of the universe, his judgments about men, his interpretation of the historical moment, his eschatological imagination.

If we finally look at his relation to himself, we can refer again to what was said about the seriousness of his temptations. They presuppose want and desire. We can also refer to his doubt about his own work, as in his hesitation to accept the messianic title, and, above all, his feeling of having been left alone by God without God's expected interference on the Cross.

All this belongs to the description of the finitude of Jesus as the Christ and has its place within the totality of his picture. It is ***one ele***ment along with others; but it must be emphasized against those who attribute to him a hidden omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and eternity. The latter take away the seriousness of his finitude and with it the reality of his participation in existence.

d) His participation in the tragic element of existence.-Every encounter with reality, whether with situations, groups, or individuals, **is** burdened with practical and theoretical uncertainty. This uncertainty is caused not only by the finitude of the individual but also by the ambiguity of that which a person encounters. Life is marked by ambiguity, and one of the ambiguities is that of greatness and tragedy (which I shall deal with in Vol. III). This raises the question of how the bearer of the New Being is involved in the tragic element of life. What is his relation to the ambiguity of tragic guilt? What is his relation to the tragic consequences of his being, including his actions and decisions, for those who are with him or who are against him and for those who are neither one nor the other?

The first and historically most important example in this area is the conflict of Jesus with the leaders of his nation. The ordinary Christian view is that their hostility toward him is unambiguously their religious and moral guilt. They decided against him, although they could have decided for him. But this "could" is just the problem. It removes the tragic element which universally belongs to existence. It places the leaders out of the context of humanity and makes them into representatives of unambiguous evil. But there is no unambiguous evil. This is acknowledged by Jesus when he refers to the traditions and when he expresses that he belongs to the "house of Israel." Although continuously persecuted by the Jews, Paul witnesses to their zeal to fulfil the law of God. The Pharisees were the pious ones of their time, and they represented the law of God, the preparatory revelation, without which the final revelation could not have happened. If Christians

deny the tragic element in the encounter between Jesus and the Jews (and analogously between Paul and the Jews), they are guilty of a profound injustice. And this injustice early produced a Christian anti-Judaism which is one of the permanent sources of modern anti-Semitism. It is regrettable that even today much Christian instruction is consciously or unconsciously responsible for this kind of anti-Jewish feeling. This can be changed only if we frankly admit that the conflict between Jesus and his enemies was a tragic one. This means that Jesus was involved in the tragic element of guilt, in so far as he made his enemies inescapably guilty. This element of guilt did not touch his personal relation to God. It did not produce estrangement. It did not split his personal center. But it is an expression of his participation in existential estrangement, and its implication, namely, the ambiguity of creation and destruction. It was a profound insight into the tragic element of guilt when Kierkegaard questioned the right of anyone to let himself be killed for the truth. He who does so must know that he becomes tragically responsible for the guilt of those who kill him.

Many embarrassing questions have been asked about the relation of Jesus and Judas-from the New Testament period on. One of the problems in the stories of the betrayal of Judas is indicated by Jesus himself. On the one hand, he asserts the providential necessity-the fulfilment of the prophecies-of the deed of Judas, and, on the other hand, he emphasizes the immensity of the personal guilt of Judas. The tragic and the moral elements in the guilt of Judas are equally stated. But, besides this more universal element of tragedy in the guilt of Judas, there is a special one. The betrayal presupposes that Judas belonged to the intimate group of disciples. And this could not have been the case without the will of Jesus. Implicitly, we have already referred to this point when we spoke of the errors in judgment which cannot be separated from finite existence. Explicitly, we must say that, as the story stands in the records (and this is the only question we are dealing with here), the innocent one becomes tragically guilty, in respect to the very one who contributes to his own death. One should not try to escape these consequences, if one takes seriously the participation in the ambiguities of life, on the part of him who is the bearer of the New Being. If Jesus as the Christ were seen as a God walking on earth, he would be neither finite nor involved in tragedy. His judgment would be ultimate, and that means an unambiguous judgment. But, according to

biblical symbolism, this is a matter of his "second coming" and is therefore connected with the transformation of reality as a whole. The Christ of the biblical picture takes upon himself the consequences of his tragic involvement in existence. The New Being in him has eternal significance also for those who caused his death, including Judas.

e) His permanent unity with God.-The conquest of existential estrangement in the New Being, which is the being of the Christ, does not remove finitude and anxiety, ambiguity and tragedy; but it does have the character of taking the negativities of existence into unbroken unity with God. The anxiety about having to die is not removed; it is taken into participation in the "will of God," i.e., in his directing creativity. His homelessness and insecurity with respect to a physical, social, and mental place are not diminished but rather increased to the last moment. Yet they are accepted in the power of a participation in a "transcendent place," which in actuality is no place but the eternal ground of every place and of every moment of time. His loneliness and his frustrated attempts in trying to be received by those to whom he came do not suddenly end in a final success; they are taken into the divine acceptance of that which rejects God, into the vertical line of the uniting love which is effective where the horizontal line from being to being is barred. Out of his unity with God he has unity with those who are separated from him and from one another by finite self-relatedness and existential self-seclusion. Both error and doubt equally are not removed but are taken into the participation in the divine life and thus indirectly into the divine omniscience. Both error and truth are taken into the transcendent truth. Therefore, we do not find symptoms of repression of doubt in the picture of Jesus as the Christ. Those who are not able to elevate their doubts into the truth which transcends every finite truth must repress them. They perforce become fanatical. Yet no traces of fanaticism are present in the biblical picture. Jesus does not claim absolute certitude for a finite conviction. He rejects the fanatical attitude of the disciples toward those who do not follow him. In the power of a certitude which transcends certitude and incertitude in matters of religion as well as secular life, he accepts incertitude as an element of finiteness. This also refers to the doubt about his own work -a doubt which breaks through most intensively on the Cross but still does not destroy his unity with God.

This is the picture of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. It is not

the picture of a divine-human automaton without serious temptation, real struggle, or tragic involvement in the ambiguities of life. Instead of that, it is the picture of a personal life which is subjected to all the consequences of existential estrangement but wherein estrangement is conquered in himself and a permanent unity is kept with God. Into this unity he accepts the negativities of existence without removing them. This is done by transcending them in the power of this unity. This is the New Being as it appears in the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ.

5. The Historical Dimension of the New Being

There is no personal life without the encounter with other persons within a community, and there is no community without the historical dimension of past and future. This is clearly indicated in the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ. Although his personal life is considered as the criterion by which past and future are judged, it is not an isolated life, and the New Being, which is the quality of his own being, is not restricted to his being. This refers to the community out of which he comes and to the preparatory manifestations of the New Being within it; it refers to the community which he creates and to the received manifestations of the New Being in it. The New Testament records take very seriously the descent of Jesus from the life of bearers of the preparatory revelation. The otherwise questionable and contradictory lists of the ancestors of Jesus have this symbolic value, as do the symbol "Son of David" (see above) and the interest in the figure of his mother. These are all symbols of the historical dimension of the past. In the selection of the Twelve Apostles, the past of the twelve tribes of Israel is symbolically connected with the future of the church. And, without the reception of Jesus as the Christ by the church, he could not have become the Christ, because he would not have brought the New Being to anyone. While the Synoptic picture is especially interested in the direction of the past, the Fourth Gospel is predominantly interested in the direction toward the future. Clearly, however,, the biblical picture is not responsible for a theology which, in the name of the "uniqueness" of Jesus as the Christ, cuts him off from everything before the year 1 and after the year 30. In this way the continuity of the divine self-manifestation through history is denied not only for the pre-Christian past but also for the Christian present and future. This tends to cut off

the contemporary Christian of today from direct connection with the New Being in Christ. He is asked to jump over the millennia to the years "1 through 30" and to subject himself to the event upon which Christianity is based. But this jump is an illusion because the very fact that he is a Christian and that he calls Jesus the Christ is based on the continuity through history of the power of the New Being. No anti-Catholic bias should prevent Protestant theologians from acknowledging this fact.

Although appearing in a personal life, the New Being has a spatial breadth in the community of the New Being and a temporal dimension in the history of the New Being. The appearance of the Christ in an individual person presupposes the community out of which he came and the community which he creates. Of course, the criterion of both is the picture of Jesus as the Christ; but, without them, this criterion never could have appeared.

6. Conflicting Elements in the Picture of Jesus as the Christ

In the preceding sections we spoke of the picture of Jesus as the Christ and neglected the differences and contrasts in the biblical picture. The question now must be asked whether, in fact, there is such a unified picture in the New Testament or whether the conflicting views of the different writers of the New Testament make the painting of such a picture impossible. The question first demands a historical, then a systematic, answer. The historical answer has been partly given by the earlier statement that all parts of the New Testament agree in their assertion that Jesus is the Christ. This is necessarily so because the New Testament is the book of the community whose foundation is the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ. But the question is not fully answered by this statement; for there are different, and somehow contrasting, ways of interpreting the assertion that Jesus is the Christ. One can emphasize the participation of the New Being in the conditions of existence or the victory of the New Being over the conditions of existence. Obviously, the first is the Synoptic, the second the Johannine, emphasis. The question here is not whether one can produce a harmonious historical picture by a combination of both pictures. Historical research has answered this question almost unanimously in the negative. But the question is whether such contrasts, after they have become conscious to the mind of the faithful, can obstruct the impact of the biblical picture of Jesus as the bearer of the New Being. In the case of the contrast between the Synoptic emphasis on the participation of Jesus in the negativities of existence and the Johannine emphasis on the victory of the Christ over these negativities, one can, still in descriptive terms, say that the difference does not lead to an exclusion of the contrasting element. There are stories and symbols of the glory of Jesus as the Christ in the Synoptics, and stories and symbols of the suffering of Jesus as the Christ in John. Nevertheless, the systematic question is unavoidable.

The same is true of a contrast which largely overlaps that between the general mood of the Synoptics and John, namely, that between the kingdom-centered sayings of Jesus in the Synoptics and the Christ-centered nature of his sayings in John. The self-consciousness expressed in the two kinds of records seems absolutely contradictory. Here also a preliminary descriptive answer can be given. The Synoptics are not without expressions of the messianic self-consciousness of Jesus. Above all, they have no word in which Jesus identifies himself with the estrangement of humanity. He enters it and takes the tragic and self-destructive consequences upon himself, but he does not identify himself with it. Of course, the Synoptic Jesus could not speak about himself in the direct and open way in which the Johannine Christ does. But it belongs to the character of the one whose communion with God is unbroken that he feel the distance between himself and the others in whom this is not the case. Nevertheless, the contrast between the two kinds of speaking is so great that it creates a systematic problem.

A third problem appears in both the Synoptics and John. It is the way in which Jesus places himself in the eschatological framework. There are differences on this point in the consecutive levels of the Synoptic tradition as well as in the Fourth Gospel. In the Synoptics, Jesus sometimes appears merely as the prophetic announcer of the kingdom to come and sometimes as the central figure within the eschatological drama. He has to die and be resurrected for the sins of the people; he fulfils the eschatological prophecies of the Old Testament; he will return on the clouds of the sky and judge the world; he will eat the eschatological meal with his disciples. In John he sometimes repeats these eschatological statements; sometimes he transforms them into statements about eschatological processes which happen in his presence in judgment and salvation. Again one must say that neither in John

nor in the Synoptics are the contrasts exclusive; but they are strong enough to demand systematic consideration.

The astonishing fact that these contrasts have not been felt over hundreds of years is due largely to the predominant influence of the Christ-picture of the Fourth Gospel in association with the cryptomonophysitic trend of the church. For Luther it is still the "main gospel," in spite of his emphasis on the lowliness of the Christ. Like most other Christians, he read the words of the Synoptic Jesus Christ as if they were the words of the Johannine Christ Jesus, in spite of the literal incompatibility. This situation no longer exists; the contrasts are seen by many Christians, and they cannot be asked to close their eyes.

The answer is that one must distinguish between the symbolic frame in which the picture of Jesus as the Christ appears and the substance in which the power of the New Being is present. We have enumerated and discussed the different symbols in which the fact "Jesus" was interpreted (of which "the Christ" is one). These interpretations are not additions to what otherwise is a finished presentation of the picture; they are the alldecisive frame within which the presentation is given. The symbol "Son of Man," for example, agrees with the eschatological frame; the symbol of the "Messiah" agrees with the passages in which the healing and preaching activity of Jesus are reported; the symbol "Son of God" and the conceptual symbol "Logos" agree with the Johannine style of speech and action. But in all cases the substance is untouched. It shines through as the power of the New Being in a threefold color: first and decisively, as the undisrupted unity of the center of his being with God; second, as the serenity and majesty of him who preserves this unity against all the attacks coming from estranged existence; and, third, as the self-surrendering love which represents and actualizes the divine love in taking the existential self-destruction upon himself. There is no passage in the Gospels-or, for that matter, in the Epistles-which takes away the power of this threefold manifestation of the New Being in the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ.

C. VALUATION OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DOGMA

1. THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DOGMA

The christological problem started with the quest for the New Being, i.e., when men became aware of their existential predicament and asked

whether their predicament could be overcome through a new state of reality. In an anticipatory way the christological problem appeared in the prophetic and apocalyptic expectations associated with the Messiah or the Son of Man. The foundations for a formulated Christology were provided by the way the writers of the New Testament applied symbols to Jesus, whom they called "the Christ." Such symbols have been enumerated in our discussion of historical research into biblical literature. We have discussed the symbols-Son of Man, Son of God, the Christ. the Logos-in four steps, of which the last was the literalistic distortion of these symbols. This danger-which is always present in Christianity -was one of the reasons why the early church began to interpret the christological symbols in conceptual terms available through the work of Greek philosophy. Better for this purpose than any of the others was the symbol of the Logos, which, by its very nature, is a conceptual symbol having both religious and philosophical roots. Consequently, the Christology of the early church became Logos-Christology. It is unfair to criticize the Church Fathers for their use of Greek concepts. There were no other available conceptual expressions of man's cognitive encounter with his world. Whether or not these concepts were adequate to the interpretation of the Christian message remains a permanent question of theology. But it is wrong to reject a priori the use of Greek concepts by the early church. There was no alternative.

The dogmatic work of the early church centers in the creation of the christological dogma. All other doctrinal statements-above all, those concerning God and man, the Spirit, and the Trinity-provide the presuppositions, or are the consequences, of the christological dogma. The baptismal confession that Jesus is the Christ is the text of which the christological dogma is the commentary. The basic attacks on the Christian dogma are implicitly or explicitly on the christological level. Some of them are on its substance, e.g., the baptismal confession, and some of them on its form, as in the use of Greek concepts. In order to judge the dogma rightly, including the attacks upon it, one must understand its nature and significance.

Some criticisms of the christological dogma and of dogma as such, however, would not have arisen if it had been realized that dogmas do not arise for so-called "speculative" reasons. Although cognitive *eros* is not excluded from the formation of dogmas, the dogmas are, as Luther said, "protective" doctrines which are meant to preserve the substance

of the Christian message against distortions from outside or inside the church. If this is understood and if the use of the dogma for political purposes is acknowledged to be a demonic distortion of its original meaning, one can, without being afraid of authoritarian consequences, attribute a positive meaning to dogma generally and to the christological dogma in particular. Then two rather different questions should be asked: To what degree did dogma succeed in reaffirming the genuine meaning of the Christian message against actual and threatening distortions? And how successful was the conceptualization of the symbols expressing the Christian message? While the first question can be answered fairly positively, the second one must be answered fairly negatively. The christological dogma saved the church, but with very inadequate conceptual tools.

The inadequacy of the tools is due partly to the inadequacy of every human concept for expressing the message of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. It is due partly to the special inadequacy of Greek concepts, which are universally significant but nevertheless dependent upon a concrete religion determined by the divine figures of Apollo and Dionysus. Such criticism is rather different from that used by Adolf Harnack and his predecessors and followers, namely, that the use of Greek concepts by the early church inevitably led to the intellectualization of the Gospel. The assumption underlying this assertion was that Greek philosophy, in its classical as well as in its Hellenistic period, was intellectualistic by nature. But this assumption is wrong for both periods. In the archaic and classical periods, philosophy was a matter of existential importance, just as in the case of tragedy and in the mystery cults. It passionately searched-with cognitive means-for the immovable in theoretical, moral, and religious terms. Neither Socrates, Zeno, the Stoics, Plotinus, nor the Neo-Platonists can be described as being intellectualistic; and in the Hellenistic period the term "intellectualistic" sounds almost absurd. Even the philosophical schools of later antiquity were organized into cult communities, identifying the term "dogma" with their basic insights, affirming the inspired authority of their founders, and demanding acceptance of basic doctrines by their members.

Using Greek concepts does not mean intellectualizing the Christian message. More to the point is the assertion that it means the Hellenization of the Christian message. One can certainly say that the christological dogma has a Hellenistic character. But this was inescapable in

the church's missionary activity in the Hellenistic world. In order to be received, the church had to use the forms of life and thought which were created by the various sources of Hellenism and which coalesced at the end of the ancient world. Three of them were of outstanding importance for the Christian church: the mystery cults, the philosophical schools, and the Roman state. Christianity adapted itself to all of them. It became a mystery cult, a philosophical school, and a legal system. But it did not cease to be an assembly based on the message that Jesus is the Christ. It remained the church in Hellenistic forms of life and thought. It did not identify itself with any of them but transformed them and even remained critical in respect to their transformation. In spite of long periods of traditionalism, the church was able to rise to moments of self-criticism and to reconsider the adapted forms.

The christological dogma uses Greek concepts, which had already undergone a Hellenizing transformation in the Hellenistic period, as in the concept of Logos. This process continued, and to it was added the Christianization of concepts. But even in this form the concepts (as, in the practical realm, the institutions) put a perpetual, problem before Christian theology. For instance, in discussing the christological dogma the following questions must be asked: Does the dogmatic statement accomplish what it is supposed to, namely, to reaffirm the message of Jesus as the Christ against actual distortions and to provide a conceptually clear expression of the meaning of the message? In this respect, a dogmatic statement can fail in two possible ways. It can fail both in its substance and in its conceptual form. An example of the first failure is the half-monophysitic changes in the creed of Chalcedon since the middle of the sixth century. In this instance it was not the use of Greek philosophical concepts which caused a distortion of the original message; it was the influence on the councils of a very powerful stream of magic-superstitious piety. An example of the inadequacy of the conceptual form is the formula of Chalcedon itself. By intent and design, it was true to the genuine meaning of the Christian message. It saved Christianity from a complete elimination of the picture of Jesus as the Christ, in so far as the participation of the New Being in the state of estrangement is concerned. But it did so-and it could not have done otherwise within the conceptual frame used-through an accumulation of powerful paradoxa. It was unable to give a constructive interpretation, although this was just the reason for the original introduction of

the philosophical concepts. Theology should not assign blame to its necessary conceptual tools when the failure is due to a deteriorized piety, nor should it attribute inadequacies of conceptual tools to a religious weakness. Nor should it try to get rid of all philosophical concepts. That would actually mean getting rid of itself! Theology must be free from and for the concepts it uses. It must be free from a confusion of its conceptual form with its substance, and it must be free to express this substance with every tool which proves to be more adequate than those given by the ecclesiastical tradition.

2. Dangers and Decisions in the Development of the Christological Dogma

The two dangers which threaten every christological statement are immediate consequences of the assertion that Jesus is the Christ. The attempt to interpret this assertion conceptually can lead to an actual denial of the Christ-character of Jesus as the Christ; or it can lead to an actual denial of the Jesus-character of Jesus as the Christ. Christology must always find its way on the ridge between these two chasms, and it must know that it will never completely succeed, inasmuch as it touches the divine mystery, which remains mystery even in its manifestation.

In traditional terms the problem has been discussed as the relation of the divine to the human "nature" in Jesus. Any diminution of the human nature would deprive the Christ of his total participation in the conditions of existence. And any diminution of the divine nature would deprive the Christ of his total victory over existential estrangement. In both cases he could not have created the New Being. His being would have been less than the New Being. Therefore, the problem was how to think the unity of a completely human with a completely divine nature. This problem never has been solved adequately, even within the limits of human possibilities. The doctrine of the two natures in the Christ raises the right question but uses wrong conceptual tools. The basic inadequacy lies in the term "nature." When applied to man, it is ambiguous; when applied to God, it is wrong. This explains the inescapable definitive failure of the councils, e.g., of Nicaea and Chalcedon, in spite of their substantial truth and their historical significance.

The decision of Nicaea, defended by Athanasius as a matter of life

and death for the church, made it inadmissible to deny the divine power of the Christ in revelation and salvation. In the terminology of the Nicaean controversy, the power of the Christ is the power of the divine Logos, the principle of divine self-manifestation. This leads to the question of whether the Logos is equal in divine power with the Father or less than he. If the first answer is given, the distinction between the Father and the Son seems to disappear, as in the Sabellian heresy. If the second answer is given, the Logos, even if called the greatest of all creatures, is a creature nevertheless and therefore unable to save the creation, as in the Arian heresy. Only the God who is really God can create the New Being, not a half-god. It was the term ***homo-ousios,*** "of equal essence," which was supposed to express this idea. But in that case, the semi-Arians asked, how could a difference exist between the Father and the Son, and does not the picture of the Jesus of history become completely ununderstandable? It was hard for Athanasius and his most intimate followers (e.g., Marcellus) to answer such questions.

The Nicaean formula has often been considered the basic Trinitarian statement of the church. It has been distinguished from the christological decisions of the fifth century, but that is misleading. The doctrine of the Trinity has independent roots in the encounter with God in all his manifestations. We have tried to show that the idea of the "living God" requires a distinction between the abysmal element of the divine, the form element, and their spiritual unity. This explains the manifold forms in which Trinitarian symbolism appears in the history of religion. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity systematizes the idea and adds the decisive element of the relation of the Christ to the Logos. It was this latter point which led to a systematically developed Trinitarian dogma. The decision of Nicaea is a christological one, although it also made the basic contribution to the Trinitarian dogma. In the same way the restatement and enlargement of Nicaea in Constantinople (381) was a christological statement, although it added the divinity of the Holy Spirit to the divinity of the Logos. If the being of Jesus as the Christ is the New Being, the human spirit of the man Jesus cannot make him into the Christ; then it must be the divine Spirit, which, like the Logos, cannot be inferior to God. Although the final discussion of the Trinitarian doctrine must await the development of the idea of the Spirit (Part IV), it can be stated here that the Trinitarian symbols become empty if they are separated from their two experiential roots—

the experience of the living God and the experience of the New Being in the Christ. Both Augustine and Luther had a feeling for this situation. Augustine found that the distinction among the three ***personae*** ***(not*** persons) in the Trinity is without any content and is used, "not in order to say something, but in order not to remain silent." And, indeed, terms like "non-generated," "eternally generated," "proceeding," even if understood as symbols-which they certainly are-do not say anything which could be meaningful for symbolic imagination. Luther found that a word like "Trinity" is strange and almost ridiculous but that here, as in other instances, there was no better one. Since he was aware of the two existential roots of the Trinitarian idea, he rejected a theology which makes the Trinitarian dialectic into a play with meaningless number combinations. The Trinitarian dogma is a supporting part of the christological dogma; and the decision of Nicaea saved Christianity from a relapse to a cult of half-gods. It rejected interpretations of Jesus as the Christ which would have deprived him of his power to create the New Being.

The decision at Nicaea that God himself and not a half-god is present in the man Jesus of Nazareth was open to the loss of the Jesus-character of Jesus as the Christ or, in traditional terminology, to the denial of his full human nature. And this danger, as we have indicated several times, was real. Popular and monastic piety was not satisfied with the message of the eternal unity of God and man appearing under the conditions of estrangement. These pieties wanted "more." They wanted a God, walking on earth, participating in history, but not involved in the conflicts of existence and the ambiguities of life. Popular piety did not want a paradox but a "miracle." It desired an event in analogy with all other events in time and space, an "objective" happening in the supranatural sense. By this kind of piety the way for every possible superstition was opened. Christianity was in danger of being swallowed up in the tidal wave of a "secondary religion," for which monophysitism provided the theological justification. This danger soon became real in countries like Egypt, which, partly for this reason, became an easy prey to iconoclastic Islam. The danger would have been more easily overcome if it had not been for the support that such popular piety found in the intensive and developing ascetic-monastic movements and their direct influence on the deciding synods. The hostility of the monks toward the natural, not only in its existential distortion,

but also in its essential goodness, made them fanatical enemies of a theology which emphasized the total participation of the Christ in man's existential predicament. In the great Bishop of Alexandria, Cyril, the alliance of popular and monastic piety found a theologically cautious and politically skilful defender. The monophysitic tendency would have prevailed in the whole church in a sophisticated form if there had not been a partly victorious opposition.

The opposition came from theologians who took seriously the participation of Jesus in man's existential predicament. It also came from church leaders like Pope Leo of Rome, who, in the line of his Western tradition, emphasized the historical-dynamic character of the New Being in the Christ over against its static-hierarchical character in the East. This opposition was largely victorious in the Council of Chalcedon -in spite of the shortcomings of the Chalcedonian formula. This victory prevented the elimination of the Jesus-character of the Christ, in spite of later successful attempts in the East (Constantinople) to restate the decision of Chalcedon along the lines of Cyril. The authority of Chalcedon was too well established and the spirit of Chalcedon was too much in agreement with basic trends of Western piety-including later Protestant piety-for it to be defeated.

In the two great decisions of the early church, both the Christ-character and the Jesus-character of the event of Jesus as the Christ were preserved. And this happened in spite of the very inadequate conceptual tools. This is the judgment about the christological work of the church underlying the present christological exposition.

3. The Christological Task of Present Theology

The general consequences which must be drawn from the preceding judgment are obvious but need concrete elaboration. Protestant theology must accept the "Catholic" tradition in so far as it is based on the substance of the two great decisions of the early church (Nicaea and Chalcedon). Protestant theology must try to find new forms in which the christological substance of the past can be expressed. The preceding christological sections are an attempt to do so. They imply a critical attitude to both the orthodox and the liberal Christologies of the last centuries of Protestant theology. The development of Protestant orthodoxy, both in its classical period and in its later reformulations, showed the impossibility of an understandable solution to the

christological problem in terms of the classical terminology. It was the merit of theological liberalism that it showed through historical-critical investigations, as, e.g., in Harnack's History of *the Dogma-the* inescapable contradictions and absurdities into which all attempts to solve the christological problem in terms of the two-nature theory were driven. But liberalism itself did not contribute much to Christology in systematic terms. By saying that "Jesus does not belong within the gospel pronounced by Jesus," it eliminated the Christ-character of the event Jesus the Christ. Even historians like Albert Schweitzer, who emphasized the eschatological character of the message of Jesus and his self-interpretation as a central figure within the eschatological scheme, did not use this element for their Christology. They dismissed it as a complex of strange imagination and as a matter of apocalyptic ecstasy. The Christ-character of the event was drawn into the Jesus-character. It would be unfair, however, to identify liberal theology with Arianism. Its picture of Jesus is not that of a half-god. Rather, it is the picture of a man in whom God was manifest in a unique way. But it is not the picture of a man whose being was the New Being and who was able to conquer existential estrangement. Neither the orthodox nor the liberal methods of Protestant theology are adequate for the christological task which the Protestant church must now fulfil.

The early church was well aware that Christology is an existentially necessary, though not a theoretically interesting, work of the church. Its ultimate criterion, therefore, is existential itself. It is "soteriological," i.e., determined by the question of salvation. The greater the things we say about the Christ, the greater the salvation we can expect from him. This word of an Apostolic Father is valid for all christological thought. Differences, of course, arise if one tries to give a definition of what "great" means in relation to the Christ. For monophysitic thinking in its nuances from the early church up to today, great things are said about the Christ if his smallness, namely, his participation in finitude and tragedy, is swallowed up in his greatness, namely, his power of conquering existential estrangement. This emphasis on the "divine nature" is called a "high" Christology. But however high the divine predicates may be which are heaped on the Christ, the result is a Christology of low value, because it removes the paradox for the sake of a supranatural miracle. And salvation can be derived only from him who fully participated in man's existential predicament, not from a God

walking on earth, "unequal to us in all respects." The Protestant principle, according to which God is near to the lowest as well as to the highest and according to which salvation is not the transference of man from the material to a so-called spiritual world, demands a "low Christology"—which actually is the truly high Christology. By this criterion, the preceding christological attempt should be judged.

Reference has already been made to the concept of nature used in the terms "divine nature" and "human nature," and it has been indicated that the term "human nature" is ambiguous and the term "divine nature" is wholly inadequate. Human nature can mean man's essential or created nature; it can mean man's existential or estranged nature; and it can mean man's nature in the ambiguous unity of the two others. If we apply the term "human nature" to Jesus as the Christ, we must say that he has a complete human nature in the first sense of the word. Through creation, he is finite freedom, like every human being. With respect to the second meaning of "human nature," we must say that he has man's existential nature as a real possibility, but in such a way that temptation, which is the possibility, is always taken into the unity with God. From this it follows that, in the third sense, human nature must be attributed to Jesus in so far as he is involved in the tragic ambiguities of life. Under these circumstances it is imperative to dismiss altogether the term "human nature" in relation to the Christ and replace it by a description of the dynamics of his life-as we have tried to do.

In a culture in which nature was the all-embracing concept, the term "human nature" was adequate. Men, gods, and all other beings which constitute the universe belong to nature, to that which grows by itself. If God is understood as he who transcends everything created, qualitatively and infinitely, the term "divine nature" can mean only that which makes God into God, that which one must think if one thinks of God. In this sense, nature is essence. But God has no essence separated from existence, he is beyond essence and existence. He is what he is, eternally by himself. This could also be called God's essential nature. But then one actually says that it is essential for God that he transcend every essence. A more concrete symbolic expression of this idea is that God is eternally creative, that through himself he creates the world and through the world himself. There is no divine nature which could be abstracted from his eternal creativity.

This analysis discloses that the term "divine nature" is questionable and that it cannot be applied to the Christ in any meaningful way; for the Christ (who is Jesus of Nazareth) is not beyond essence and existence. If he were, he could not be a personal life living in a limited period of time, having been born and having to die, being finite, tempted, and tragically involved in existence. The assertion that Jesus as the Christ is the personal unity of a divine and a human nature must be replaced by the assertion that in Jesus as the Christ the eternal unity of God and man has become historical reality. In his being, the New Being is real, and the New Being is the re-established unity between God and man. We replace the inadequate concept "divine nature" by the concepts "eternal God-man-unity" or "Eternal God-Manhood." Such concepts replace a static essence by a dynamic relation. The uniqueness of this relation is in no way reduced by its dynamic character; but, by eliminating the concept of "two natures," which lie beside each other like blocks and whose unity cannot be understood at all, we are open to relational concepts which make understandable the dynamic picture of Jesus as the Christ.

In both of these terms the word "eternal" is added to the relational description. "Eternal" points to the general presupposition of the unique event Jesus as the Christ. This event could not have taken place if there had not been an eternal unity of God and man within the divine life. This unity in a state of pure essentiality or potentiality can become actualized through finite freedom and, in the unique event Jesus as the Christ, became actualized against existential disruption. The character of this unity has been described in the concrete terms of the Gospel stories. Abstract definitions of the nature of this unity are as impossible as psychological investigations into its character. One can only say that it is a community between God and the center of a personal life which determines all utterances of this life and resists the attempts within existential estrangement to disrupt it.

The question now arises as to whether the replacement of the two-nature theory by dynamic-relational concepts does not remove the important idea of "Incarnation." Is not a relational concept a return from a Christology of Incarnation to a Christology of adoption? First of all, one can answer that both the incarnational and the adoptionist Christologies have biblical roots and, for this and other reasons, a genuine standing in Christian thought. But, beyond this, one must say that

neither of them can be carried out without the other. Adoptionism, the idea that God through his Spirit adopted the man Jesus as his Messiah, leads to the question: Why just him? And this question leads back to the polarity of freedom and destiny which created the uninterrupted unity between him and God. The story of the virgin birth traces this unity back to his very beginning and even beyond it to his ancestors. The symbol of his pre-existence gives the eternal dimension, and the doctrine of the Logos, which became historical reality (flesh), points to what has been called "Incarnation." The incarnational Christology was needed to explain the adoptionist Christology. This was a necessary development. But it is equally necessary-although not always seen—that incarnational Christology needs adoptionist Christology for its fulfilment. The term "Incarnation" in itself is adequate (like the term "divine nature") in paganism. Since the gods belong to the universe, they can easily enter all forms of the universe; endless metamorphoses are possible. When Christianity uses the term "Incarnation," it tries to express the paradox that he who transcends the universe appears in it and under its conditions. In this sense every Christology is an incarnational Christology. But the connotation of the term leads to ideas which can hardly be distinguished from pagan transmutation myths. If the egeneto in the Johannine sentence, Logos *sarx egeneto,* the "Word became flesh," is pressed, we are in the midst of a mythology of metamorphosis. And it is natural that the question should arise concerning how something which becomes something else can remain at the same time what it is. Or did the Logos otherwise disappear when Jesus of Nazareth was born? Here absurdity replaces thought, and faith is called the acceptance of absurdities. The Incarnation of the Logos is not metamorphosis but his total manifestation in a personal life. But manifestation in a personal life is a dynamic process involving tensions, risks, dangers, and determination by freedom as well as by destiny. This is the adoption side, without which the Incarnation accent would make unreal the living picture of the Christ. He would be deprived of his finite freedom; for a transmuted divine being does not have the freedom to be other than divine. He would be without serious temptation. Protestantism favors the given solution. It does not deny the idea of Incarnation, but it removes the pagan connotations and rejects its supranaturalistic interpretation. As Protestantism asserts the justification of the sinner, so it demands a Christology of the participa-

tion of the Christ in sinful existence, including, at the same time, its conquest. The christological paradox and the paradox of the justification of the sinner are one and the same paradox. It is the paradox of God accepting a world which rejects him.

Some traits of the christological position taken here are similar to Schleiermacher's Christology, as developed in his *Glaubenslehre.* He replaces the two-nature doctrine by a doctrine of a divine-human relation. He speaks of a God-consciousness in Jesus, the strength of which surpasses the God-consciousness of all other men. He describes Jesus as the ***Urbild*** ("original image") of what man essentially is and from which he has fallen. The similarity is obvious; but it is not identity. Essential God-Manhood points to both sides of the relation and this in terms of eternity. It is an objective structure and not a state of man. The phrase "essential unity between God and man" has an ontological character; Schleiermacher's God-consciousness has an anthropological character. The term ***Urbild*** when used for Jesus as the Christ does not have the decisive implication of the term "New Being." In ***Urbild*** the idealistic transcendence of true humanity over human existence is clearly expressed, while in "New Being," the participation of him who is ***also the Urbild*** ("essential man") is decisive. The New Being is new not only over against existence but also over against essence, in so far as essence remains mere potentiality. The ***Urbild*** remains unmoved above existence; the New Being participates in existence and conquers it. Here again an ontological element makes the difference. But these differences, expressing variant presuppositions and consequences, should not hide the fact that similar problems and solutions arise when Protestant theology takes a path lying between classical and liberal Christology. This is our present situation. In the problems it puts before us, we must seek for solutions.

D. THE UNIVERSAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT JESUS THE CHRIST

1. THE UNIQUENESS AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE EVENT

Christology is a function of soteriology. The problem of soteriology creates the christological question and gives direction to the christological answer. For it is the Christ who brings the New Being, who saves men from the old being, that is, from existential estrangement and its self-destructive consequences. This criterion has been presupposed in all

the christological assertions, but we must now consider it directly. We must ask in what sense and in what way Jesus as the Christ is the savior or, more precisely, in what way the unique event of Jesus as the Christ has universal significance for every human being and, indirectly, for the universe as well.

The biblical picture of Jesus is that of a unique event. Jesus appears as an individual beside others, but unique in his destiny, in every single trait of his character, and in his historical setting. It was just this concreteness and incomparable uniqueness of the "real" picture which gave Christianity its superiority over mystery cults and Gnostic visions. A real, individual life shines through all-his utterances and actions. In comparison, the divine figures of the mystery cults remain abstract, without the fresh colors of a life really lived and without historical destiny and the tensions of finite freedom. The picture of Jesus as the Christ conquered them through the power of a concrete reality.

Nevertheless, the New Testament was not interested in telling the story of a uniquely interesting man. It intended to give the picture of the one who is the Christ and who, for this reason, has universal significance. At the same time, the New Testament does not erase the individual traits in the picture of the Christ but relates them rather to his character as the Christ. Every trait in the New Testament records becomes translucent for the New Being, which is his being. In every expression of his individuality appears his universal significance.

We have distinguished between historical, legendary, and mythical elements in the biblical records. For the purpose of showing the universality of Jesus as the Christ within his individuality, this distinction provides three ways of looking at the biblical materials. The one way is that of historical reports which were chosen according to their value in answering the questions of human existence generally and of the early congregations especially. This produces what has been called the "anecdotal" character of the Gospel stories. The second way emphasizes the universal quality of particular stories through a more or less legendary form. The third way expresses the universal meaning of the whole event of Jesus of Nazareth in symbols and myths. The three ways often overlap, but the third way is decisive for christological thought, The latter has the character of a direct confession and thereby provides the materials for the creedal expressions of the Christian faith. In order to describe the universal significance of Jesus as the Christ on the basis of

the biblical literature, one must hold to the symbols and use the historical and legendary stories only in a corroborative sense.

But symbols and myths raise a problem which has come to the fore in the discussion about the "demythologization" of the New Testament. Although there are some "dated" features in the discussion, it has significance for the whole of Christian history and for the history of religion generally. In our earlier treatment of the nature of historical research and of the reception of the Christ, the basic point was that christological symbols are the way in which the historical fact, called Jesus of Nazareth, has been received by those who consider him to be the Christ. These symbols must be understood as symbols, and they lose their meaning if taken literally. In dealing with the christological symbols, we were engaged not in a "demythologization" but in a "deliteralization." We tried to affirm and to intercept them as symbols. "Demythologization" can mean two things, and the failure to distinguish between them has led to the confusion which characterizes the discussion. It can mean the fight against the literalistic distortion of symbols and myths. This is a necessary task of Christian theology. It keeps Christianity from falling into a wave of superstitious "objectivations" of the holy. But demythologization can also mean the removal of myth as a vehicle of religious expression and the substitution of science and morals. In this sense demythologization must be strongly rejected. It would deprive religion of its language; it would silence the experience of the holy. Symbols and myths cannot be criticized simply because they are symbols. They must be criticized on the basis of their power to express what they are supposed to express, namely, in this instance, the New Being in Jesus as the Christ.

This is the attitude for approaching those symbols and myths in which the universal meaning of Jesus as the Christ is expressed. Each of these symbols shows him as the bearer of the New Being in a special relation to existence. For systematic reasons, anticipated in the New Testament, one can single out two central symbols. These correspond to the two basic relations of the Christ to existential estrangement, and they have determined the development of and the conflicts about the christological dogma. The first relation of the Christ to existence is his subjection to it; the second relation of the Christ to existence is his conquest of it. All other relations are directly or indirectly dependent on these two. Each of them is expressed by a central symbol. The subjection to existence is expressed in the symbol of the "Cross of the Christ"; the conquest of existence is expressed in the symbol of the "Resurrection of the Christ."

2. The Central Symbols of the Universal Significance of Jesus as the Christ and Their Relation

The "Cross of the Christ" and the "Resurrection of the Christ" are interdependent symbols; they cannot be separated without losing their meaning. The Cross of the Christ is the Cross of the one who has conquered the death of existential estrangement. Otherwise it would only be one more tragic event (which it *also* is) in the long history of the tragedy of man. And the Resurrection of the Christ is the Resurrection of the one who, as the Christ, subjected himself to the death of existential estrangement. Otherwise it would be only one more questionable miracle story (which it also is in the records).

If Cross and Resurrection are interdependent, they must be both reality and symbol. In both cases something happened within existence. Otherwise the Christ would not have entered existence and could not have conquered it. But there is a qualitative difference. While the stories of the Cross probably point to an event that took place in the full light of historical observation, the stories of the Resurrection spread a veil of deep mystery over the event. The one is a highly probable fact; the other a mysterious experience of a few. One can ask whether this qualitative difference does not make a real interdependence impossible? Is it perhaps wiser to follow the suggestion of those scholars who understand the Resurrection as a symbolic interpretation of the Cross without any kind of objective reality?

The New Testament lays tremendous significance on the objective side of the Resurrection; at the same time, it elevates the objective event indicated in the stories of the Crucifixion to universal symbolic significance. One could say that in the minds of the disciples and of the writers of the New Testament the Cross is both an event and a symbol and that the Resurrection is both a symbol and an event. Certainly, the Cross of Jesus is seen as an event that happened in time and space. But, as the Cross of the Jesus who is the Christ, it is a symbol and a part of a myth. It is the myth of the bearer of the new eon who suffers the death of a convict and slave under the powers of that old eon which he

is to conquer. This Cross, whatever the historical circumstances may have been, is a symbol based on a fact.

But the same is true of the Resurrection. The resurrection of gods and half-gods is a familiar mythological symbol. It plays a major role in some mystery cults in which mystical participation in the death and the resurrection of the god on the part of the initiated is the ritual center. A belief in the future resurrection of the martyrs grew up in later Judaism. In the moment in which Jesus was called the Christ and the combination of his messianic dignity with an ignominious death was asserted-whether in expectation or in retrospection-the application of the idea of resurrection to the Christ was almost unavoidable. The disciples' assertion that the symbol had become an event was dependent in part upon their belief in Jesus, who, as the Christ, became the Messiah. But it was affirmed in a way which transcended the mythological symbolism of the mystery cults, just as the concrete picture of Jesus as the Christ transcended the mythical pictures of the mystery gods. The character of this event remains in darkness, even in the poetic rationalization of the Easter story. But one thing is obvious. In the days in which the certainty of his Resurrection grasped the small, dispersed, and despairing group of his followers, the church was born, and, since the Christ is not the Christ without the church, he has become the Christ. The certainty that he who is the bringer of the new eon cannot finally have succumbed to the powers of the old eon made the experience of the Resurrection the decisive test of the Christ-character of Jesus of Nazareth. A real experience made it possible for the disciples to apply the known symbol of resurrection to Jesus, thus acknowledging him definitely as the Christ. They called this experienced event the "Resurrection of the Christ," and it was a combination of event and symbol.

The attempt has been made to describe both events, the Cross and the Resurrection, as factual events separated from their symbolic meaning. This is justified, in so far as the significance of both symbols rests on the combination of symbol and fact. Without the factual element, the Christ would not have participated in existence and consequently not have been the Christ. But the desire to isolate the factual from the symbolic element is, as has been shown before, not a primary interest of faith. The results of the research for the purely factual element can never be on the basis of faith or theology.

With this in mind, one can say that the historical event underlying

the Crucifixion story shines with comparative clarity through the different and often contradictory legendary reports. Those who regard the passion story as cult-legend, which is told in various ways, simply agree with the thesis presented about the symbolic character of the Cross of the Jesus who is the Christ. The only factual element in it having the immediate certainty of faith is the surrender of him who is called the Christ to the ultimate consequence of existence, namely, death under the conditions of estrangement. Everything else is a matter of historical probability, elaborated out of legendary interpretation.

The event which underlies the symbol of the Resurrection must be treated in an analogous way. The factual element is a necessary implication of the symbol of the Resurrection (as it is of the symbol of the Cross). Historical research is justified in trying to elaborate this factual element on the basis of the legendary and mythological material which surrounds it. But historical research can never give more than a probable answer. The faith in the Resurrection of the Christ is neither positively nor negatively dependent on it. Faith can give certainty only to the victory of the Christ over the ultimate consequence of the existential estrangement to which he subjected himself. And faith can give this certainty because it is itself based on it. Faith is based on the experience of being grasped by the power of the New Being through which the destructive consequences of estrangement are conquered.

It is the certainty of one's own victory over the death of existential estrangement which creates the certainty of the Resurrection of the Christ as event and symbol; but it is not historical conviction or the acceptance of biblical authority which creates this certainty. Beyond this point there is no certainty but only probability, often very low, sometimes rather high.

There are three theories which try to make the event of the Resurrection probable. The most primitive theory, and at the same time most beautifully expressed, is the physical one. It is told in the story of the tomb which the women found empty on Easter morning. The sources of this story are rather late and questionable, and there is no indication of it in the earliest tradition concerning the event of the Resurrection, namely I Corinthians, chapter 15. Theologically speaking, it is a rationalization of the event, interpreting it with physical categories that identify resurrection with the presence or absence of a physical body. Then

the absurd question arises as to what happened to the molecules which comprise the corpse of Jesus of Nazareth. Then absurdity becomes compounded into blasphemy.

A second attempt to penetrate into the factual side of the Resurrection event is the spiritualistic one. It uses, above all, the appearances of the Resurrected as recorded by Paul. It explains them as manifestations of the soul of the man Jesus to his followers, in analogy to the self-manifestations of the souls of the dead in spiritualistic experiences. Obviously, this is not the Resurrection of the Christ but an attempt to prove the general immortality of the soul and the claim that it has the general ability after death to manifest itself to the living. Spiritualistic experiences may or may not be valid. But, even if valid, they cannot explain the factual side of the Resurrection of the Christ symbolized as the reappearance of the total personality, which includes the bodily expression of his being. This is so much the case that he can be recognized in a way which is more than the manifestation of a bodiless "spirit."

The third attempt to approach the factual side of the Resurrection is the psychological one. It is the easiest and most accepted way of describing the factual element in the Resurrection. Resurrection is an inner event in the minds of 'Jesus' adherents. Paul's description of the Resurrection experiences (including his own) lends itself to the psychological interpretation. And-if we exclude the physical interpretation—Paul's words, like the story of his conversion, point to something which happened in the minds of those who had the experiences. This does not imply that the event itself was "merely" psychological, namely, wholly dependent on psychological factors in the minds of those whom Paul enumerates (e.g., an intensification of the memory of Jesus). But the psychological theory misses the reality of the event which is presupposed in the symbol-the event of the Resurrection of the Christ.

We must ask anew what this reality is? In order to describe it, we must look at the negativity which is overcome in it. Certainly, it is not the death of an individual man, no matter how important. Therefore, the revival of an individual man or his reappearance as a spirit cannot be the event of Resurrection. The negativity which is overcome in the Resurrection is that of the disappearance of him whose being was the New Being. It is the overcoming of his disappearance from present experience and his consequent transition into the past except for the limits

of memory. And, since the conquest of such transitoriness is essential for the New Being, Jesus, it appeared, could not have been its bearer. At the same time, the power of his being had impressed itself indelibly upon the disciples as the power of the New Being. In this tension something unique happened. In an ecstatic experience the concrete picture of Jesus of Nazareth became indissolubly united with the reality of the New Being. He is present wherever the New Being is present. Death was not able to push him into the past. But this presence does not have the character of a revived (and transmuted) body, nor does it have the character of the reappearance of an individual soul; it has the character of spiritual presence. He "is the Spirit" and we "know him now" only because he is the Spirit. In this way the concrete individual life of the man Jesus of Nazareth is raised above transitoriness into the eternal presence of God as Spirit. This event happened first to some of his followers who had fled to Galilee in the hours of his execution; then to many others; then to Paul; then to all those who in every period experience his living presence here and now. This is the event. It has been interpreted through the symbol "Resurrection" which was readily available in the thought forms of that day. The combination of symbol and event is the central Christian symbol, the Resurrection of the Christ.

The preceding theory concerning the event which underlies the symbol of Resurrection dismisses physical as well as spiritualistic literalism. It replaces both by a description which keeps nearer to the oldest source (I Cor., chap. 15) and which places at the center of its analysis the religious meaning of the Resurrection for the disciples (and all their followers), in contrast to their previous state of negativity and despair. This view is the ecstatic confirmation of the indestructible unity of the New Being and its bearer, Jesus of Nazareth. In eternity they belong together. In contrast to the physical, the spiritualistic, and the psychological theories concerning the Resurrection event, one could call this the "restitution theory." According to it, the Resurrection is the restitution of Jesus as the Christ, a restitution which is rooted in the personal unity between Jesus and God and in the impact of this unity on the minds of the apostles. Historically, it may well be that the restitution of Jesus to the dignity of the Christ in the minds of the disciples may precede the story of the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ by Peter. The latter may be a reflex of the former; but, even if this is the case, the

experience of the New Being in Jesus must precede the experience of the Resurrected.

Although it is my conviction that the restitution theory is most adequate to the facts, it must also be considered a theory. It remains in the realm of probability and does not have the certainty of faith. Faith provides the certainty that the picture of the Christ in the Gospels is a personal life in which the New Being has appeared in its fulness and that the death of Jesus of Nazareth was not able to separate the New Being from the picture of its bearer. If physical or spiritualistic literalists are not satisfied with this solution, they cannot be forced to accept it in the name of faith. But they can perhaps grant that the attitude of the New Testament and especially of the non-literalistic Apostle Paul justifies the theory of restitution.

3. Symbols Corroborating the Symbol "Cross of the Christ"

The story of the Cross of Jesus as the Christ does not report an isolated event in his life but that event toward which the story of his life is directed and in which the others receive their meaning. Their meaning is that he who is the Christ subjects himself to the ultimate negativities of existence and that they are not able to separate him from his unity with God. Thus we find other symbols in the New Testament which point to and corroborate the more central symbol of the Cross of Jesus as the Christ.

The idea of the subjection of the self is expressed by Paul in mythical terms in Philippians, chapter 2. The pre-existent Christ gave up his divine form, became a servant, and experienced the death of a slave. Pre-existence and self-surrender are combined in this symbolism. It corroborates the central symbol of the Cross, but it cannot be taken literally as an event which happened at some time in some heavenly place. The same idea is expressed in legendary terms in the stories of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, his lying in a cradle, his flight to Egypt, and the early threat to his life by the political powers.

Also preparing for and corroborating the symbolic meaning of the Cross are the descriptions of his subjection to finitude and its categories. In many of the descriptions, which include the tension between his messianic dignity and the low conditions of his existence, the character of "subjection" to existence is indicated. In the scene of Gethsemane, of his death and burial, all this comes to a climax. All these traits, which could easily be multiplied and elaborated, are summed up in the symbol of the Cross. The Cross should not be separated from them, just as they should be interpreted in their totality as expressions of the subjection of him in whom the New Being is present to the conditions of existential estrangement. Whether these expressions are mythical, legendary, historical, or mixtures of all of them, they as well as the Cross, for which they are supporting symbols, are not important in themselves in the context of the biblital picture. They are important in their power to show the subjection of him who is the bearer of the New Being to the destructive structures of the old being. They are symbols of the divine paradox of the appearance of the eternal God-man unity within existential estrangement. One of the great features of the Apostles' Creed is that in the all-embracing second article it has enumerated symbols of subjection along with the symbols of victory. In doing so, it anticipated the basic structure in which the universal significance of Jesus the Christ as the bearer of the New Being must be seen.

4. Symbols Corroborating the Symbol "Resurrection of the Christ"

Like the story of the Cross, the story of the Resurrection of the Christ does not report an isolated event after his death. It reports the event which is anticipated in a large number of other events and which is, at the same time, their confirmation. The Resurrection, as well as the historical, legendary, and mythological symbols corroborating it, show the New Being in Jesus as the Christ as victorious over the existential estrangement to which he has subjected himself. This is their universal significance.

As in the discussion of the symbols of subjection, we must start with the mythical symbol of pre-existence and add to it that of postexistence. While pre-existence in connection with the symbols of subjection was the precondition for the transcendent self-humiliation of the Christ, it must be considered in the present context in its own significance and as a corroborating symbol for the Resurrection. It expresses the eternal root of the New Being as it is historically present in the event Jesus the Christ. When, according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus says that he precedes Abraham, this is a kind of preceding that cannot be understood horizontally (as the Jews in the story could not help doing) but vertically. This is also an implication of the Logos doctrine of the Fourth Gospel and points to the presence of the eternal principle of the divine self-manifestation in Jesus of Nazareth.

The symbol of postexistence corresponds to the symbol of pre-exist-

ence. It also lies in the vertical dimension not as the eternal presupposition of the historical appearance of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ but as its eternal confirmation. The special symbols, connected with postexistence, will be discussed presently. At this point it seems necessary to warn against a literalism which takes pre-existence and post-existence as stages in a transcendent story of a divine being which descends from and ascends to a heavenly place. Descending and ascending are spatial metaphors indicating the eternal dimension in the subjection of the bearer of the New Being to existence and in the victory of the bearer of the New Being over existence.

While the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem belongs to the symbols corroborating the Cross, the story of the virgin birth belongs to the symbols corroborating the Resurrection. It expresses the conviction that the divine Spirit who has made the man Jesus of Nazareth into the Messiah has already created him as his vessel, so that the saving appearance of the New Being is independent of historical contingencies and dependent on God alone. It is the same motif which led to the Logos Christology, even though it belongs to another line of thought. The factual element in it is that historical destiny determined the bearer of the New Being, even before his birth. But the actual story is a myth, the symbolic value of which must be seriously questioned. It points toward the docetic-monophysitic direction of Christian thinking and is itself an important step in it. By excluding the participation of a human father in the procreation of the Messiah, it deprives him of full participation in the human predicament.

A symbolically clear anticipation of the Resurrection is the story of the transfiguration of Jesus and his conversation with Moses and Elijah.

The biblical records are full of miracle stories, and some of them are significant in pointing to the appearance of the new state of things. When the disciples of John the Baptist ask him about his messianic character, Jesus points to them as witnessing the coming of the new eon. In all the miracles performed by Jesus, some of the evils of existential self-destruction are conquered. They are not finally conquered, for the people to whom miracles happened were again subject to sickness and death and to the vicissitudes of nature. But what happened to them was a representative anticipation of the victory of the New Being over existential self-destruction. This was evident in mental and bodily sickness, in catastrophe and in want, in despair and in meaningless death.

The miracles of Jesus would not have had this function, had he done them for the sake of showing his messianic power. That approach was considered by him to be a demonic temptation coming both from his enemies and from Satan. Miracles are performed by him because he fully participates in the misery of the human situation and tries to overcome it wherever the occasion offers itself. In a special way the healing stories show the superiority of the New Being in him over mental possession and its bodily consequences. He appears as the victor over the demons, over the supra-individual structures of destruction. This point was taken up by Paul and the early church. The saving power of the New Being is, above all, power over the enslaving structures of evil. In later periods Christian teaching and preaching often neglected this basic meaning of the miracle stories and instead emphasized their miraculous character. This is one of the unfortunate consequences of the supranaturalistic frame of reference in which traditional theology saw the relation between God and the world. God's presence and power should not be sought in the supranatural interference in the ordinary course of events but in the power of the New Being to overcome the self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement in and through the created structures of reality. If taken in this sense, the miracles of Jesus as the Christ belong to the symbols of victory and corroborate the central symbol of Resurrection.

The concept of miracles in general was discussed in Part I and cannot be repeated here. Here it can only be reported that miracles are described as an ecstatically received understanding of constellations of factors which point to the divine Ground of Being. This definition was formulated on the basis of the New Testament miracle stories and the judgment about them in the New Testament itself. It is understandable, however, that legendary and mythical elements easily entered into the reports about genuinely experienced miracles. It is even more understandable that, as early as the New Testament, a rationalization took place which expressed itself in the desire to emphasize the antinatural element in the stories instead of their power to point to the presence of the divine power overcoming existential destruction.

We must now consider a consistent group of symbols, taken from the rich field of eschatological symbolism, which corroborate the Resurrection from the point of view of its consequences for the Christ, his church, and his world. These start with the symbol of the Ascension of the Christ. In some ways this is a reduplication of the Resurrection

but is distinguished from it because it has a finality which contrasts markedly with the repeated experiences of the Resurrected. The finality of his separation from historical existence, indicated in the Ascension, is identical with his spiritual presence as the power of the New Being but with the concreteness of his personal countenance. It is therefore another symbolic expression of the same event which the Resurrection expresses. If taken literally, its spatial symbolism would become absurd.

The same is true of the symbol of Christ "sitting at the right hand of God." If taken literally, it is absurd and ridiculous, as Luther already felt when he identified the right hand of God with his omnipotence, that is, his power of working everything in everything. The symbol then means that God's creativity is not separated from the New Being in Christ but that in its three forms (original, preserving, directing creativity) its final aim is the actualization of the New Being as manifest in the Christ.

Immediately connected with the participation of the New Being in divine creativity is the symbol of his rule over the church through the Spirit. In fact, the church takes the criteria of his working in the church from him, namely, from the being of Jesus as the Christ which is the New Being. Another, but intimately connected, expression of the participation of the New Being in divine creativity is the symbol of him as the ruler of history. He who is the Christ and has brought the new eon is the ruler of the new eon. History is the creation of the new in every moment. But the ultimately new toward which history moves is the New Being; it is the end of history, namely, the end of the preparatory period of history and its aim. If one asks what the event is behind the symbol of the ruling of history in the Christ, the answer can only be that through historical providence the New Being is actualized in history and through history (fragmentarily and under the ambiguities of life), though under the criterion of the being of Jesus as the Christ. The symbol of the Christ as Lord of history means neither external interference by a heavenly being nor fulfilment of the New Being in history or its transformation into the Kingdom of God; but it does mean the certainty that nothing can happen in history which would make the work of the New Being impossible.

The more directly eschatological symbols must also be evaluated. One of them, the expectation of a coming period symbolized as a period of a thousand years, is much neglected in traditional theology. This is

partly because it had no prominent place in biblical literature. It is neglected partly because it had been a matter of sharp controversy since the time of the Montanist revolt against ecclesiastical conservatism. It was present still as a problem in the revolt of the radical Franciscans. But it must be taken seriously in theology, because it is decisive for the Christian interpretation of history. In contrast to a final catastrophe in the sense of the apocalyptic visions, the symbol of the thousand years' reign of the Christ continues the prophetic tradition in which an inner-historical fulfilment of history is envisaged. Of course, the symbol does not stand for a complete fulfilment. The demonic power is banned but not eradicated, and it will return. In less mythological language, one could say that the demonic can positively be conquered in a special place and in a special time but not totally and universally. The expectation of the thousand-year reign produced many utopian movements, but it actually has in it a genuine warning against utopianism. The demonic is subdued for a time, but it is not dead!

The symbol of the "Second Coming" or the ***parousia*** of the Christ has two functions. First, it expresses in a special way that Jesus is the Christ, namely, he who cannot be transcended by anyone else who may appear in the course of human history. Although this is clearly implicit in the christological assertion, it must be emphasized especially for those who speak of new superior religious experiences which might occur and who therefore think that one must keep the future open, even in relation to Jesus as the Christ. This problem was well known to the author of the Fourth Gospel. He does not deny the continuation of religious experience after the Resurrection of the Christ. He has the Christ say that the Spirit will guide them into all truth. But he immediately warns that what the Spirit shows does not come from the Spirit but from the Christ, who himself has nothing from himself but everything from his Father. The one function of the symbol of the Second Coming of the Christ is to exclude the expectation of a superior manifestation of the New Being.

But this is only one function of the symbol "Second Coming." The other is to give an answer to the Jewish criticism that Jesus could not have been the Messiah, since the new eon has not come and the old state of things remains unchanged. Therefore, the Jewish argument is that we still must wait for the coming of the Messiah. Christianity agrees that we are in a period of waiting. It proves that, with the

increase of the power of the Kingdom of God, the demonic realm also becomes stronger and more destructive. But, in contrast to Judaism, Christianity asserts that the might of the demonic is broken in principle (in power and beginning) because the Christ has appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, the bearer of the New Being. His being is the New Being. And the New Being, the conquest of the old eon, is in those who participate in him and in the church in so far as it is based on him as its foundation. The symbol of the Second Coming of the Christ corroborates the Resurrection by placing the Christian in a period between the *kairoi,* the times in which the eternal breaks into the temporal, between an "already" and a "not yet," and subjects him to the infinite tensions of this situation in personal and in historical existence.

The ultimate judgment of the world by Christ is one of the most dramatic symbols. It has inspired artists and poets in all generations and has produced profound and often neurotic anxiety in the conscious as well as the unconscious spheres of believers. It has-as Luther tells of his own early experience-corrupted the image of the Christ as healer and savior into the image of a pitiless judge from whom one must flee under the protection of saints, analysts, or skeptics. It is important to realize that in this case the New Testament itself has started to "deliteralize" (as one should say, instead of "demythologize"). The Fourth Gospel does not deny the mythical symbol of the Last Judgment; but it describes the factual side as the crisis which happens to people who encounter the New Being and either accept it or reject it. It is an immanent judgment which is always going on in history, even where the name of Jesus is not known but where the power of the New Being, which is his being, is present or absent (Matthew, chapter 25). This immanent judgment, since it is going on under the conditions of existence, is subject to the ambiguities of life and therefore demands a symbol of an ultimate separation of the ambiguous elements of reality or their purification and elevation into the transcendent unity of the Kingdom of God.

This completes our discussion of the symbols which corroborate the central one of the Resurrection of the Christ. The symbols have been greatly distorted and consequently were rejected by many because of a literalism which makes them absurd and non-existential. Their power must be reestablished by a reinterpretation which unites cosmic and existential qualities and makes it evident that a symbol is based on

things and events and participates in the power of that which it symbolizes. Therefore, symbols cannot be replaced at will; they must be interpreted as long as they are alive. They may die, and some of the symbols interpreted in the preceding chapters may already be dead. For a long time they have been under justifiable and unjustifiable attacks. The theologian cannot give a judgment concerning the life or death of the symbols he interprets. This judgment occurs in the consciousness of the living church and has deep roots in the collective unconscious. It happens in the liturgical realm, in personal devotion, in preaching and in teaching, in the activities of the church toward the world, and in the quiet contemplation of its members. It happens as historical destiny and therefore ultimately through the divine creativity as united with the power of the New Being in the Christ. The New Being is not dependent on the special symbols in which it is expressed. It has the power to be free from every form in which it appears.

E. THE NEW BEING IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST AS THE POWER OF SALVATION

1. The Meaning of Salvation

The universal significance of Jesus as the Christ, which is expressed in the symbols of subjection to existence and of victory over existence, can also be expressed in the term "salvation." He himself is called the Savior, the Mediator, or the Redeemer. Each of these terms demands semantic and theological clarification.

The term "salvation" has as many connotations as there are negativities from which salvation is needed. But one can distinguish salvation from ultimate negativity and from that which leads to ultimate negativity. Ultimate negativity is called condemnation or eternal death, the loss of the inner *telos* of one's being, the exclusion from the universal unity of the Kingdom of God, and the exclusion from eternal life. In the overwhelming majority of occasions in which the word "salvation" or the phrase "being saved" is used, it refers to salvation from this ultimate negativity. The tremendous weight of the question of salvation is rooted in this understanding of the term. It becomes the question of "to be or not to be."

The way in which the ultimate aim-eternal life-can be gained or lost decides about the more limited meaning of "salvation." Therefore,

for the early Greek church death and error were the things from which one needed and wanted to be saved. In the Roman Catholic church salvation is from guilt and its consequences in this and the next life (in purgatory and hell). In classical Protestantism salvation is from the law, its anxiety-producing and its condemning power. In pietism and revivalism salvation is the conquest of the godless state through conversion and transformation for those who are converted. In ascetic and liberal Protestantism salvation is the conquest of special sins and progress toward moral perfection. The question of life and death in the ultimate sense has not disappeared in the latter groups (except in some forms of so-called theological humanism), but it has been pushed into the background.

With respect to both the original meaning of salvation (from *salvus,* "healed") and our present situation, it may be adequate to interpret salvation as "healing." It corresponds to the state of estrangement as the main characteristic of existence. In this sense, healing means reuniting that which is estranged, giving a center to what is split, overcoming the split between God and man, man and his world, man and himself. Out of this interpretation of salvation, the concept of the New Being has grown. Salvation is reclaiming from the old and transferring into the New Being. This understanding includes the elements of salvation which were emphasized in other periods; it includes, above all, the fulfilment of the ultimate meaning of one's existence, but it sees this in a special perspective, that of making *salvus,* of "healing."

If Christianity derives salvation from the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, it does not separate salvation through the Christ from the processes of salvation, i.e., of healing, which occur throughout all history. We have discussed the problem of "healing" universally in the section on revelation. There is a history of concrete revelatory events in all periods in which man exists as man. It would be wrong to call that history itself the history of revelation (with some theological humanists). But it would be equally wrong to deny that revelatory events occur anywhere besides the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. There is a history of revelation, the center of which is the event Jesus the Christ; but the center is not without a line which leads to it (preparatory revelation) and a line which leads from it (receiving revelation). Further, we have asserted that where there is revelation, there is salvation. Revelation is not information about divine things; it is the ecstatic manifestation of

the Ground of Being in events, persons, and things. Such manifestations have shaking, transforming, and healing power. They are saving events in which the power of the New Being is present, It is present in a preparatory way, fragmentarily, and is open to demonic distortion. But it is present and heals where it is seriously accepted. On these healing forces the life of mankind always depends; they prevent the self-destructive structures of existence from plunging mankind into complete annihilation. This is true of individuals as well as of groups and is the basis for a positive evolution of the religions and cultures of mankind. However, the idea of a universal history of salvation can be developed fully only in the parts of Systematic *Theology* which deal with "Life and the Spirit" and with "History and the Kingdom of God" (Vol. III).

This view of the history of salvation excludes an unbiblical but nevertheless ecclesiastical view of salvation. It is the belief that salvation is either total or non-existent. Total salvation, in this view, is identical with being taken into the state of ultimate blessedness and is the opposite of total condemnation to everlasting pain or eternal death. If, then, the salvation to eternal life is made dependent upon the encounter with Jesus as the Christ and the acceptance of his saving power, only a small number of human beings will ever reach salvation. The others; either through a divine decree or through the destiny which came upon them from Adam's Fall or through their own guilt, are condemned to exclusion from eternal life. Theologies of universalism always tried to escape this absurd and demonic idea, but it is difficult to do so, once the absolute alternative between salvation and condemnation is presupposed. Only if salvation is understood as healing and saving power through the New Being in all history is the problem put on another level. In some degree all men participate in the healing power of the New Being. Otherwise, they would have no being. The self-destructive consequences of estrangement would have destroyed them. But no men are totally healed, not even those who have encountered the healing power as it appears in Jesus as the Christ. Here the concept of salvation drives us to the eschatological symbolism and its interpretation. It drives us to the symbol of cosmic healing and to the question of the relation of the eternal to the temporal with respect to the future.

What, then, is the peculiar character of the healing through the New Being in Jesus as the Christ? If he is accepted as the Savior, what does salvation through him mean? The answer cannot be that there is no

saving power apart from him but that he is the ultimate criterion of every healing and saving process. We said before that even those who have encountered him are only fragmentarily healed. But now we must say that in him the healing quality is complete and unlimited. The Christian remains in the state of relativity with respect to salvation; the New Being in the Christ transcends every relativity in its quality and power of healing. It is just this that makes him the Christ. Therefore, wherever there is saving power in mankind, it must be judged by the saving power in Jesus as the Christ.

2. The Christ as the Savior (Mediator, Redeemer)

Traditional theology distinguished between the person and the work of Christ. The person was the subject matter of Christology; the work was the subject matter of soteriology. This scheme was abandoned in the concept of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ and its universal significance. It was a rather unsatisfactory and theologically dangerous scheme. It created the impression that the person of the Christ is a reality in itself without relation to what has made him the Christ, namely, the New Being-the power of healing and salvation-in him. The correlation with those for whom he became the Christ is missing in this double, but separate, description of person and work. On the other hand, the work was understood as an act of the person who was the Christ, whether or not he had performed his work. This is one of the reasons for the understanding of the atonement as a kind of priestly technique undertaken for the purpose of salvation-even if this technique includes self-sacrifice. Many of these semimechanistic mistakes in the doctrine of salvation could have been avoided if the principle had been accepted that the being of the Christ is his work and that his work is his being, namely, the New Being which is his being. With the help of this principle, we can dispose of the traditional division of the work of Christ into his prophetic, priestly, and kingly work, whereby his office as prophet covers his words, his office as priest his self-sacrifice, his office as king the ruling over world and church. Under certain circumstances such distinctions are homiletically and liturgically useful, but they have no systematic value. The significance of Jesus as the Christ is his being; and the prophetic, priestly, and royal elements in it are immediate consequences of his being (besides several others), but they are not special "offices" connected with his "work." Jesus as the

Christ is the Savior through the universal significance of his being as the New Being.

Besides the term "Savior" (*soter*), the term "Mediator" is also applied to the Christ. The term has deep roots in the history of religion. Religions of both the non-historical and the historical types use the idea of mediator-gods to bridge the gap between men and the highest gods who have become increasingly transcendent and abstract. The religious consciousness, the state of being concerned unconditionally, must affirm both the unconditional transcendence of its god and the concreteness which makes possible an encounter with him. The mediator-gods have grown out of this tension. They made the transcendent divine approachable for men, and they elevated man toward the transcendent divine. They united in themselves the infinity of the transcendent divinity and the finitude of men.

But this is only the one element in the idea of the Mediator; the other is his function to reunite what is estranged. He is Mediator in so far as he is supposed to reconcile. He represents God toward man and man toward God. Both elements of the idea of the mediator have been applied to Jesus as the Christ. In his face we see the face of God, and in him we experience the reconciling will of God; in both respects he is the Mediator.

The term "Mediator" is not without theological difficulty. It can suggest that the Mediator is a third reality on which both God and men are dependent for revelation and reconciliation. This, however, is untenable, from both the christological and the soteriological point of view. A third kind of being between God and man would be a half-god. Exactly this was rejected in the Arian heresy. In Christ the eternal God-Man unity has appeared under the conditions of existence. The Mediator is not a half-god. This was the first great anti-heretical decision of Christianity, namely, that he is not a third reality between God and man.

This must be emphasized even more strongly with respect to soteriology. If the Mediator is a third reality between God and man, God is dependent upon him for his saving activity. He needs someone in order to make himself manifest, and-even more misleading-he needs someone in order to be reconciled. This leads to the type of doctrine of the atonement according to which God is the one who must be reconciled. But the message of Christianity is that God, who is eternally reconciled,

wants us to be reconciled to him. God reveals himself to us and reconciles us to him through the Mediator. God is always the one who acts, and the Mediator is the one through whom he acts. If this is understood, the term "Mediator" can be used; if not, it should be dropped.

A similar semantic difficulty is connected with the term "Redeemer" (as well as "redemption"). The word, derived from *redemere* ("buying back"), introduces the connotation of someone who has men in his power-namely, Satan-to whom a ransom price must be paid for their liberation. This imagery is not strong in the ordinary use of the term "Redeemer," but it has not altogether disappeared. The symbolism of man's liberation from demonic powers plays a great role in the traditional doctrines of atonement. Therefore, it is quite just&able to apply the term "Redeemer" to Jesus as the Christ. However, the word has a dangerous semantic connotation, similar to that of the word "mediator." It can create an image of someone who must pay a price to the antidivine powers before God is able to liberate man from the bondage of guilt and punishment. This leads to the discussion of the doctrine of atonement and its several types.

3. Doctrines of Atonement

The doctrine of atonement is the description of the effect of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ on those who are grasped by it in their state of estrangement. This definition points to two sides of the process of atonement, to that in the manifestation of the New Being which has an atoning effect and to that which happens to man under the atoning effect. In the sense of this definition, atonement is always both a divine act and a human reaction. The divine act overcomes the estrangement between God and man in so far as it is a matter of human guilt. In atonement, human guilt is removed as a factor which separates man from God. But this divine act is effective only if man reacts and accepts the removal of guilt between God and man, namely, the divine offer of reconciliation in spite of guilt. Atonement therefore necessarily has an objective and a subjective element.

The subjective element makes the process of atonement partly dependent on man's possibilities of reaction. In this way a moment of indefiniteness is introduced into the doctrine of atonement. This is why the church instinctively refused to state the doctrine of atonement in definite dogmatic terms, as in the case of the christological dogma. This

also opened the way for the development of different types of the doctrine of atonement. All of them were admitted in the church, and each of them has a special strength and a special weakness.

These, types can be distinguished as predominantly objective, predominantly subjective, and stages between the two. This itself corresponds to the objective-subjective character of the processes of atonement. Objective in a radical sense is the doctrine developed by Origen, namely, that the liberation of man from the bondage of guilt and self-destruction became possible by a deal between God, Satan, and Christ in which Satan was betrayed. Satan received power over Christ; but he did not have the right to exercise this power over someone who was innocent. His power over Christ and those who are with Christ was therefore broken. This construction of Origen is based on a group of biblical passages in which the victory of the Christ over the demonic powers is expressed. This line of thought has recently been re-emphasized under the title *Christus* Victor (Aulen). It seems that, in this formulation of the doctrine of atonement, any relation to man is completely lacking. A cosmic drama—almost a comedy in the case of Origen-happens above man's head; and the report of the drama provides man with the certainty that he is liberated from the demonic power. But this is not the real meaning of the objective type. In Paul's triumphant verses about the victory of the love of God in Christ over all the demonic powers, it is the experience of the love of God which precedes the application of this experience to a symbolism involving demonic powers-consequently, the symbol of the victory of Christ over the demons. Without the experience of the conquest of existential estrangement, the *Christus* Victor symbol never could have arisen either in Paul or in Origen.

But this general consideration is not sufficient to evaluate the objective theory of atonement. One must examine the concrete symbols themselves. The betrayal of Satan has a profound metaphysical dimension. It points to the truth that the negative lives from the positive, which it distorts. If it completely overcame the positive, it would destroy itself. Satan can never keep the Christ, because the Christ represents the positive in existence by representing the New Being. The betrayal of Satan is a widespread motif in the history of religion, because Satan, the principle of the negative, has no independent reality.

The world into which Christianity came was filled with fear of the

demonic powers considered as both the sources of evil and the tools of punishment (a mythical expression of the self-destructive character of existential estrangement). These demonic powers prevent the soul from being reunited with God. They keep one in bondage and under the control of existential self-destruction. The message of Christianity was one of liberation from this demonic fear. And the process of atonement is that of liberation. But the liberation from the fear of destructive and punishing power is possible only if something happens, not only objectively but also subjectively. The subjective element is the experienced impact of the inner power of him who is externally subdued by the demonic powers. Without the experience of the power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, his atoning subjection to the forces of existence would not have been able to overcome demonic fear.

It is therefore not astonishing that Abélard developed a theory by stressing the subjective side of the processes of atonement, though without denying the objective side. The liberating impression made upon men by the picture of Christ the Crucified is the impression of his self-surrendering love. This love awakens in man the answering love which is certain that, in God, love, not wrath, is the last word. But this is not sufficient to take away the anxiety about guilt and the feeling of having to undergo punishment. The violated justice cannot be reestablished by the message of the divine love alone. For love becomes weakness and sentimentality if it does not include justice. The message of a divine love which neglects the message of divine justice cannot give man a good conscience. One can refer here to depth psychology, with its practice of making the patient go through the torment of existential insight into his being (though not in a realistic or legalistic sense) before promising any healing. In so far as the predominantly subjective description of the process of atonement misses this point, it could not be accepted as adequate by Christian theology.

The fact that Anselm did justice to this psychological situation is the main reason why his doctrine was the most effective one, at least in Western Christianity. In its form it belongs to the predominantly objective type. It starts with the tension in God between his wrath and his love and shows that the work of Christ makes it possible for God to exercise mercy without violating the demands of justice. The infinite worth of the suffering of the Christ gives satisfaction to God and makes unnecessary the punishment of man for the infinite weight of his sin.

Only the God-Man could do this, because, as man, he could suffer and, as God, he did not have to suffer for his own sins. For the believing Christian, this means that his consciousness of guilt is affirmed in its unconditional character. At the same time he feels the inescapability of that punishment which is nevertheless taken over by the infinite depth and value of the suffering of the Christ. Whenever he prays that God may forgive his sins because of the innocent suffering and death of the Christ, he accepts both the demand that he himself suffer infinite punishment and the message that he is released from guilt and punishment by the substitutional suffering of the Christ.

This point gave the Anselmian doctrine its strong psychological effect and kept it alive in spite of its dated legalistic terminology and its quantitative measuring of sin and punishment. The discovery of an often deeply hidden guilt feeling has given us a new key for an explanation of the tremendous effect of the Anselmian theory on personal piety, hymns, liturgies, and much of Christian teaching and preaching. A system of symbols which gives the individual the courage to accept himself in spite of his awareness that he is unacceptable has every chance to be accepted itself.

A criticism of the theory has already been made in connection with our discussion of the titles "Mediator" and "Redeemer." We have also referred critically to the legalistic and quantitative categories that Anselm uses in his description of the objective side of the atonement. We must add an even more basic criticism-made by Thomas Aquinas—that the subjective side of the atoning process is not present at all. Thomas adds the, idea of the participation of the Christian in what happens to the "head" of the Christian body, the Christ. The replacement of the concept of substitution by the concept of participation seems to be a way to a more adequate doctrine of atonement, in which the objective and the subjective sides are balanced.

4. Principles of the Doctrine of Atonement

The implicit and partly explicit criticisms of the basic types of the doctrine of atonement make it possible to give principles which should determine the further development of the doctrine of atonement-or what may even replace it in future theology.

The first and all-decisive principle is that the atoning processes are created by God and God alone. This implies that God, in the removal

of the guilt and punishment which stand between him and man, is not dependent on the Christ but that the Christ, as the bearer of the New Being, mediates the reconciling act of God to man.

The second principle for a doctrine of atonement is that there are no conflicts in God between his reconciling love and his retributive justice. The justice of God is not a special act of punishment calculated according to the guilt of the sinner. But the justice of God is the act through which he lets the self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement go their way. He cannot remove them because they belong to the structure of being itself and God would cease to be God—the only thing which is impossible for him-if he removed these consequences. Above all, he would cease to be love, for justice is the structural form of love without which it would be sheer sentimentality. The exercise of justice is the working of his love, resisting and breaking what is against love. Therefore, there can be no conflict in God between love and justice.

The third principle for a doctrine of atonement is that the divine removal of guilt and punishment is not an act of overlooking the reality and depth of existential estrangement. Such thinking is often found in liberal humanism and is supported by them by comparing the divine and human forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer. This comparison, like all comparisons between divine and human things (e.g., in the parables of Jesus), is valid to a point but is wrong if driven beyond it. While the point of analogy is obvious (community in spite of trespasses), the difference must be clearly stated. In all human relations he who forgives is himself guilty, not only generally, but in the concrete situation in which he forgives. Human forgiveness should always be mutual even if it is not outspokenly acknowledged. But God represents the order of being which is violated by reparation from God; his forgiveness is no private matter.

The fourth principle for a doctrine of atonement is that God's atoning activity must be understood as his participation in existential estrangement and its self-destructive consequences. He cannot remove these consequences; they are implied in his justice. But he can take them upon himself by participating in them and transforming them for those who participate in his participation. Here we are in the very heart of the doctrine of atonement and of God's acting with man and his world. The problem, of course, is: What does it mean that God

takes the suffering of the world upon himself by participating in existential estrangement? The first answer is that it is a highly symbolic kind of speaking, but a speaking which is not strange to the biblical writers. God's "patience," God's "repentance" (change of mind), God's "toil with human sin," "God not sparing his Son," and other expressions of this type disclose a freedom for concreteness in speaking of God's living reactions to the world of which theology is naturally afraid. If we try to say more than the symbolic assertion that "God takes the suffering of the world upon himself," we must add the statement that this suffering does not contradict God's eternal blessedness and its basis, namely, God's eternal "aseity," his being by himself and therefore beyond freedom and destiny. On the other hand, we must refer to what has been said in the sections on God as living, namely, the element of non-being which is eternally conquered in the divine life. This element of non-being, seen from inside, is the suffering that God takes upon himself by participating in existential estrangement or the state of unconquered negativity. Here the doctrine of the living God and the doctrine of atonement coincide.

The fifth principle of a doctrine of atonement is that in the Cross of the Christ the divine participation in existential estrangement becomes manifest. Once more it must be stressed that it is a basic distortion -of the doctrine of atonement if, instead of saying "becomes manifest," one says "becomes possible." On the other hand, "becomes manifest" does not mean only "becomes known." Manifestations are effective expressions, not only communications. Something happens through a manifestation which has effects and consequences. The Cross of the Christ is a manifestation in this sense. It is a manifestation by being actualization. It is not the only actualization, but it is the central one, the criterion of all other manifestations of God's participation in the suffering of the world. The guilty conscience which looks at the Cross sees God's atoning act in it and through it, namely his taking the destructive consequences of estrangement upon himself. The liturgical language which derives consolation in guilt and death from the "merit" of Christ, from his "precious blood," and his "innocent suffering" points to him in whom God's atoning act is manifest. But neither the liturgical language nor the uneasy conscience differentiates in the act of faith between the terms "in the Cross" and "through the Cross." Theology must make a differentiation (because of the first of these

principles) between the two. The Cross is not the cause but the effective manifestation of God's taking the consequences of human guilt upon himslf. And, since the atoning process includes the subjective side, namely, the experience of man that God is eternally reconciled, one can say that atonement is actualized through the Cross of the Christ. This partly justifies a theology which makes God's atoning act dependent on the "'merit" of the Christ.

The sixth principle of a doctrine of atonement is that through participation in the New Being, which is the being of Jesus as the Christ, men also participate in the manifestation of the atoning act of God. They participate in the suffering of God who takes the consequences of existential estrangement upon himself, or, to say it succinctly, they participate in the suffering of the Christ. From this follows an evaluation of the term "substitutional suffering." It is a rather unfortunate term and should not be used in theology. God participates in the suffering of existential estrangement, but his suffering is not a substitute for the suffering of the creature. Neither is the suffering of the Christ a substitute for the suffering of man. But the suffering of God, universally and in the Christ, is the power which overcomes creaturely self-destruction by participation and transformation. Not substitution, but free participation, is the character of the divine suffering. And, conversely, not having a theoretical knowledge of the divine participation, but participation in the divine participation, accepting it and being transformed by it-that is the threefold character of the state of salvation.

In the light of the principle of participation and on the basis of the doctrine of atonement, we must now consider this threefold character of salvation in which the effect of the divine atoning act upon men is expressed: participation, acceptance, transformation (in classical terminology, Regeneration, Justification, Santification).

5. The Threefold Character of Salvation

a) *Salvation as participation in the New Being* (*Regeneration*).—The saving power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is dependent on man's participation in it. The power of the New Being must lay hold of him who is still in bondage to the old being. The description of the psychological and spiritual processes in which this happens belongs to the part of ***Systematic Theology*** which is called "Life and the Spirit"

(Vol. III). At this point, however, it is not the human reaction which is the subject matter under consideration. It is the objective side, the relation of the New Being to those who are grasped by it. This relation can be called "grasping and drawing into itself," producing the state which Paul called "being ***in*** Christ."

The classical terms for this state are "New Birth," "Regeneration," "being a new creature." Obviously, the characteristics of the New Being are the opposite of those of estrangement, namely, faith instead of unbelief, surrender instead of *hubris,* love instead of concupiscence. According to the usual terminology, these are only subjective processes, the work of the divine Spirit in the individual soul. But this is not the only way in which pre-New Testament and New Testament sources use the term "Regeneration." Regeneration is a state of things universally. It is the new state of things, the new eon, which the Christ brought; the individual "enters it," and in so doing he himself participates in it and is reborn through participation. The objective reality of the New Being precedes subjective participation in it. The message of conversion is, first, the message of a new reality to which one is asked to turn; in the light of it, one is to move away from the old reality, the state of existential estrangement in which one has lived. Regeneration (and conversion), understood in this way, have little in common with the attempt to create emotional reactions in appealing to an individual in his subjectivity. Regeneration is the state of having been drawn into the new reality manifest in Jesus as the Christ. The subjective consequences are fragmentary and ambiguous and not the basis for claiming participation in the Christ. But the faith which accepts Jesus as the bearer of the New Being is this basis. This leads to the second relation which the New Being has to those who are grasped by it.

b) Salvation as acceptance of the New Being (*Justification*).—The priority of Justification or Regeneration was discussed in the process of salvation. The Lutheran emphasis is upon Justification; the pietistic and methodistic upon Regeneration. A decision between them is dependent partly on the way one defines the terms but partly also on different religious experiences. Regeneration can be defined as actual transformation. If this is done, it is identical with Sanctification and must definitely be put in the second place. The meaning of the atoning act of God is that man's salvation is not dependent on the state of his

development. But Regeneration can also be defined as in this system, namely, as participation in the New Being, in its objective, power, however fragmentary this may be. If defined in this way, Regeneration precedes Justification; for Justification presupposes faith, the state of being grasped by the divine presence. Faith, justifying faith, is not a human act, although it happens in man; faith is the work of the divine Spirit, the power which creates the New Being, in the Christ, id individuals, in the church. It was a pitfall in Protestant theology when Melanchthon placed the reception of the divine Spirit after the act of faith. In this moment faith became an intellectual work of man, made possible without participation in the New Being. For these reasons, one should put Regeneration, defined in the sense of participation in the New Being, before Justification.

Justification brings the element of "in spite of" into the process of salvation. It is the immediate consequence of the doctrine of atonement, and it is the heart and center of salvation. Like Regeneration, Justification is first an objective event and then a subjective reception. Justification in the objective sense is the eternal act of God by which he accepts as not estranged those who are indeed estranged from him by guilt and the act by which he takes them into the unity with him which is manifest in the New Being in Christ. Justification literally means "making just," namely, making man that which he essentially is and from which he is estranged. If used in this sense, the word would be identical with Sanctification. But the Pauline doctrine of Justification by grace through faith has given the word a meaning which makes it the opposite pole of Sanctification. It is an act of God which is in no way dependent on man, an act in which he accepts him who is unacceptable. In the paradoxical formula, ***simul peccator, simul justus,*** which is the core of the Lutheran revolution, the in-spite-of character is decisive for the whole Christian message as the salvation from despair about one's guilt. It is actually the only way to overcome the anxiety of guilt; it enables man to look away from himself and his state of estrangement and self-destruction to the justifying act of God. He who looks at himself and tries to measure his relation to God by his achievements increases his estrangement and the anxiety of guilt and despair. In the discussion of the failure of self-salvation, we prepared the ground for this statement. For Luther, the absence of any human contribution was so important that Melanchthon formulated the "forensic" doctrine

of Just&cation. He compared God with a judge who releases a guilty one in spite of his guilt, simply because he decides to do so. But this is a way of stating a doctrine of Justification which leaves out of consideration the subjective side, namely, the acceptance. Indeed, there is nothing in man which enables God to accept him. But man must accept just this. He must accept that he is accepted; he must accept acceptance. And the question is how this is possible in spite of the guilt which makes him hostile to God. The traditional answer is "Because of Christ!" This answer has been interpreted in the preceding sections. It means that one is drawn into the power of the New Being in Christ, which makes faith possible; that it is the state of unity between God and man, no matter how fragmentarily realized. Accepting that one is accepted is the paradox of salvation without which there would be no salvation but only despair.

A word must be said about the expression "Justification by grace through faith." It is often used in the abbreviated form of "Justification by faith." But this is extremely misleading, for it gives the impression that faith is an act of man by which he merits Justification. This is a total and disastrous distortion of the doctrine of Justification. The cause is God alone (by grace), but the faith that one is accepted is the channel through which grace is mediated to man (through faith). The ***articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*** must be kept clear, even in the formulation of Justification by grace through faith.

c) ***Salvation as transformation by the New Being*** (*Sanctification*).— As a divine act, Regeneration and Justification are one. Both describe the reunion of what is estranged. Regeneration as the actual reunion, Justification as the paradoxical character of this reunion, both as accepting the unacceptable. Sanctification is distinguished from both of them as a process is distinguished from the event in which it is initiated. The sharp distinction in the Reformation between "Sanctification" and "Justification" is not rooted in the original meaning of the words. "Justification" literally means "making just," and, on the other hand, "Sanctification" ***can*** mean "being received into the community of the ***sancti,"*** namely, into the community of those who are grasped by the power of the New Being. The differentiation between the terms is not due to their literal meaning but to events of church history, such as the resurgence of Paulinism in the Reformation.

Sanctification is the process in which the power of the New Being

transforms personality and community, inside and outside the church. Both the individual Christian and the church, both the religious and the secular realm, are objects of the sanctifying work of the divine Spirit, who is the actuality of the New Being. But these considerations transcend the frame of this part of Systematic Theology. They belong to what will be discussed in the fourth and fifth parts of the system—"Life and the Spirit," "History and the Kingdom of God."

This concludes the third part, "Existence and the Christ." Actually, however, neither the doctrine of man nor the doctrine of the Christ is brought to an end within this part. Man is not only determined by essential goodness and by existential estrangement; he is also determined by the ambiguities of life and history. Without an analysis of these characteristics of his being, everything so far remains abstract. Also, the Christ is not an isolated event which happened "once upon a time"; he is the power of the New Being preparing his decisive manifestation in Jesus as the Christ in all preceding history and actualizing himself as the Christ in all subsequent history. Our statement that the Christ is not the Christ without the church makes the doctrines of the Spirit and of the Kingdom integral parts of the christological work. Only external expediency justifies the separation of the parts. It is the hope that some of the problems which remain open in this part will find answers in the subsequent parts.

VOLUME THREE

LIFE AND THE SPIRIT

HISTORY AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

FOR HANNAH

THE COMPANION OF MY LIFE

PR-EFACE

WITH THE third volume, my Systematic *Theology* is completed. The last volume appears six years after the second volume, which itself appeared six years after the first one. The long periods between the dates of publication were caused not only by the qualitative and quantitative immensity of the subject but also by demands on my time in'connection with my work as a systematic theologian. These demands involved developing particular problems in smaller and less technical books and presenting my views in lectures and discussions at many places in this country and abroad. I considered these demands as justified and tried to fulfil them although this meant delays in the completion of my main work.

But finally, in view of my age, a further delay was not permissible, in spite of the fact that one never feels enough work has been done on a book that struggles with so many problematic subjects. However, at some time, the author must accept his finitude and with it the incompleteness of the completed. A strong motive to do so came from the doctoral students who over the years have asked that the still fragmentary manuscript of the third volume be opened to them because they had to write theses on my theology. This questionable procedure had to come to an end and, beyond this, a large number of requests for the third volume had finally to be satisfied. My friends and I sometimes feared that the system would remain a fragment. This has not happened, although even at its best this system is fragmentary and often inadequate and questionable. Nevertheless, it shows the stage at which my theological thought has arrived. Yet a system should be not only a point of arrival but a point of departure as well. It should be like a station at which preliminary truth is crystallized on the endless road toward truth.

I want to express my thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Boone, who did the necessary "Englishing" of my style with its unavoidable Germanisms, to William Crout, who read the galley proof, and to Mrs. Elizabeth Stoner and Mrs. Maria Pelikan, who helped prepare the index. I also want

to thank my assistant, Clark Williamson, who was the special editor for this volume, for the hard work he put into the difficult task and for the fruitful discussions we had about particular problems. And I am grateful to the publishers, who very graciously and patiently awaited the slow growth of the three volumes.

EAST HAMPTON, LONG ISLAND
August, 1963

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THE QUESTION "Why a system?" has been asked ever since the first volume of my systematics appeared. In one of the books that deals critically with my theology, The System and the *Gospel,* by Kenneth Hamilton, the fact of the system itself, more than anything stated within the system, is characterized as the decisive error of my theology. Of course, such an argument could be used against all of the theological systems that have been created in the history of Christian thought, from Origen, Gregory, and John of Damascus, to Bonaventura, Thomas, and Ockham, and finally to Calvin, Johann Gerhard, and Schleiermacher, not to mention innumerable others. There are many reasons for aversion to the systematic-constructive form in theology; one is the result of confusion of a deductive, quasi-mathematical system, like those of Lullus in the Middle Ages and Spinoza in modern times, with the systematic form as such. But there are very few examples of deductive systems, and even in them the deductive form remains external to the experienced material. Spinoza's influence is prophetic and mystical as well as metaphysical. There are, however, other reasons for aversion to a system. In theology the systematic form is often considered an attempt to rationalize revelatory experiences. But this confuses the justifiable demand to be consistent in one's statements with the unjustifiable attempt to derive theological statements from sources that are strange to revelatory experiences.

For me, the systematic-constructive form has meant the following. First, it forced me to be consistent. Genuine consistency is one of the hardest tasks in theology (as it probably is in every cognitive approach to reality), and no one fully succeeds. But in making a new statement, the necessity of surveying previous statements in order to see whether or not they are mutually compatible drastically reduces inconsistencies. Second, and very surprisingly, the systematic form became an instrument by which relations between symbols and concepts were discovered that otherwise would not have been apparent. Finally, the systematic construction has led me to conceive the object of theology in its wholeness, as a Gestalt in which many parts and elements are united by determining principles and dynamic interrelations.

To emphasize the importance of the systematic form is not to deny that every concrete system is transitory and that none can be final. New organizing principles appear, neglected elements acquire central significance, the method may become more refined or completely different, with the result that a new conception of the structure of the whole emerges. This is the fate of every system. But this is also the rhythm in which the history of Christian thought has moved through the centuries. The systems were points of crystallization toward which the discussion of particular problems moved and from which new discussions and fresh problems arose. It is my hope that, in however limited a way, the present system may perform the same function.

A special characteristic of these three volumes, much noticed and often criticized, is the kind of language used in them and the way in which it is used. It deviates from the ordinary use of biblical language in systematic theology-that is, to support particular assertions with appropriate biblical quotations. Not even the more satisfactory method of building a theological system on the foundation of a historical-critical "biblical theology" is directly applied, although its influence is present in every part of the system. Instead, philosophical and psychological concepts are preferred, and references to sociological and scientific theories often appear. This procedure seems more suitable for a systematic theology which tries to speak understandably to the large group of educated people, including open-minded students of theology, for whom traditional language has become irrelevant. Of course, I am not unaware of the danger that in this way the substance of the Christian message may be lost. Nevertheless, this danger must be risked, and once one has realized this, one must proceed in this direction. Dangers are not a reason for avoiding a serious demand. It sometimes appears in these days that the Roman Catholic church is more open to the demand for reformation than are the churches of the Reformation. Certainly, these three books would not have been written if I had not been convinced that the event in which Christianity was born has central significance for all mankind, both before and after the event. But the way in which this event can be understood and received changes with changing conditions in all periods of history. On the other hand, this work would not have come into existence either, if I had not tried during the larger part of my life to penetrate the meaning of the Christian symbols, which have become increasingly problematic within the cultural context of our time. Since the split between a faith

unacceptable to culture and a culture unacceptable to faith was not possible for me, the only alternative was to attempt to interpret the symbols of faith through expressions of our own culture. The result of this attempt is the three volumes of Systematic *Theology.*

Several critical books and many critical articles concerning my theology appeared before this final volume was finished. I did not feel that I should deal with them in terms of direct answers, since that would overload this volume with polemical material and I believed that the volume itself, especially the section on the doctrine of the Spirit, implicitly answers many of the criticisms. Others could not be answered except by repeating the arguments of the former volumes. And in some cases, as in those criticisms arising from traditional supranaturalism or exclusive Christocentrism, I could only answer, No!

Long after I had written the sections on life and its ambiguities, I happened to read Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's book ***The Phenomenon of Man.*** It encouraged me greatly to know that an acknowledged scientist had developed ideas about the dimensions and processes of life so similar to my own. Although I cannot share his rather optimistic vision of the future, I am convinced by his description of the evolutionary processes in nature. Of course, theology cannot rest on scientific theory. But it must relate its understanding of man to an understanding of universal nature, for man is a part of nature and statements about nature underlie every statement about him. The sections in this book on the dimensions and ambiguities of life attempt to make explicit what is implicit in even the most antiphilosophical theologies. Even if the questions about the relation of man to nature and to the universe could be avoided by theologians, they would still be asked by people of every place and time-often with existential urgency and out of cognitive honesty. And the lack of an answer can become a stumbling block for a man's whole religious life. These are the reasons why I ventured to enter, from the theological point of view, the field of a philosophy of life, fully aware of the cognitive risks involved.

A system is not a summa, and this system is not even complete. Some subjects are less fully treated than others: for example, atonement, trinity, and particular sacraments. But I hope that there are not too many problems that are totally neglected. My choice was mostly dependent on the urgency of the actual problem-situation, as reflected mainly in public discussions. This factor is also responsible for the pres-

entation of some questions and answers in rather traditional terms, whereas for others, new roads of thought as well as of language were tried. The latter method was applied in some of the eschatological chapters which conclude this volume and which turn the whole system back to its beginning in the sense of Romans 11:36. "For of him, and *through* him, and to him, are all things." In these chapters the attempt has been made, not to solve the mystery of the "to him," but to interpret it in such a way as to provide a meaningful alternative to the primitive and often superstitious imaginings about the *eschaton*, whether the ***eschaton*** is conceived individually or universally.

The church-historical situation in which the system has been written is characterized by developments which surpass in religious significance everything solely theological. Most significant is the encounter of the historical religions with secularism and with the "quasi-religions" born out of it (for a treatment of this subject, see my recent book, ***Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions).*** A theology which does not deal seriously with the criticism of religion by secular thought and some particular forms of secular faith, such as liberal humanism, nationalism, and socialism, would be "a-*kairos*"—missing the demand of the historical moment. Another important characteristic of the present situation is the less dramatic but increasingly significant exchange between the historical religions, dependent partly on the need for a common front against the invading secular forces and partly on the conquest of spatial distance between different religious centers. Again I must say that a Christian theology which is not able to enter into a creative dialogue with the theological thought of other religions misses a world-historical occasion and remains provincial. Finally, Protestant systematic theology must take into consideration the present, more affirmative relation between Catholicism and Protestantism. Contemporary theology must consider the fact that the Reformation was not only a religious gain but also a religious loss. Although my system is very outspoken in its emphasis on the "Protestant principle," it has not ignored the demand that the "Catholic substance" be united with it, as the section on the church, one of the longest in the whole system, shows .There is a *kairos*, a moment full of potentialities, in Protestant-Catholic relations; and Protestant theology must become and remain conscious of it.

Since the twenties of this century several systems of Protestant theology have been elaborated-some over a period of three decades and

more. (I consider my lectures on "Systematic Theology" in Marburg, Germany, in 1924 as the beginning of my work on this system.) This approach was very different from that of the immediately preceding period, especially for American Protestantism, in which philosophical criticism, on the one hand, and denominational traditionalism, on the other hand, inhibited the rise of a constructive systematic theology. This situation has drastically changed. The impact of the world-historical events **as well** as the threat coming from the historical-critical method of biblical research have subjected Protestant theology to the necessity of a positive revision of its whole tradition. And this can be done only through systematic construction.

PART IV

LIFE AND THE SPIRIT

I

LIFE, ITS AMBIGUITIES, AND THE QUEST FOR UNAMBIGUOUS LIFE

A. THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL UNITY OF LIFE

1. LIFE: ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE

THE FACT that more than ten different meanings of the word "life" are given in an ordinary dictionary makes it understandable why many philosophers hesitate to use the word "life" altogether and why others restrict its use to the realm of living beings, thus implying the contrast of life with death. On the other hand, in Continental Europe, toward the turn of the century, a large philosophical school was concerned with "philosophy of life." It included such people as Nietzsche, Dilthey, Bergson, Simmel, and Scheler, and it influenced many others, notably the existentialists. At the same time in America the "philosophy of process" developed, foreshadowed by the pragmatism of James and Dewey and fully elaborated by Whitehead and his school. The term "process" is much less equivocal than the term "life" but also much less expressive. The living and the dead body are equally subject to "process," but in the fact of death, "life" includes its own negation. The emphatic use of the word "life" serves to indicate the conquest of this negation-as in "life reborn" or in "eternal life." Perhaps it is not too bold to assume that the words for life first arose through the experience of death. In any case, the polarity of life and death has always colored the word "life." This polar concept of life presupposes the use of the word for a special group of existing things, i.e., "living beings." "Living beings" are also "dying beings," and they exhibit special characteristics under the predominance of the organic dimension. This generic concept of life is the pattern after which the ontological concept of life has been formed. The observation of a particular potentiality of beings, whether it is that of a species or of individuals actualizing themselves in time and space, has led to the *ontological* concept of life-life as the "actuality of being." This concept of life unites the two main qualifications of being which under-

lie this whole system; these two main qualifications of being are the essential and the existential. Potentiality is that kind of being which has the power, the dynamic, to become actual (for example, the potentiality of every tree is treehood). There are other essences which do not have this power, such as geometrical forms (for example, the triangle). Those which become actual, however, subject themselves to the conditions of existence, such as finitude, estrangement, conflict, and so on. This does not mean that they lose their essential character (trees remain trees), but it does mean that they fall under the structures of existence and are open to growth, distortion, and death. We use the word "life" in this sense of a "mixture" of essential and existential elements. In terms of the history of philosophy we can say that we envisage the Aristotelian distinction between ***dynamis*** and ***energeia,*** between potentiality and actuality, from an existentialist viewpoint. Certainly this is not too different from Aristotle's own view, which emphasizes the lasting ontological tension between matter and form in all existence.

The ontological concept of life underlies the ***universal*** concept used by the "philosophers of life." If the actualization of the potential is a structural condition of all beings, and if this actualization is called "life," then the universal concept of life is unavoidable. Consequently, the genesis of stars and rocks, their growth as well as their decay, must be called a life process. The ontological concept of life liberates the word "life" from its bondage to the organic realm and elevates it to the level of a basic term that can be used within the theological system only if interpreted in existential terms. The term "process" is not open to such interpretation, although in many instances it is helpful to speak of life processes.

The ontological concept of life and its universal application require two kinds of consideration, one of which we should call "essentialist" and the other "existentialist." The first deals with the unity and diversity of life in its essential nature. It describes what I venture to call "the ***multidimensional unity of life."*** Only if this unity and the relation of the dimensions and realms of life are understood, can we analyze the existential ambiguities of all life processes correctly and express the quest for unambiguous or eternal life adequately.

2. The Case against "Levels"

The diversity of beings has led the human mind to seek for unity in diversity, because man can perceive the encountered manifoldness of things only with the help of uniting principles. One of the most universal principles used for this purpose is that of a hierarchical order in which every genus and species of things, and through them every individual thing, has its place. This way of discovering ***order*** in the seeming chaos of reality distinguishes grades and levels of being. Ontological qualities, such as a higher degree of universality or a richer development of potentiality, determine the place which is ascribed to a level of being. The old term "hierarchy" ("holy order of rulers, disposed in rank of sacramental power") is most expressive for this kind of thinking. It can be applied to earthly rulers as well as to genera and species of beings in nature, for example, the inorganic, the organic, the psychological. In this view reality is seen as a pyramid of levels following each other in vertical direction according to their power of being and their grade of value. This imagery of rulers (*archoi*) in the term "hierarchy" gives to the higher levels a higher quality but a smaller quantity of exemplars. The top is monarchic, whether the monarch is a priest, an emperor, a god, or the God of monotheism.

The term "level" is a metaphor which emphasizes the equality of all objects belonging to a particular level. They are "leveled," that is, brought to a common plane and kept on it. There is no organic ***movement*** from one to the other; the higher is not implicit in the lower, and the lower is not implicit in the higher. The relation of the levels is that of interference, either by control or by revolt. Certainly, in the history of thought (and social structures), the intrinsic independence of each level from the others has been modified, as, for instance, in Thomas Aquinas' definition of the relation of nature and grace ("grace fulfilling, not denying nature"). But the way in which he describes the grace which fulfils nature shows the continuing dominance of the hierarchical system. It was not until Nicolaus Cusanus formulated the principle of the "coincidence of opposites" (for example, of the infinite and the finite) and Luther formulated the principle of "justification of the sinner" (calling the saint a sinner and the sinner a saint if accepted by God) that the hierarchical principle lost its power and was replaced. Its place was taken in the religious realm by the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and in the social-political realm by the democratic principle of equal human nature in ***every*** man. Both the Protestant and the democratic principles negate the mutually independent and hierarchically organized levels of the power of being.

The metaphor "level" betrays its inadequacy when the relation of different levels is under consideration. The choice of the metaphor had far-reaching consequences for the whole cultural situation. And, conversly, the choice itself expressed a cultural situation. The question of the relation of the organic to the inorganic "level" of nature leads to the recurrent problem of whether biological processes can be fully understood through the application of methods used in mathematical physics or whether a teleological principle must be used to explain the inner-directedness of organic growth. Under the dominance of the metaphor "level" the inorganic either swallows the organic (control) or the inorganic processes are interfered with by a strange "vitalist" force (revolt) -an idea which naturally produces passionate and justified reactions from the physicists and their biological followers.

Another consequence of the use of the metaphor "level" appears in considering the relation of the organic and the spiritual, usually discussed as the relation of body and mind. If body and mind are levels, the problem of their relation can be solved only by reducing the mental to the organic (biologism and psychologism) or by asserting the interference of mental activities in the biological and psychological processes; this latter assertion produces the passionate and justifiable reaction of biologists and psychologists against the establishment of a "soul" as a separate substance exercising a particular causality.

A third consequence of the use of the metaphor "level" is manifest in the interpretation of the relation between religion and culture. For instance, if one says that culture is the level on which man creates himself, whereas it is in religion that he receives the divine self-manifestation, which gives religion ultimate authority over culture, then destructive conflicts inevitably appear between religion and culture-as the pages of history indicate. Religion as the superior level tries to control culture or some cultural functions such as science, the arts, ethics, or politics. This suppression of the autonomous cultural functions has led to revolutionary reactions in which culture has tried to engulf religion and subject it to the norms of autonomous reason. Here again it is obvious that the use of the metaphor "level" is a matter not of inadequacy alone but of decision about the problems of human existence.

The preceding example can lead to the question of whether the relation of God and man (including his world) can be described, as in religious dualism and theological supranaturalism, in terms of two levels—the divine and the human. Arrival at the decisive answer to this question is simplified through the attempt to demythologize religious language. Demythologization is not directed against the use of genuine mythical images as such but against the supranaturalistic method which takes these images literally. The enormity of the superstitious consequences following from this kind of supranaturalism sufficiently demonstrates the danger which the metaphor "level" poses in theological thought.

3. Dimensions, Realms, Degrees

The result of these considerations is that the metaphor "level" (and such similar metaphors as "stratum" or "layer") must be excluded from any description of life processes. It is my suggestion that it be replaced by the metaphor "dimension," together with correlative concepts such as "realm" and "grade." The significant thing, however, is not the replacement of one metaphor by another but the changed vision of reality which such replacement expresses.

The metaphor "dimension" is also taken from the spatial sphere, but it describes the difference of the realms of being in such a way that there cannot be mutual interference; depth does not interfere with breadth, since all dimensions meet in the same point. They cross without disturbing each other; there is no conflict between dimensions. Therefore, the replacement of the metaphor "level" by the metaphor "dimension" represents an encounter with reality in which the unity of life is seen above its conflicts. These conflicts are not denied, but they are not derived from the hierarchy of levels; they are consequences of the ambiguity of all life processes and are therefore conquerable without the destruction of one level by another. They do not refute the doctrine of the multidimensional unity of life.

One reason for using the metaphor "level" is the fact that there are wide areas of reality in which some characteristics of life are not manifest at all, for instance, the large amount of inorganic materials in which no trace of the organic dimension can be found and the many forms of organic life in which neither the psychological nor the spiritual dimension is visible. Can the metaphor "dimension" cover these conditions? I believe it can. It can point to the fact that, even if certain dimensions of life do not appear, nonetheless they are potentially real. The distinc-

tion of the potential from the actual implies that all dimensions are always real, if not actually, at least potentially. A dimension's actualization is dependent on conditions which are not always present.

The first condition for the actualization of some dimensions of life is that others must already have been actualized. No actualization of the organic dimension is possible without actualization of the inorganic, and the dimension of spirit would remain potential without the actualization of the organic. But this is only one condition. The other one is that in the realm which is characterized by the already actualized dimension particular constellations occur which make possible the actualization of a new dimension. Billions of years may have passed before the inorganic realm permitted the appearance of objects in the organic dimension, and millions of years before the organic realm permitted the appearance of a being with language. Again, it took tens of thousands of years before the being with the power of language became the historical man whom we know as ourselves. Potential dimensions of being became actual in all these cases because conditions were present for the actualization of that which had always been potentially real.

One can use the term "realm" to indicate a section of life in which a particular dimension is predominant. "Realm" is a metaphor like "level" and "dimension," but it is not basically spatial (although it is this, too); it is basically social. One speaks of the ruler of a realm, and just this connotation makes the metaphor adequate, because in the metaphorical sense a realm is a section of reality in which a special dimension determines the character of every individual belonging to it, whether it is an atom or a man. In this sense one speaks of the vegetable realm or the animal realm or the historical realm. In all of them, all dimensions are potentially present, and some of them are actualized. All of them are actual in man as we know him, but the special character of this realm is determined by the dimensions of the spiritual and historical. Only the inorganic dimension is actualized in the atom, but all the other dimensions are potentially present. Symbolically speaking, one could say that when God created the potentiality of the atom within himself he created the potentiality of man, and when he created the potentiality of man he created the potentiality of the atom-and all other dimensions between them. They are all present in every realm, in part potentially, in part (or in full) actually. Of the dimensions which are

actual, one characterizes the realm, because the others which are also actual in it are there only as conditions for the actualization of the determining dimension (which itself is not a condition for the others). The inorganic can be actual without actuality of the organic but not vice versa.

This leads to the question of whether there is a gradation of value among the different dimensions. The answer is affirmative: That which presupposes something else and adds to it is by so much the richer. Historical man adds the historical dimension to all other dimensions which are presupposed and contained in his being. He is the highest grade from the point of view of valuation, presupposing that the criterion of such value judgment is the power of a being to include a maximum number of potentialities in one living actuality. This is an ontological criterion, according to the rule that value judgments must be rooted in qualities of the objects valuated, and it is a criterion which should not be confused with that of perfection. Man is the highest being within the realm of our experience, but he is by no means the most perfect. These last considerations show that the rejection of the metaphor "level" does not entail the denial of value judgments based on degrees of power of being.

4. The Dimensions of Life and Their Relations

a) The dimensions in the inorganic and organic realms. *We* have mentioned different realms of the encountered reality as being determined by special dimensions, for example, the inorganic, the organic, the historical. We must now ask what the principle is for establishing a dimension of life as a dimension. First of all, there is no definite number of them, for dimensions of life are established under flexible criteria. One is justified in speaking of a particular dimension when the phenomenological description of a section of encountered reality shows unique categorical and other structures. A "phenomenological" description is one which points to a reality as it is given, before one goes to a theoretical explanation or derivation. In many cases that encounter of mind and reality which produces words has prepared the way for a precise phenomenological observation. In other cases such observation leads to the discovery of a new dimension of life or, conversely, to the reduction of two or more assumed dimensions to one. With these criteria in mind, and without any claim to finality, several obvious dimensions of life may be distinguished. The purpose of discussing them in the context of a

theological system is to show the multidimensional unity of life and to determine concretely the source and the consequences of the ambiguities of all life processes.

The particular character of a dimension which justifies its establishment as a dimension can best be seen in the modification of time, space, causality, and substance under its predominance. These categories have universal validity for everything that exists. But this does not mean that there is only *one* time, space, and so on. For the categories change their character under the predominance of each dimension. Things are not *in* time and space; rather they have a definite time and space. Inorganic space and organic space are different spaces; psychological time and historical time are different times; and inorganic and spiritual causality are different causalities. However, this does not mean that the categories, for example, in their inorganic character disappear in the organic realm or that clock time is annihilated by historical time. The categorical form which belongs to a conditioning realm, such as the inorganic in relation to the organic, enters the new categorical form as an element within it. In historical time or causality, all preceding forms of time or causality are present, but they are not the same as they were before. Such considerations provide a solid basis for the rejection of all kinds of reductionist ontology, both naturalistic and idealistic.

If, in agreement with tradition, we start by calling the inorganic the first dimension, the very use of the negative term "inorganic" points to the indefiniteness of the field which this term covers. It might be possible and adequate to distinguish more than one dimension in it, as one formerly distinguished the physical and chemical realms and still does for special purposes in spite of their growing unity. There are indications that one could speak of special dimensions in the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic realm. In any case, this whole field, which may or may not constitute one realm, is phenomenologically different from the realms which are determined by the other dimensions.

The religious significance of the inorganic is immense, but it is rarely considered by theology. In most theological discussions the general term "nature" covers all particular dimensions of the "natural." This is one of the reasons why the quantitatively overwhelming realm of the inorganic has had such a strong antireligious impact on many people in the ancient and the modern worlds. A "theology of the inorganic" is lacking. According to the principle of the multidimensional unity of life, it has to be

included in the present discussion of life processes and their ambiguity. Traditionally, the problem of the inorganic has been discussed as the problem of matter. The term "matter" has an ontological and a scientific meaning. In the second sense, it is usually identified with that which underlies the inorganic processes. If the whole of reality is reduced to inorganic processes, the result is the non-scientific ontological theory which is called materialism or reductionist naturalism. Its peculiar contention is not that there is matter in everything that exists-every ontology must say this including all forms of positivism-but that the matter we encounter under the dimension of the inorganic is the only matter.

In the inorganic dimension, potentialities become actual in those things in time and space which are subject to physical analysis or which can be measured in spatial-temporal-causal relations. However, as indicated before, such measurements have their limitations in the realms of the very large and the very small, in the macrocosmic and microcosmic extensions. Here time, space, causality in the ordinary sense, and the logic based on them are not sufficient to describe the phenomena. If one followed the principle that, under certain conditions, quantity becomes quality (Hegel), one would be justified in distinguishing the dimensions of the subatomic, of the astronomical, and of that between them which appears in the ordinary human encounter with reality. If, however, one denies the transition of quantity into quality, one may speak of *one* dimension in the inorganic realm and consider the ordinary encounter as a particular case of the micro- or macrocosmic structures.

Special characteristics of the dimension of the inorganic will appear in its comparison with characteristics of the other dimensions and, above all, their relation to the categories, and through a discussion of the life processes in all dimensions. For the inorganic has a preferred position among the dimensions in so far as it is the first condition for the actualization of every dimension. This is why all realms of being would dissolve were the basic condition provided by the constellation of inorganic structures to disappear. Biblically speaking: "You return to the ground, for out of it you were taken" (Genesis 3:19 [R.S.V.]). This is also the reason for the above-mentioned "reductionist naturalism," or materialism, which identifies matter with inorganic matter. *Materialism*, in this definition, ***is an ontology of death.***

The dimension of the organic is so central for every philosophy of life

that linguistically the basic meaning of "life" is organic life. But in a way more obvious than in the inorganic realm, the term "organic life" actually embraces several dimensions. The structural difference between a typical representative of the vegetable realm and one of the animal realm makes the establishment of two dimensions advisable, despite the indefiniteness of the transition between them. This decision is supported by the fact that in the realm which is determined by the animal dimension, another dimension makes its appearance: the self-awareness of life-the psychic (if this word can be saved from its occultist connotations). The organic dimension is characterized by self-related, self-preserving, self-increasing, and self-continuing *Gestalten* ("living wholes").

The theological problem arising from the differences between the organic and the inorganic dimensions is connected with the theory of evolution and the misguided attacks on it on the part of traditional religion. The conflict arose not only over the significance of the evolutionary doctrine for the doctrine of man but also over the transition from the inorganic to the organic. Some theologians argued for the existence of God on the basis of our ignorance of the genesis of the organic out of the inorganic; they asserted that the "first cell" can be explained only in terms of a special divine interference. Obviously, biology had to reject the establishment of such a supranatural causality and to attempt to narrow our ignorance about the conditions for the appearance of organisms -an attempt which has been largely successful. The question of the source of the species of organic life is more serious. Here two points of view are in conflict, the Aristotelian and the evolutionary; the first emphasizes the eternity of the species in terms of their ***dynamis,*** their potentiality, and the second emphasizes the conditions of their appearance in ***energeia,*** actuality. Formulated in the following way, the difference obviously need not create a conflict: the dimension of the organic is essentially present in the inorganic; its actual appearance is dependent on conditions the description of which is the task of biology and biochemistry.

An analogous solution must be given for the problem of the transition from the dimension of the vegetative to that of the animal, especially to the phenomenon of an individual's "inner awareness" of himself. Here again, the distinction of the potential from the actual provides the solution : potentially, self-awareness is present in every dimension; actually, it can appear only under the dimension of animal being. The attempt to

pursue self-awareness back into the vegetative dimension can be neither rejected nor accepted, since it can in no way be verified, whether by intuitive participation or by reflexive analogy to expressions similar to those man finds in himself. Under these circumstances, it seems wiser to restrict the assumption of inner awareness to those realms in which it can be made highly probable, at least in terms of analogy, and emotionally certain in terms of participation-most obviously in the higher animals.

Under special conditions the dimension of inner awareness, or the psychological realm, actualizes within itself another dimension, that of the personal-communal or the "spirit." Within reach of present human experience, this has happened only in man. The question of whether it has happened anywhere else in the universe cannot yet be answered positively or negatively. (For the theological significance of this problem, see ***Systematic Theology,*** II, 95, 96.)

b) The meaning of spirit as a dimension of life.-The word "spirit" in this title raises an important problem of terminology. The Stoic term for spirit is ***pneuma,*** and the Latin, ***spiritus,*** with its derivations in modern languages-in German it is ***Geist,*** in Hebrew ***ru'ach.*** There is no semantic problem in these languages, but there is one in English, because of misuse of the word "spirit" with a small **"s."** The words "Spirit" and "Spiritual" are used only for the divine Spirit and its effects in man, and are written with a capital "S." The question then is, Should and can the word "spirit," designating the particularly human dimension of life, be reinstated? There are strong arguments for trying to do so; and I shall attempt it throughout the discussions of the present part of the theological system.

In the Semitic as well as in the Indo-Germanic languages, the root of the words designating spirit means "breath." It was in the experience of breathing and above all in the cessation of breathing in the corpse that man's attention was drawn to the question, What keeps life alive? His answer was : breath. Where there is breath, there is the power of life; where it vanishes, the power of life vanishes. As the ***power*** of life, spirit is not identical with the inorganic substratum which is animated by it; rather, spirit is the power of animation itself and not a part added to the organic system. Yet some philosophical developments, allied with mystical and ascetic tendencies in the later ancient world, separated spirit and body. In modern times this trend came to its fulfilment in Descartes and

English empiricism. The word received the connotation of "mind," and "mind" itself received the connotation of "intellect." The element of power in the original meaning of spirit disappeared, and finally the word itself was discarded. In contemporary English it is largely replaced by "mind," and the question is whether the word "mind" can be de-intellectualized and fully replace the word "spirit."

According to some, it is possible, but the majority of those who answer this question take the opposite position. They see the necessity of restoring the term "spirit" to denote the unity of life-power and life in meanings, or in condensed form, the "unity of power and meaning." The fact that the term "Spirit" has been preserved in the religious sphere is due partly to the strength of tradition in the religious realm and partly to the impossibility of depriving the divine Spirit of the element of power (for example, the hymn "Veni, Creator Spiritus"). "God is Spirit" can never be translated as "God is Mind" or "God is Intellect." And even Hegel's *Phaenomenologie des Geistes* should never have been translated as *Phenomenology of the Mind.* Hegel's concept of spirit unites meaning with power.

A new understanding of the term "spirit" as a dimension of life is a theological necessity. For every religious term is a symbol using material from ordinary experience, and the symbol itself cannot be understood without an understanding of the symbolic material. (God as "Father" is meaningless for somebody who does not know what "father" means.) It is quite probable that the fading of the symbol "Holy Spirit" from the living consciousness of Christianity is at least partly caused by the disappearance of the word "spirit" from the doctrine of man. Without knowing what spirit is, one cannot know what Spirit is. This is the reason for the ghostly connotations of the words "divine Spirit" and for the absence of these words from ordinary talk, even within the church. It seems that, while it may be possible to rescue the term "spirit," the adjective "spiritual" is lost beyond hope. This book will not even attempt to reestablish it in its original meaning.

But there are other sources of the semantic confusion which darkens the meaning of the word "spirit." For instance, if one speaks of the spirit of a nation, of a law, or of an artistic style, one points to their essential character as expressed in their manifestations. The relation which this use of the word "spirit" has to its original meaning stems from the fact that the self-expressions of human groups are dependent on the dimension of spirit and its different functions. Another source of semantic confusion is the way in which one speaks of a "spiritual world," pointing to the realm of essences or ideas, in the Platonic sense. But the life "in" ideas, for which the word "spirit" is adequate, is different from the ideas themselves, which are potentialities of life but not life itself. Spirit is a dimension of life, but it is not the "universe of potentialities," which itself is not life. Mythically speaking, one could say that in the "paradise of dreaming innocence" there is potential but not actual spirit. "Adam before the fall" is also before the state of actualized spirit (and history).

A third source of semantic confusion is the concept of "spirits." If spirit is a dimension of life, one can certainly speak of living beings in which this dimension is actualized, and one can call them beings with spirit. But it is extremely misleading to call them "spirits," because this implies the existence of a "spirit" realm apart from life. Spirit becomes somewhat like inorganic matter and loses its character as a dimension of life which is potentially or actually present in all life. It assumes a "ghostly" character. This is confirmed by the so-called spiritualistic (in Continental languages, spiritistic) movements which try to make contact with the "spirits" or "ghosts" of the deceased and to provoke physical effects from them (noises, words, physical movements, visual appearances). Those who assert such experience are thus faced with the necessity of attributing physical causality to these "spirits." The way in which their manifestations are described points to a somehow transmuted psycho-physical existence of human beings after death. But such existence is neither Spiritual (determined by the divine Spirit) nor identical with what the Christian message calls "eternal life." Just like the question of extrasensory perception, it is a matter of empirical investigations the results of which, whether positive or negative, have no direct bearing on the problem of man's spirit or of God as Spirit.

It is fortunate that in the word "spirited" the original element of power in the meaning of spirit is still preserved, although in a small corner of ordinary communication. The word is used as a translation of Plato's ***thymoeides,*** as describing that function of the soul which lies between rationality and sensuality and corresponds to the virtue of courage and to the social group of the aristocracy of the sword. This concept-which is often omitted from the picture of Plato's philosophy-is nearest to the genuine conception of spirit.

Since the dimension of spirit appears for us only in man, it is desirable

to relate the term "spirit" to some other terms used in the doctrine of man, namely, "soul" (psyche), "mind" (*nous*), "reason" (**togos**) . The word "soul" has suffered a fate similar to that of the term "spirit." It has been lost in that human endeavor which calls itself the "doctrine of the soul," namely, psychology. Modern psychology is psychology without ***psyche.*** The reason for this is the rejection of the soul as an immortal "substance" by modern epistemology since Hume and Kant. The word "soul" has been preserved mainly in poetry where it designates the seat of the passions and emotions. In the contemporary doctrine of man, the psychology of personality deals with phenomena attributed to the human soul. If spirit is defined as the unity of power and meaning, it can become a partial substitute for the lost concept of soul, although it transcends it in range, in structure, and especially, in dynamics. In any case, while the word "soul" is alive in biblical, liturgical, and poetic language, it has lost its usefulness for a strict theological understanding of man, his spirit, and its relation to the divine Spirit.

Although the word "mind" cannot become a substitute for "spirit," it has a basic function in the doctrine of life. It expresses the consciousness of a living being in relation to its surroundings and to itself. It includes awareness, perception, intention. It appears in the dimension of animality as soon as self-awareness appears; and in rudimentary or developed form, it includes intelligence, will, directed action. Under the predominance of the dimension of spirit, i.e., in man, it is related to the universals in perception and intention. It is structurally determined by reason (logos), the third of the terms to be considered.

The concept of reason has been fully discussed in the first part of the system, "Reason and Revelation." There, the difference between technical, or formal, and ontological reason was emphasized. Here, the question is that of the relation of both concepts to the dimension of spirit. Reason in the sense of logos is the principle of form by which reality in all its dimensions, and mind in all its directions, is structured. There is reason in the movement of an electron, and there is reason in the first words of a child-and in the structure of every expression of the spirit. Spirit as a dimension of life includes more than reason-it includes ***eros,*** passion, imagination-but without logos-structure, it could not express anything. Reason in the sense of technical reason or of reasoning is one of the potentialities of man's spirit in the cognitive sphere. It is the tool for the scientific analysis and technical control of reality.

Although these semantic considerations are far from complete, they may be sufficient to indicate the use of some key words in the following chapters and to provide, through agreement or disagreement, a stricter use of anthropological terms in theological statements.

c) ***The dimension of spirit in its relation to the preceding dimensions.*** - The semantic discussion in the last section interrupted the step-by-step consideration of distinguishable dimensions of life and their relations. There are two questions to be asked: the first concerns the relation of spirit to the psychological and biological dimensions, and the second concerns the question of the dimension which follows spirit in the order of conditioning, namely, the historical dimension. After a preliminary discussion, the second question will be fully considered in the last part of the system-"History and the Kingdom of God." At this point we must concentrate on the first, the relation of spirit to the psychological dimension—the dimension of inner awareness.

The appearance of a new dimension of life is dependent on a constellation of conditions in the conditioning dimension. Constellations of conditions make it possible for the organic to appear in the inorganic realm. Constellations in the inorganic realm make it possible for the dimension of self-awareness to become actual, and in the same way constellations under the predominance of the psychological dimension make it possible for the dimension of the spirit to become actual. The phrases "make it possible" and "provides for the conditions" for a dimension to become actual are crucial in these statements. The question is not how the conditions are provided; this is a matter of the interplay of freedom and destiny under the directing creativity of God, i.e., under the divine providence. The question is rather how the actualization of the potential follows from the constellation of conditions.

In order to answer this we must now consider the dynamics of life, or the historical dimension in an anticipatory way. This last and all-embracing dimension of life comes to its full actualization only in man, in whom as the bearer of the spirit the conditions for it are present. But the historical dimension is manifest-although under the predominance of other dimensions-in all realms of life. It is the universal character of actual being which, in the philosophies of life or process, has led to the elevation of the category of becoming to the highest ontological rank. But one cannot deny that the claim of the category of being to this rank is justified because, while becoming includes and overcomes relative non-being,

being itself is the negation of absolute non-being; it is the affirmation that there is anything at all. Indeed, it is under the protection of this affirmation that becoming and process are universal qualities of life. It is questionable, however, whether the words "becoming" and "process" are adequate for a view of the dynamics of life as a whole. They are lacking in a connotation which characterizes all life, and that is the creation of the new. This connotation is strongly present in references to the historical dimension, which is actual-even if subdued-in every realm of life, for history is the dimension under which the new is being created.

The actualization of a dimension is a historical event within the history of the universe, but it is an event which cannot be localized at a definite point of time and space. In long periods of transition the dimensions, metaphorically speaking, struggle with each other in the same realm. This is obvious concerning the transition of the inorganic to the organic, of the vegetative to the animal, of the biological to the psychological. This is also true of the transition from the psychological to the dimension of the spirit. If we define man as that organism in which the dimension of spirit is dominant, we cannot fix a definite point at which he appeared on earth. It is quite probable that for a long period the fight of the dimensions was going on in animal bodies which were anatomically and physiologically similar to those which are ours as historical man, until the conditions were given for that leap which brought about the dominance of the dimension of the spirit. But we must go one step farther. The same struggle of the dimensions which finally produced the sharp division between those beings who have language and those who have not now goes on within every human being as a lasting problem for the basis of the predominance of the spirit. Man cannot not be man, as animal cannot not be animal. But man can partly miss that creative act in which the dominance of the psychological is overcome by the dominance of the spirit. As we shall see, this is the essence of the moral problem.

These considerations reject implicitly the doctrine that at a precise moment of the evolutionary process God in a special act added an "immortal soul" to an otherwise complete human body, with this soul bearing the life of the spirit. This idea-in addition to being based on the metaphor "level" and a corresponding supranaturalistic doctrine of man-disrupts the multidimensional unity of life, especially the unity of the psychological and the spirit, thus making the dynamics of the human personality completely incomprehensible.

Instead of separating the spirit from the conditioning psychological realm, we shall try to describe the rise of an act of the spirit out of a constellation of psychological factors. Every act of the spirit presupposes given psychological material and, at the same time, constitutes a leap which is possible only for a totally centered self, that is to say, one that is free.

The relation of spirit *to* the psychological material can be observed in the cognitive as well as in the moral act. Every thought aiming at knowledge is based on sense impressions and conscious and unconscious scientific traditions and experiences, and conscious and unconscious authorities, besides volitional and emotional elements which are always present. Without this material, thinking would have no content. But in order to transform this material into knowledge, something must be done to it; it must be split, reduced, increased, and connected according to logical, and purged according to methodological, criteria. All this is done by the personal center which is not identical with any particular one of these elements. The transcendence of the center over the psychological material makes the cognitive act possible, and such an act is a manifestation of spirit. We said that the personal center is not identical with any one of the psychological contents, but neither is it another element added to them; if it were this, it would be psychological material itself and not the bearer of the spirit. Nor is the personal center strange to the psychological material. It is *their* psychological center, but transformed into the dimension of the spirit. The psychological center, the subject of self-awareness, moves in the realm of higher animal life as a balanced whole, organically or spontaneously (but not mechanically) dependent on the total situation. If the dimension of the spirit dominates a life process, the psychological center offers its own contents to the unity of the personal center. This happens through deliberation and decision. In doing so it actualizes its own potentialities, but in actualizing its own potentialities, it transcends itself. This phenomenon can be experienced in every cognitive act.

The same situation obtains in a moral act. Here, also, a large amount of material is present in the psychological center-drives, inclinations, desires, more or less compulsory trends, moral experiences, ethical traditions and authorities, relations to other persons, social conditions. But the moral act is not the diagonal in which all these vectors limit each other and converge; it is the centered self which actualizes itself as a

personal self by distinguishing, separating, rejecting, preferring, connecting, and in doing so, transcending its elements. The act, or more exactly the whole complex of acts, in which this happens has the character of freedom, not freedom in the bad sense of the indeterminacy of an act of the will, but freedom in the sense of a total reaction of a centered self which deliberates and decides. Such freedom is united with destiny in such a way that the psychological material which enters into the moral act represents the pole of destiny, while the deliberating and deciding self represents the pole of freedom, according to the ontological polarity of freedom and destiny.

The preceding description of acts of the spirit implicitly refutes both a dualistic contrasting of the spirit with the psychological and a dissolution of the spirit into the psychological out of which it arises. The principle of multidimensional unity denies dualism as well as psychologistic (or biologistic) monism.

Friedrich Nietzsche expresses well the intricacies of the relation of the dimension of the spirit to the preceding dimensions of life, when he says of spirit that it is the life which cuts into life itself. Out of its pain it draws into fulfilment (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*).

d) Norms and values in the dimension of spirit.-In the description of the relation between spirit and its psychological presuppositions, the word "freedom" was used for the way in which the spirit acts upon the psychological material. Such freedom is possible only because there are norms to which the spirit subjects itself just in order to be free within the limits of its biological and psychological destiny. Freedom and subjection to valid norms are one and the same thing. Therefore the question arises: What is the source of these norms?

One can distinguish three main answers to this question, each of which has been represented in both past and present: the pragmatic, the value-theoretical, the ontological. They contradict each other in some respects, but they do not exclude each other. Each contributes an important element to the solution, although the ontological answer is decisive and implicit within the other two, whether or not this is realized by those who offer the answer.

According to the pragmatic derivation of norms, life is its own criterion. Pragmatism does not transcend life in order to judge life. The criteria of spirit are immanent in the life of the spirit. This is consistent with our doctrine of the multidimensional unity of life and our rejection

of the metaphor "level": the norms of life do not originate outside of life. But pragmatism has no way of demonstrating how particular expressions of life can become norms for life as a whole. Whenever the pragmatic method is applied consistently to ethical, political, or aesthetic judgments, it selects criteria which themselves must be measured by higher, and finally highest, criteria, and when 'this point is reached, the pragmatic method is replaced, without explicit recognition, by an ontological principle which cannot be tested pragmatically because it is the criterion for all testing.

This situation is clearly recognized by the value theory of norms in the dimension of spirit. The value theory has a high standing in present philosophical thought and has largely influenced non-philosophical and even popular thought. Its great merit has been to establish the validity of norms without taking refuge in either heteronomous theology or that kind of metaphysics the breakdown of which has produced the value theory (in people like Lotze, Ritschl, the Neo-Kantians, and so on.) They wanted to save validity (*Geltung*) without pragmatic relativism or metaphysical absolutism. In their "hierarchies of values" they tried to establish norms for a society without ***sacred*** hierarchies. But they were and still are unable to answer the question: What is the basis for the claim of such values to control life? What is their relevance for the processes of life in the dimension of spirit for which they are supposed to be valid? Why should life, the bearer of spirit, care for them at all? What is the relation of obligation to being? This question has driven some philosophers of value back to the ontological problem.

The pragmatic solution must be restated and qualified: it is true that the criteria for life in the dimension of spirit are implicit in life itself—otherwise they would not be relevant for life; but life is ambiguous because it unites essential and existential elements. The essential or potential in man and his world is the source from which the norms for life in the dimension of spirit are derived. The essential nature of being, the *logos*-determined structure of reality, as Stoicism and Christianity would call it, is the "heaven of values" to which the value theory points.

But if this is accepted and the ontological answer thus restated, the question arises: How can we reach this "heaven"; how can we know about the logos-structure of being, about the essential nature of man and his world? We know about it only through its ambiguous manifestations in the mixture which is life. These manifestations are ambigu-

ous in so far as they not only reveal but also conceal. There is no straight and certain way to the norms of action in the dimension of spirit. The sphere of the potential is partly visible, partly hidden. Therefore, the application of a norm to a concrete situation in the realm of the spirit is a venture and a risk. It requires courage and acceptance of the possibility of failure. The daring character of life in its creative functions holds true also in the dimension of the spirit, in morality, culture, and religion.

B. THE SELF-ACTUALIZATION OF LIFE AND ITS AMBIGUITIES

Fundamental Consideration: The Basic Functions of Life and the Nature of Their Ambiguity

Life was defined as the actualization of potential being. In every life process such actualization takes place. The terms "act," "action," "actual," denote a centrally intended movement ahead, a going-out from a center of action. But this going-out takes place in such a way that the center is not lost in the outgoing movement. The self-identity remains in the self-alteration. The other (*alterum*) in the process of alteration is turned both away from the center and back toward it. So we can distinguish three elements in the process of life: self-identity, self-alteration, and return to one's self. Potentiality becomes actuality only through these three elements in the process which we call life.

This character of the structure of life processes leads to the recognition of the first function of life: self-integration. In it the center of self-identity is established, drawn into self-alteration and re-established with the contents of that into which it has been altered. There is centeredness in all life, both as reality and as task. The movement in which centeredness is actualized shall be called the self-integration of life. The syllable "self' indicates that it is life itself which drives toward centeredness in every process of self-integration. There is nothing outside life which could cause its movement from centeredeness through alteration back to centeredness. The nature of life itself expresses itself in the function of self-integration in every particular life process.

But the process of actualization does not imply only the function of self-integration, the circular movement of life from a center and back to this center; it also implies the function of producing new centers, the function of self-creation. In it the movement of actualization of the

potential, the movement of life, goes forward in the horizontal direction. In it also self-identity and self-alteration are effective, but under the predominance of self-alteration. Life drives toward the new. It cannot do this without centeredness, but it does it by transcending every individual center. It is the principle of growth which determines the function of self-creation, growth within the circular movement of a self-centered being and growth in the creation of new centers beyond this circle.

The word "creation" is one of the great symbol-words describing the relation of God to the universe. Contemporary language has applied the words "creative," "creativity," and even "creation" to human (and prehuman) beings, actions, and products. And it is consistent with this fashion to speak of the self-creative function of life. Of course, life is not self-creative in an absolute sense. It presupposes the creative ground out of which it comes. Nevertheless, as we can speak of Spirit only because we have spirit, so we can speak of Creation only because creative power is given to us.

The third direction in which the actualization of the potential goes is in contrast to the circular and the horizontal-the vertical direction. This metaphor stands for the function of life which we suggest calling the self-transcending function. In itself the term "self-transcendence" could also be used for the two other functions: self-integration, going from identity through alteration back to identity, is a kind of intrinsic self-transcendence within a centered being, and in every process of growth a later stage transcends a former one in the horizontal direction. But in both cases the self-transcendence remains within the limits of finite life. One finite situation is transcended by another; but finite life is not transcended. Therefore, it seems appropriate to reserve the term "self-transcendence" for that function of life in which this does occur-in which life drives beyond itself as finite life. It is self-transcendence because life is not transcended by something that is not life. Life, by its very nature as life, is both *in* itself and ***above*** itself, and this situation is manifest in the function of self-transcendence. For the way in which this elevation of life beyond itself becomes apparent, I suggest using the phrase "driving toward the sublime." The words "sublime," "sublimation," "sublimity" point to a "going beyond limits" toward the great, the solemn, the high.

Thus, within the process of actualization of the potential, which is called life, we distinguish the three functions of life: self-integration

under the principle of centeredness, self-creation under the principle of growth, and self-transcendence under the principle of sublimity. The basic structure of self-identity and self-alteration is effective in each, and each is dependent on the basic polarities of being: self-integration on the polarity of individualization and participation, self-creation on the polarity of dynamics and form, self-transcendence on the polarity of freedom and destiny. And the structure of self-identity and self-alteration is rooted in the basic ontological self-world correlation. (The relation of the structure and the functions of life to the ontological polarities will receive a fuller treatment in the discussion of the particular functions.)

The three functions of life unite elements of self-identity with elements of self-alteration. But this unity is threatened by existential estrangement, which drives life in one or the other direction, thus disrupting the unity. To the degree in which this disruption is real, self-integration is countered by disintegration, self-creation is countered by destruction, self-transcendence is countered by profanization. Every life process has the ambiguity that the positive and negative elements are mixed in such a way that a definite separation of the negative from the positive is impossible: life at every moment is ambiguous. It is my intention to discuss the particular functions of life, not in their essential nature, separate from their existential distortion, but in the way they appear within the ambiguities of their actualization, for life is neither essential nor existential but ambiguous.

1. The Self-integration of Life and Its Ambiguities

a) Individualization and centeredness.—The first of the polarities in the structure of being is that of individualization and participation. It is expressed in the function of self-integration through the principle of centeredness. Centeredness is a quality of individualization, in so far as the indivisible thing is the centered thing. To continue the metaphor, the center is a point, and a point cannot be divided. A centered being can develop another being out of itself, or it can be deprived of some parts which belong to the whole; but the center as such cannot be divided-it can only be destroyed. A fully individualized being, therefore, is at the same time a fully centered being. Within the limits of human experience only man has these qualities fully; in all other beings, both centeredness and individualization are limited. But they are qualities of everything that is, whether limited or fully developed.

The term "centeredness" is derived from the geometrical circle and metaphorically applied to the structure of a being in which an effect exercised on one part has consequences for all other parts, directly or indirectly. The words "whole" or ***Gestalt*** have been used for things with such structure; and these terms have sometimes been applied to all dimensions except the inorganic ones. Occasionally, the inorganic dimensions have also been included. The line of thought we have followed leads to the more inclusive interpretation. Since individualization is an ontological pole, it has universal significance, and so has centeredness, which is the condition of the actualization of the individual in life. However, this makes the term "centeredness" preferable to wholeness or ***Gestalt.*** It does not imply an integrated ***Gestalt,*** or "whole," but only processes going out from and returning to a point which cannot be localized in a special place in the whole but which is the point of direction of the two basic movements of all life processes. In this sense, centeredness exists under the control of all dimensions of being, but as a process of outgoing and returning. For where there is a center, there is a periphery which includes an amount of space or, in non-metaphorical terms, which unites a manifoldness of elements. This corresponds to participation, with which individualization forms a polarity. Individualization separates. The most individualized being is the most unapproachable and the most lonely one. But, at the same time, he has the greatest potentiality of universal participation. He can have communion with his world and ***eros*** toward it. This ***eros*** can be theoretical as well as practical. He can participate in the universe in all its dimensions and draw elements of it into himself. Therefore the process of self-integration moves between the center and the manifoldness which is taken into the center.

This description of integration implies the possibility of disintegration. Disintegration means failure to reach or to preserve self-integration. This failure can occur in one of two directions. Either it is the inability to overcome a limited, stabilized, and immovable centeredness, in which case there is a center, but a center which does not have a life process whose content is changed and increased; thus it approaches the death of mere self-identity. Or it is the inability to return because of the dispersing power of the manifoldness, in which case there is life, but it is dispersed and weak in centeredness, and it faces the danger of losing its center altogether-the death of mere self-alteration. The function of

self-integration ambiguously mixed with disintegration works between these two extremes in every life process.

b) ***Self-integration and disintegration in general: health and disease.***— Centeredness is a universal phenomenon. It appears in the microcosmic as well as in the macrocosmic dimension of the inorganic realm, and it appears in the realm of our ordinary encounter with inorganic objects. It appears in atom and star, in molecule and crystal. It produces structures which inspire the enthusiasm of the artist and which confirm, poetically speaking, the Pythagorean symbol of the musical harmony of the astronomical spheres. This gives to every star as well as to every atom and crystal a kind of individuality. They cannot be divided; they can only be crushed-their centeredness disrupted and parts of their integrated unity lost and driven toward other centers. The full weight of these facts becomes manifest if one imagines a completely uncentered realm of inorganic being. It would be that chaos of which, in creation myths, water is the symbol. Individual centeredness in the microcosmic and macrocosmic spheres and in everything between them is the "beginning" of creation. But the process of self-integration is counteracted by the forces of disintegration: repulsion counteracts attraction (compare the centrifugal and centripetal forces) ; concentration-ideally in one point-is counteracted by expansion-ideally to an infinite periphery— and fusion is contrasted by splitting. The ambiguities of self-integration and disintegration are effective in these processes, and they are effective simultaneously in the same process. Integrating and disintegrating forces are struggling in every situation, and every situation is a compromise between these forces. This gives a dynamic character to the inorganic realm which cannot be described in exclusively quantitative terms. One could say: No-thing in nature is merely a thing-if "thing" here means that which is altogether conditioned, an object without any kind of "being in itself" or centeredness. Perhaps man alone is able to produce "things" by dissolving centered structures and reconnecting the pieces into technical objects. Yet, though the technical objects have no center in themselves, even they have a center which is imposed on them by man (for example, the computing machine). This view of the inorganic realm and its dimensions is a decisive step in overcoming the gap between the inorganic and the organic (and psychological). Just like every other dimension, the inorganic belongs to life, and it shows the integratedness and the possible disintegration of life in general.

Self-integration and disintegration are most manifest under the dimension of the organic. Every living being is sharply centered (at whatever point in the whole of natural processes one starts to speak of living beings) ; it reacts as a whole. Its life is a process of going out and returning to itself as long as it lives. It takes in elements of the encountered reality and assimilates them to its own centered whole, or it rejects them if assimilation is impossible. It pushes ahead into space as far as its individual structure permits, and it withdraws when it has overstepped this limit or when other living individuals force it to withdraw. It develops its parts in balance under the uniting center and is forced back into balance if one part tends to disrupt the unity.

The process of self-integration is constitutive for life, but it is so in a continuous struggle with disintegration, and integrating and disintegrating tendencies are ambiguously mixed in any given moment. The strange elements which must be assimilated have the tendency to become independent within the centered whole and to disrupt it. Many diseases, especially infectious ones, can be understood as an organism's inability to return to its self-identity. It cannot eject the strange elements which it has not assimilated. But disease can also be the consequence of a self-restriction of the centered whole, a tendency to maintain self-identity by avoiding the dangers of going out to self-alteration. The weakness of life expresses itself in the refusal of necessary movement, desirable food, participation in the environment, and so on. In order to be safe, the organism tries to rest in itself, but since this contradicts the life function of self-integration, it leads to disease and disintegration.

This view of disease compels us to reject biological theories which model their concepts of life after those phenomena in which life disintegrates, i.e., uncentered processes which are subject to quantitative-calculating methods of analysis. The stimulus-response theory has an important function in the science of life, but it becomes erroneous if raised to absolute validity. Whether the uncentered, calculable processes are produced by disease (for their production is the essence of disease) or whether they are artificially produced in the experimental situation, they are opposed to the normal processes of self-integration. They are not models of healthy life but of life in disintegration.

One distinguishes between lower and higher forms of life in the realm of the organic. Something must be said about this distinction from the theological point of view, because of the wide symbolic use to which all

forms of organic life, especially the higher ones, are subject and because of the fact that man-against the protest of many naturalists-is often called the highest living being. First of all, one should not confuse the "highest" with the "most perfect." Perfection means actualization of one's potentialities; therefore, a lower being can be more perfect than a higher one if it is actually what it is potentially-at least in a high approximation. And the highest being-man-can become less perfect than any other, because he not only can fail to actualize his essential being but can deny and distort it.

So a higher living being is not in itself a more perfect one; rather, there are different degrees of lower and higher. The question then is: What are the criteria of high and low, and why is man the highest being in spite of his liability to the greatest imperfection? The criteria are the definiteness of the center, on the one hand, and the amount of content united by it, on the other. These are the criteria for the higher or lower rank of the dimensions of life. They decide the establishment of the animal dimension above the dimension of the vegetative. They decide that the dimension of inner awareness surpasses the biological and is surpassed by the dimension of the spirit. They decide that man is the highest being because his center is definite and the structure of its content is all-embracing. In contrast to all other beings, man does not have only environment; he has world, the structured unity of all possible content. This and its implications make him the highest being.

The decisive step in the self-integration of life-with respect to both the definite character of the center and the richness of the content-is the appearance of self-awareness somewhere in the animal realm. Self-awareness means that all encounters of a being with its environment are experienced as related to the individual being that is aware of them. Centered awareness implies a center which is definite, and at the same time, it implies a more embracing content than in even the most developed preconscious being. Without awareness there is only presence in encounter; with awareness a past and future are open in terms of remembrance and anticipation. The remoteness of the remembered or the anticipated may be very slight, but the fact that it appears irrefutably in animal life indicates the dominance of a new dimension, the psychological.

The self-integration of life in the psychological realm includes the basic movement of going out of and returning to itself in immediate experience. The center of a being under the dimension of self-awareness can be called the "psychological self." "Self," in this sense, must not be misunderstood as an object, the existence of which could be discussed, or as a part of a living being, but rather as the point to which all contents of awareness are related, in so far as "I" am aware of them. The acts which go out from this center are related to the environment as receiving it and reacting to it. This is an implication of the basic polar elements of individualization and participation in all reality, and it is a continuation of the same polar tension in the biological and inorganic realms. Under the dimension of self-awareness, it is effective as perceiving encountered reality and reacting upon it.

It is difficult to discuss the psychological realm and the functions of life within it because of the fact that man ordinarily experiences the dimension of self-awareness in unity with the dimension of the spirit. The psychological and the personal self are united in him. Only in such special situations as dream, intoxication, half-sleep, and so on, does a partial separation occur, and this separation is never so complete that a sharply distinct description of the psychological is possible. To avoid this difficulty, one approaches the process of self-integration under the dimension of self-awareness by way of animal psychology. The limits of this approach lie in man's ability to participate empathetically in the psychological self of even the highest animals in such a way that, for example, he can fully understand psychological health and disease. Artificially induced psychic disintegration in animals, such as exaggerated anxiety or exaggerated hostility, can be observed only indirectly in so far as they are expressed biologically. Self-awareness is, so to speak, submerged in both dimensions, the biological dimension on the one side and that of the spirit on the other side, and can be approached through analyses and conclusions only, not by direct observation.

Conscious of these limitations, one may say that the structure of health and disease, of successful or unsuccessful self-integration in the psychological sphere, is dependent on the working of the same factors which work in the preceding dimensions: the forces driving toward self-identity and those driving toward self-alteration. The psychological self can be disrupted by its inability to assimilate (i.e., to take into the centered unity an extensively or intensively overpowering number of impressions), or 'by its inability to resist the destructive impact of impressions drawing the self in too many or too contradictory directions, or by its

inability under such impacts to keep particular psychological functions balanced by others. In these ways self-alteration may prevent or disrupt self-integration. The opposite derangement is caused by the psychological self's fear of losing itself, with the result that it becomes indifferent to stimuli and ends in a stupor which prevents any self-alteration and transforms self-identity into a dead form. The ambiguities of psychic self-integration and disintegration occur between these poles.

c) ***The self-integration of life in the dimension of spirit: morality, or the constitution of the personal*** self.-In man complete centeredness is essentially given, but it is not actually given until man actualizes it in freedom and through destiny. The act in which man actualizes his essential centeredness is the moral act. Morality is the function of life by which the realm of the spirit comes into being. Morality is the constitutive function of spirit. A moral act, therefore, is not an act in which some divine or human law is obeyed but an act in which life integrates itself in the dimension of spirit, and this means as personality within a community. Morality is the function of life in which the centered self constitutes itself as a person; it is the totality of those acts in which a potentially personal life process becomes an actual person. Such acts happen continuously in a personal life; the constitution of the person as a person never comes to an end during his whole life process.

Morality presupposes the potentially total centeredness of him in whom life is actualized under the dimension of spirit. "Total centeredness" is the situation of having, face to face with one's self, a world to which one, at the same time, belongs as a part. This situation liberates the self from the bondage to the environment on which every being in the preceding dimensions is dependent. Man lives in an environment, but he has a world. Theories which try to explain his behavior solely by reference to his environment reduce man to the dimension of the organic-psychological and deprive him of participation in the dimension of spirit, thus making it impossible to explain how he can have a theory which claims to be true-of which the environmental theory itself is an instance. But man has a world, i.e., a structured whole of infinite potentialities and actualities. In his encounter with his environment ***(this*** home, ***this*** tree, ***this*** person), he experiences both environment and world, or more exactly, in and through his encounter with the things of his environment he encounters a world. He transcends their merely environmental quality. If this were not so, he could not be completely centered.

In some part of his being he would be a part of his environment, and this part would not be an element in his centered self. But man can oppose his self to every part of his world, including himself as a part of his world.

This is the first presupposition of morality and of the dimension of the spirit in general. The second follows from it. Because man has a world which he faces as a totally centered self, he can ask questions and receive answers and commands. This possibility, which characterizes the dimension of the spirit, is unique, because it implies both freedom from the merely given (environment) and norms which determine the moral act through freedom. As shown above, these norms express the essential structure of reality, of self and world, over against the existential conditions of mere environment. Again it becomes manifest that freedom is the openness for norms of unconditional, or essential, validity. They express the essence of being, and the moral side of the function of self-integration is the totality of acts in which the commands coming from the essence of the encountered world are obeyed or disobeyed. One can also say that man is able to respond to these commands and that this ability is what makes him responsible. Every moral act is a responsible act, a response to a valid command, but man can refuse to respond. If he refuses, he gives way to the forces of moral disintegration; he acts against the spirit in the power of the spirit. For he can never get rid of himself as spirit. He constitutes himself as a completely centered self even in his anti-essential, antimoral actions. These actions express moral centeredness even while they tend to dissolve the moral center.

Before continuing the discussion of the constitution of the personal self, it may be useful to discuss a semantic problem. "Moral" and its derivatives have accumulated so many bad connotations that it seems impossible to use them in any positive sense. Morality is reminiscent of moralism, of immorality with its sexual connotations, of conventional morals, and so on. For this reason, it has been suggested (especially in Continental theology) that the term "morals" be replaced by the term "ethics." But this offers no real solution because after a short time the negative connotations of "moral" would fall upon the new word. It is more useful to reserve the term "ethics" and its derivatives to designate the "science of morals," which deals theoretically with the moral function of the spirit. Of course, this presupposes that the term "moral" can be liberated from the negative connotations which have increasingly

distorted its meaning since the eighteenth century. The preceding and following discussions are an attempt to work in this direction.

The moral act in which the realm of the spirit comes into being presupposes the freedom to receive commands, to obey and to disobey them. The source of these commands is the moral norms, that is, the essential structures of encountered reality, in man himself and in his world. The first question that arises at this point is: How does man become aware of the ought-to-be in his encounter with being? How does it happen that he experiences the moral commands as commands of unconditional validity? In contemporary ethical discussions the answer has been given with increasing unanimity on the basis of Protestant and Kantian insights: in the encounter of a person who is already and not yet a person with another in the same condition, both are constituted as real persons. "Oughtness" is basically experienced in the ego-thou relation. This situation can also be described in the following way: man, facing his world, has the whole universe as the potential content of his centered self. Certainly, there are actual limits because of the finitude of every being, but the world is indefinitely open to man; everything can become a content of the self. This is the structural basis for the endlessness of libido in the state of estrangement; it is the condition for man's desire to "win the whole world."

But there is one limit to man's attempt to draw all content into himself-the other self. One can subject and exploit another in his organic basis, including his psychological self, but not the other self in the dimension of the spirit. One can destroy it as a self, but one cannot assimilate it as a content of one's own centeredness. The attempt to do so by totalitarian rulers has never succeeded. Nobody can deprive a person of his claim to be a person and to be dealt with as a person. Therefore, the other self is the unconditional limit to the desire to assimilate one's whole world, and the experience of this limit is the experience of the ought-to-be, the moral imperative. The moral constitution of the self in the dimension of the spirit begins with this experience. Personal life emerges in the encounter of person with person and in no other way. If one can imagine a living being with the psychosomatic structure of man, completely outside any human community, such a being could not actualize its potential spirit. It would be driven in all directions, limited only by its finitude, but it would not experience the ought-to-be. Therefore, the self-integration of the person as a person occurs in a community, within

which the continuous mutual encounter of centered self with centered self is possible and actual.

The community itself is a phenomenon of life which has analogies in all realms. It is implied by the polarity of individualization and participation. Neither pole is actual without the other. This is as true of the function of self-creation as it is of the function' of self-integration, and there is no self-transcendence of life except through the polar interdependence of individualization and participation.

It would be possible to continue the discussion of centeredness and self-integration in relation to participation and community, but this would anticipate descriptions which belong to the dimension of the historical, and such anticipation would be dangerous for understanding the life processes. For example, it would support the false assumption that the moral principle refers to the community in the same way that it refers to the personality. But the structure of the community, including its structure of centeredness, is qualitatively different from that of the personality. The community is without complete centeredness and without the freedom which is identical with being completely centered. The confusing problem of social ethics is that the community consists of individuals who are bearers of the spirit, whereas the community itself, because of its lack of a centered self, is not. Where this situation is recognized, the notion of a personified community put under moral commands is impossible-as in some forms of pacifism. These considerations lead to the decision that the functions of life with respect to the community must be discussed in the context of the most embracing dimension, the historical. At this point the object of discussion is the question of the way in which the person becomes a person. Considering the communal quality of the person does not mean considering the community.

d) The ambiguities of personal self-integration: the possible, the real, and the ambiguity of sacrifice.-As does any other form of self-integration, the personal moves between the poles of self-identity and self-alteration. Integration is the state of balance between them, disintegration the disruption of this balance. Both trends are always effective in actual life processes under the conditions of existential estrangement. Personal life is am'biguously pulled between forces of essential centeredness and of existential disruption. There is no moment in a personal life process in which one or the other force is exclusively dominant.

As in the organic and the psychological realms, the ambiguity of life

in the function of self-integration is rooted in the necessity for a being to take the encountered content of reality into its centered unity without being disrupted by its quantity or quality. Personal life is always the life of somebody-as in all dimensions, life is the life of some individual being, according to the principle of centeredness. I speak of my life, of your life, of our lives. Everything is included in my life which belongs to me: my body, my self-awareness, my memories and anticipations, **my** perceptions and thoughts, my will, and my emotions. All this belongs to the centered unity which I am. I try to increase this content by going out and try to preserve it by returning to the centered unity which I am. In this process I encounter innumerable possibilities, each of which, if accepted, means a self-alteration and consequently a danger of disruption. For the sake of my present reality, I must keep many possibilities outside of my centered self, or I must give up something of what I now am for the sake of something possible which may enlarge and strengthen my centered self. So my life process oscillates between the possible and the real and requires the surrender of the one for the other-the sacrificial character of all life.

Every individual has essential potentialities which he tends to actualize, according to the general movement of being from the potential to the actual. Some of these potentialities never reach the stage of concrete possibilities; historical, social, and individual conditions reduce the possibilities drastically. From the point of view of human potentialities, a Central American rural Indian may have the same human potentialities as a North American college student, but he does not have the same possibilities of actualizing them. His choices are much more limited, although he also has to sacrifice possibilities for realities and vice versa.

Examples illustrating this situation are abundant. We must sacrifice possible interests for those which are or could become real. We must surrender possible work and possible vocations for the one we have chosen. We must sacrifice possible human relations for the sake of real ones or real ones for the sake of possible ones. We must choose between a consistent but self-limiting building-up of our life and a **breaking-**through of as many limits as possible with a loss of consistency and direction. We must continuously decide between abundance and poverty and between special kinds of abundance and special kinds of poverty. There is the abundance of life into which one is driven by the anxiety of remaining poor in some respect, or in many respects; but this abundance may

surpass our power of doing justice to it and to us, and then the abundance becomes an empty repetition. If thereupon the opposite anxiety, that of losing oneself in life, leads to a partial resignation or complete withdrawal from abundance, the poverty becomes empty **self-relatedness—** the centered unity of the personal self comprises many different trends, each of which tends to dominate the center. We have mentioned this already in connection with the psychological self and have pointed to the structure of compulsion; the same ambiguity of self-integration is present under the dimension of spirit. It is usually described as the struggle of values in a personal center; in ontological terms it can be called the conflict of essences within an existing self. One of the many ethical norms, strengthened by experiences with the encountered world, takes hold on the personal center and shakes the balance of essences within the centered unity. This can result in a failure of self-integration in personalities with a strong but narrow morality-just as it may lead to disrupting conflicts between the dominating and the suppressed ethical norms. The ambiguity of sacrifice is apparent even in the moral function of the spirit.

The self-integration of life includes the sacrifice of the possible for the real, or of the real for the possible, as an inescapable process in all dimensions other than that of the spirit and as an inescapable decision within the dimension of the spirit. In the common judgment, sacrifice is unambiguously good. In Christianity, in which God himself makes the sacrifice according to Christian symbolism, the act of sacrifice seems to transcend any ambiguity. But this is not true, as theological thoughts and penitential practice well know. They know that every sacrifice is a moral risk and that hidden motives may even make a seemingly heroic sacrifice questionable. This does not mean that there should not be sacrifice; the moral life demands it continuously. But the risk must be taken with awareness that it is a risk and not something unambiguously good on which an easy conscience can rely. One of the risks is the decision whether to sacrifice the real for the possible or the possible for the real. The "anxious conscience" tends to prefer the real to the possible, because the real is at least familiar, whereas the possible is unknown. But the moral risk in sacrificing an important possibility can be equally as great as the risk in sacrificing an important reality. The ambiguity of sacrifice also becomes visible when the question is asked, What is to be sacrificed? Self-sacrifice may be worthless if there is no self worthy of being

sacrificed. The other one, or the cause, for which it is sacrificed may receive nothing from it, nor does he who makes the sacrifice achieve moral self-integration by it. He may merely gain the power which weakness gives over the strong one for whom the sacrifice is made. If, however, the self which is sacrificed is worthy, the question arises whether that for which it is sacrificed is worthy to receive it. The cause which receives it may be evil, or the person for whom it is offered may use it for selfish exploitation. Thus the ambiguity of sacrifice is a decisive and all-permeating expression of the ambiguity of life in the function of self-integration. It shows the human situation in the mixture of essential and existential elements and the impossibility of separating them as good and evil in an unambiguous way.

e) ***The ambiguities of the moral taw: the moral imperative, the moral norms, the moral motivation.-The*** discussion of the conflict of norms and the necessity of risking the sacrifice of some of them for the sake of others has shown that the ambiguities of personal self-integration are ultimately rooted in the character of the moral law. Since morality is the constitutive function of the spirit, the analysis of its nature and the proof of its ambiguity are decisive for the understanding of the spirit and the predicament of man. Obviously, such inquiry relates the present discussion to the biblical and classical theological judgments about the law's meaning in the relation of God and man. The three functions of the spirit-morality, culture, and religion-will be treated separately in this and the following sections. Only after this has been done will their essential unity, their actual conflicts, and their possible reunion be considered. This sequence is called for by the fact that they can only be reunited by that which transcends each of them, i.e., the new reality or the divine Spirit. Under the dimension of spirit as it is actual in human life, no reunion is possible.

Three main problems of the moral law confront ethical inquiry: the unconditional character of the moral imperative, the norms of moral action, and moral motivation. The ambiguity of life in the dimension of the spirit is manifest in all three.

As we have seen, the moral imperative is valid because it represents our essential being over against our state of existential estrangement. For this reason the moral imperative is categorical, its validity not dependent on external or internal conditions; it is unambiguous. But this unambiguity does not refer to anything concrete. It only says that if there is a moral imperative it is unconditional. The question then is whether and where there is a moral imperative. Our first answer was: The encounter with another person implies the unconditional command to acknowledge him as a person. The validity of the moral imperative is basically experienced in such encounters. But this does not say what kind of encounter provides for such an experience, and to answer this a qualifying description is needed. There are innumerable non-personal encounters in reality (walking together in a crowd, reading about people in a newspaper) which are potentially personal encounters but which never become actual. The transition from the potentially personal encounter to the actual one is a field with countless ambiguities, many of which put before us painful decisions. The question-Who is my neighbor ?-with all its problems, remains valid in spite-or more exactly because-of the ***one*** answer given by Jesus in the story of the Good Samaritan. This answer shows that the abstract notion of "acknowledging the other one as a person" becomes concrete only in the notion of participating in the other one (which follows from the ontological polarity of individualization and participation). Without participation one would not know what "other self" means; no empathy discerning the difference between a thing and a person would be possible. Even the word "thou" in the description of the ego-thou encounter could not be used, because it implies the participation that is present whenever one addresses somebody as a person. ***So*** one must ask, What kind of participation is it in which the moral self is constituted and which has unconditional validity? It certainly cannot be a participation in the particular characteristics of another self with one's own particular characteristics. This would be the more or less successful convergence of two particularities which could lead to sympathy or antipathy, to friendship or hostility; this is a matter of chance, which does not constitute a moral imperative. The moral imperative demands that one self participate in the center of the other self and consequently accept his particularities even if there is no convergence between the two individuals as individuals. This acceptance of the other self by participating in his personal center is the core of love in the sense of ***agape,*** the New Testament term. The preliminary formal answer, that the unconditional character of the moral imperative is experienced in the encounter of person with person,

has now become embodied in the material answer, that it is ***agape*** which gives concreteness to the categorical imperative, centeredness to the person and the foundation of the life of the spirit.

Agape, as the ultimate norm of the moral law, is beyond the distinction of formal and material. But, because of the material element in ***agape,*** this assertion reveals the ambiguity of the moral law-and it does so just in the term "law of love." The problem can be formulated in this manner : How is participation in the center of the other self related to participation in or rejection of his particular characteristics? Do they support, or exclude, or limit each other? For instance, what is the essential and what is the existential relation of ***agape*** and libido, and what does the mixture of both relations in a moral act mean for the validity of ***agape*** as ultimate norm? These questions are asked in order to show the ambiguity of the moral law from the point of view of its validity, and at the same time they lead to the question of the ambiguity of the moral law from the point of view of its content-the actual commandments.

The commandments of the moral law are valid because they express man's essential nature and put his essential being against him in his state of existential estrangement. This raises the question: How is moral self-integration possible within the ambiguous mixture of essential and existential elements which characterizes life? We answered: By love in the sense of ***agape!*** For love includes the ultimate, though formal, principle of justice, and love applies it in an ever changing way to the concrete situation.

This solution is decisive for the question of the content of the moral law. But it can be attacked from two sides. One can defend the pure formalism of ethics, as it appears, for example, in Kant and reject ***agape*** as ultimate principle just because it leads to ambiguous decisions which are lacking in unconditional validity. But actually, not even Kant was able to maintain the radical formalism he intended, and in his elaboration of the moral imperative he appears as a liberal heir of Christianity and Stoicism. It seems that radical ethical formalism is logically impossible because the form always keeps traits of that from which it has been abstracted. Under these circumstances, it is more realistic to name the content from which the form is abstracted but to formulate the principles in such a way that the radicalism of the pure form is united in them with the concrete content. And in spite of the ambiguities in its application, this is just what ***agape*** does.

The content of the moral law is historically conditioned. This fact is the reason why Kant attempted to liberate the ethical norm from all concrete contents, and-in contrast-it is also the reason why most kinds of naturalism reject absolute principles of moral action. According to them, the content of the moral imperative is determined by biological and psychological necessities or by sociological and cultural realities. This precludes absolute ethical norms and admits only a calculating ethical relativism.

The truth of ethical relativism lies in the moral law's inability to give commandments which are unambiguous, both in their general form and in their concrete application. Every moral law is abstract in relation to the unique and totally concrete situation. This is true of what has been called natural law and of what has been called revealed law. This distinction between natural and revealed law is ethically irrelevant, because according to classical Protestant theology, the Ten Commandments, as well as the commandments of the Sermon on the Mount, are restatements of the natural law, the "law of love," after periods in which it was partly forgotten, partly distorted. Their substance is the natural law, or in our terminology, man's essential nature standing against him in his existential estrangement. If formulated in commandments, this law never reaches the here and now of a particular decision. With respect to it, the commandment may be right in a special situation, mainly in its prohibitive form, but it may be wrong in another situation just because of its prohibitive form. Every moral decision demands a partial liberation from the stated moral law. Every moral decision is a risk because there is no guarantee that it fulfils the law of love, the unconditional demand coming from the encounter with the other one. This risk must be taken, but if it is taken the question arises, How is it possible to reach personal self-integration under these conditions? There is no answer to this question within the realm of man's moral life and its ambiguities.

The ambiguity of the moral law with respect to ethical content even appears in the abstract statements of the moral law and not only in their particular application, For instance, the ambiguity of the Ten Commandments is rooted in the fact that, in spite of their universalist form, they are historically conditioned by the Israelitic culture and its development out of the surrounding cultures. Even the ethical statements of the New Testament, including those of Jesus, reflect the condition of the Roman Empire and the radical withdrawal of the individual from the

problems of social and political existence, and this situation was repeated in all periods of the history of the church. Ethical questions and answers changed, and every answer or statement of the moral law in each period of human history remained ambiguous. Man's essential nature and the ultimate norm of agape in which it is expressed are both hidden and manifest in the processes of life. We have no unambiguous approach to the created nature of man and its dynamic potentialities. We have only an indirect and ambiguous approach through the revelatory experiences which underlie the ethical wisdom of all nations, but which are not unambiguous even though they are revelatory. The human reception of every revelation makes the revelation itself ambiguous for man's action.

A practical consequence of these considerations is that the moral conscience is ambiguous in what it commands us to do or not to do. In view of innumerable historical and psychological cases, one cannot deny that there is an "erring conscience." The conflicts between tradition and revolution, between nomism and liberality, between authority and autonomy, make a simple reliance on the "voice of conscience" impossible. It is a risk to follow one's conscience; it is a greater risk to contradict it. But if it is uncertain, this greater risk is required. Therefore, although it is safer to follow one's conscience, the result may be disastrous, revealing the ambiguity of conscience and leading to the quest for a moral certainty which in temporal life is given only fragmentarily and through anticipation.

The principle of agape expresses the unconditional validity of the moral imperative, and it gives the ultimate norm for all ethical content. But it has still a third function: it is the source of moral motivation. It necessarily commands, threatens, and promises, because fulfilment of the law is reunion with one's essential being, or integration of the centered self. The law is "good," as Paul says. But just at this point its deepest and most dangerous ambiguity appears, that which drove Paul, Augustine, and Luther to their revolutionary experiences. The law as law expresses man's estrangement from himself. In the state of mere potentiality or created innocence (which is not a historical stage), there is no law, because man is essentially united with that to which he belongs: the divine ground of his world and of himself. What ought to be and what is are identical in the state of potentiality. In existence, this identity is broken, and in every life process the identity and non-identity of what is and what ought to be are mixed. Therefore, obedience and

disobedience to the law are mixed; the law has the power to motivate partial fulfilment, but in so doing it also drives to resistance, because by its very character as law it confirms our separation from the state of fulfilment. It produces hostility against God, man, and one's self. This leads to different attitudes toward the law. The fact that it has some motivating power leads to the self-deception that it can produce reunion with our essential being, i.e., a complete self-integration of life in the realm of the spirit. This self-deception is conspicuously represented by those who are called variously the righteous ones, the pharisees, the puritans, the pietists, the moralists, the people of good will. They *are* righteous, and they deserve to be admired. On a limited basis they are well-centered, strong, self-certain, dominating. They are persons who radiate judgment even when they do not express it in words. Yet just by their righteousness they are often responsible for the distintegration of those whom they encounter and who feel their judgment.

The other attitude toward the law, probably that of the majority of people, is a resigned acceptance of the fact that its motivating power is limited and that it cannot bring about a full reunion with what we ought to be. They do not deny the validity of the law; they do not fall into antinomianism, and so they compromise with its commandments. This is the attitude of those who try to obey the law and oscillate between fulfilment and non-fulfilment, between a limited centeredness and a limited dispersion. They are good in the sense of conventional legality, and their fragmentary fulfilment of the law makes the life of society possible. But their goodness, like that of the righteous ones, is ambiguous-only with less self-deception and with less moral arrogance.

There is a third attitude toward the law, one which combines a radical acceptance of the validity of the law with a complete despair about its motivating power. This attitude is the result of passionate attempts to be a "righteous one" and to fulfil the law without compromise in its unconditional seriousness. If these strivings are followed by the experience of failure, the centered self is disrupted in the conflict between willing and doing. One is aware of the fact (which has been rediscovered and methodologically described by present-day analytic psychology) that the unconscious motives of personal decisions are not transformed by commandments. The motivating power of the law is defied by them, sometimes by direct resistance, sometimes by the process of rationalization and-in the social realm-by the production of ideologies. The moti-

vating power of the divine law is wrecked by what Paul calls the opposing "law in our members." And this is not changed by the reduction of the whole law to the law of *agape*, because if agape (toward God, man, and oneself) is imposed on us as law, the impossibility of fulfilling it becomes more obvious than in the case of any particular law. The experience of this situation leads to the quest for a morality which fulfils the law by transcending it, that is, *agape* given to man as reuniting and integrating reality, as new being and not as law.

2. The Self-creativity of Life and Its Ambiguities

a) Dynamics and growth.-The second polarity in the structure of being is that of dynamics and form. It is effective in the function of life which we have called self-creativity, and it is effective in the principle of growth. Growth is dependent on the polar element of dynamics in so far as growth is the process by which a formed reality goes beyond itself to another form which both preserves and transforms the original reality. This process is the way in which life creates itself. It does not create itself in terms of original creation. It is given to itself by the divine creativity which transcends and underlies all processes of life. But on this basis, life creates itself through the dynamics of growth. The phenomenon of growth is fundamental under all dimensions of life. It is frequently used as the ultimate norm by philosophers who openly reject all ultimate norms (for example, pragmatists). It is used for processes under the dimension of the spirit and for the work of the divine Spirit. It is a main category in individual as well as social life, and in the "philosophies of process" it is the hidden reason for their preference of "becoming" to "being."

But dynamics is held in *a* polar interdependence with form. Self-creation of life is always creation of form. Nothing that grows is without form. The form makes a thing what it is, and the form makes a creation of man's culture into what it is: a poem or a building or a law, and so on. However, a continuous series of forms alone is not growth. Another element, coming from the pole of dynamics, makes itself felt. Every new form is made possible only by breaking through the limits of an old form. In other words, there is a moment of "chaos" between the old and the new form, a moment of no-longer-form and not-yet-form. This chaos is never absolute; it cannot be absolute because, according to the structure of the ontological polarities, being implies form. Even relative

chaos has a relative form. But relative chaos with relative form is transitional, and as such it is a danger to the self-creative function of life. At this crisis life may fall back to its starting point and resist creation, or it may destroy itself in the attempt to reach *a* new form. Here one thinks of the destructive implications of every birth, whether of individuals or species, of the psychological phenomenon of repression, and of the creation of a new social entity or a new artistic style. The chaotic element which appears here is already manifest in the creation myths, even in the creation stories of the Old Testament. Creation and chaos belong to each other, and even the exclusive monotheism of biblical religion confirms this structure of life. It is echoed in the symbolic descriptions of the divine life, of its abysmal depth, of its character as burning fire, of its suffering over and with the creatures, of its destructive wrath. But in the divine life the element of chaos does not endanger its eternal fulfilment, whereas in the life of the creature, under the conditions of estrangement, it leads to the ambiguity of self-creativity and destructiveness. Destruction can then be described as the prevalence of the elements of chaos over against the pole of form in the dynamics of life.

But there is no pure destruction in any life process. The merely negative has *no* being. *In every* process of life structures of creation are mixed with powers of destruction in such a way that they cannot be unambiguously separated. And in the actual processes of life, one never can establish with certainty which process is dominated by one or the other of these forces.

One could consider integration as an element of creation and disintegration as a form of destruction. And one could ask why integration and disintegration should be understood as a special function of life. However, they *must* be distinguished-as must the two polarities on which they are dependent. Self-integration constitutes the individual being in its centeredness; self-creation gives the dynamic impulse which drives life from one centered state to another under the principle of growth. Centeredness does not imply growth, but growth does presuppose coming from and going to a state of centeredness. Likewise, disintegration is possibly, but not necessarily, destruction. Disintegration takes place within a centered unity; destruction can occur only in the encounter of centered unity with centered unity. Disintegration is represented by disease, destruction by death.

b) Self-creativity and destruction outside the dimension of spirit: life

and death.-Like centeredness, growth is a universal function of life. But while the concept of centeredness is taken from the dimension of the inorganic and its geometrical measurement, the concept of growth is taken from the organic dimension and is one of its basic characteristics. In both cases, the concept is used metaphorically to indicate the universal principle under which one of the three basic functions of life works, but it is also used literally in the realm from which it is taken.

"Growth" is used metaphorically whenever it refers to the inorganic realms-the macrocosmic, the microcosmic, and that of ordinary experience. The problem of growth and decay in the macrocosmic sphere is as old as mythology and as new as recent astronomy. For instance, it was envisaged in the rhythmic process of the burning and renewal of a "cosmos," in the discussions about "entropy" and the threat of the "death" of the world by the loss of warmth, or in the indications given by contemporary astronomy that we live within an expanding world. Such ideas show that mankind has always been aware of the ambiguity of self-creativity and destruction in the processes of life in general, including the inorganic dimension. The religious significance of these ideas is obvious, but they should never be abused (as has the doctrine of entropy) by basing arguments for the existence of a highest being on them.

The ambiguity of creation and destruction is equally visible in the microcosmic, especially the subatomic, sphere. The continuous genesis and decay of the smallest particles of matter, mutual annihilation as expressed in the conception of "countermatter," the exhaustion of radiating materials-in all these hypothetical concepts, life is seen as creating itself and being destroyed under the predominance of the inorganic dimension. These microcosmic developments are the background for developments of growth and decay within the realm of the inorganic materials ordinarily encountered, even those which actually and symbolically give the impression of unchangeable duration (rocks, metals, and so on).

The concepts of self-creativity and destruction, growth and decay, come into their own in the realms which are dominated by the dimensions of the organic, for it is here that life and death are experienced. It is not necessary to confirm the fact as such, but it is important to point out the ambiguous interweaving of self-creation and destruction in all realms of the organic. In every process of growth, the conditions

of life are also the conditions of death. Death is present in every life process from its beginning to its end, although the actual death of a living being does not depend only on the ambiguity of its own individual life process but also on its position within the totality of life. But death from outside could have no power over a being if death from inside were not continuously at work.

Therefore one must affirm that the moment of our conception is the moment in which we begin not only to live but also to die. The same cellular constitution which gives a being the power of life drives toward the extinction of this power. This ambiguity of self-creation and destruction in all life processes is a fundamental experience of all life. Living beings are consciously aware of it, and the face of every living being expresses the ambiguity of growth and decay in its life process.

The ambiguity of self-creation and destruction is not limited to the growth of the living being in itself but also to its growth in relation to other life. Individual life moves within the context of all life; in each moment of a life process, strange life is encountered, with both creative and destructive reactions on both sides. Life grows by suppressing or removing or consuming other life. Life lives on life.

This leads to the concept of struggle as a symptom of the ambiguity of life in all realms but most properly speaking in the organic realm and most significantly in its historical dimension (see Part V of the system). Every look at nature confirms the reality of struggle as an ambiguous means of the self-creation of life-a fact classically formulated by Heraclitus when he called "war" the father of all things. One could write a "phenomenology of encounters" showing how the growth of life at every step includes conflicts with other life. One could point to the necessity for the individual to push ahead in trial, defeat, and triumph in order to actualize himself, and to the inevitable clash with like attempts and experiences of other life. In push and counterpush, life effects a preliminary balance in all dimensions, but there is no a priori certainty about the outcome of these conflicts. The balance achieved in one moment is destroyed in the next.

This is the case in the relation between organic beings, even of the same species. Yet the struggle becomes even more conspicuously a tool of growth in the encounter of species where one feeds on the other. A life-and-death-struggle is going on in all of what we call "nature," and because of the multidimensional unity of life, it is going on also between

men, within man, and in the history of mankind. It is a universal structure of life, and disregard of this fact is the underlying reason for the theoretical error and practical failure of legalistic pacifism, which tries to abolish this characteristic of the self-creation of all life-at least in historical mankind.

Life lives on life, but it also lives through life, being defended, strengthened, and driven beyond itself by struggle. The survival of the strongest is the means by which life in the process of self-creation reaches its preliminary balance, a balance which is continuously threatened by the dynamics of being and the growth of life. It is only by the waste of innumerable seeds of generative power and actual individuals that a preliminary balance in nature is maintained. Without such waste a whole complex of natural life would be destroyed, as happens when climatic conditions or human activities interfere. The conditions of death are also the conditions of life.

The individual life process transcends itself in two directions, by labor and by propagation in the self-creation of life. The curse laid on Adam and Eve in the story of the Fall powerfully expresses the ambiguity of labor as a form of the self-creation of life. In English the word "labor" is used both for the pangs of childbirth and for the toil of tilling the land. Labor as the result of being thrown out of paradise is imposed on the woman and the man. There is little positive valuation of labor in the Old Testament and not much in the New Testament or in the medieval church (even for the monastic life); certainly, there is no glorification of it as there is in Protestantism, industrial society, and socialism. In the attiudes of these latter the burden of labor has often been concealed, especially in educational contexts, and sometimes even repressed, as by the contemporary activistic ideology and by people who feel a vacuum the moment they stop working. These extremes in the valuation of labor show its ambiguity, an ambiguity which appears in every life process under the dimension of the organic.

Individualized and separated from the encountered reality, life goes beyond itself to assimilate other life, whether it is under the inorganic or under the organic dimension. But in order to go out, it must submit to the surrender of a well-preserved self-identity. It must surrender the blessedness of a fulfilled resting in itself; it must toil. Even if driven by libido or *eros*, it cannot escape the labor of destroying a potential balance for an actual creative imbalance. In the concrete-symbolic language of

the Old Testament, even God has been thrown out of his blessed balance and forced into labor by human sin. It is in this context that the romantic devaluation of technical progress must be rejected. In so far as it liberates innumerable human beings from a toil which ruins their bodies and prevents the actualization of the potentialities of their spirit, technical progress is a healing power in view of the wounds caused by the destructive implications of labor.

But there is another side to the ambiguity of labor. Labor prevents the self-identity of a living individual from losing its dynamics and becoming empty. This is the reason why the laborless blessedness of heaven, as it appears in mythological symbols, is abhorred by many people who identify it with the hell of eternal ennui and prefer to it the hell of eternal pain. This shows that for a being whose life is conditioned by time and space, the burden of labor is an expression of its real life and as such a blessing superior to the imaginary one of dreaming innocence or mere potentiality. Sighing under the burden of every labor is ambiguously mixed with anxiety about losing it, witnessing to the ambiguity of the self-creation of life.

The most conspicuous and mysterious ambiguity in the function of the self-creation of life is that of propagation, or concretely, that of sexual differentiation and reunion. The self-creative process of life under the dimension of the organic reaches its highest power and its deepest ambiguity in it. Individual organisms are driven toward each other to experience the highest ecstasy, but in this experience the individuals disappear as separate individuals and sometimes die or are killed by their mates. The sexual union of the separate is the most conspicuous form of the self-creation of life, and here the life of the species which is actual in individuals both fulfils and negates the individuals. This holds true not only of the individuals within a species but also of the species itself. In producing individuals it also produces from time to time those which represent the transition to a new species, anticipating the ambiguity of life in the historical dimension.

The discussion of the ambiguity of propagation, like that of the ambiguity of labor, has touched on the realm which represents the transition from the dimension of the organic to that of the spirit-the realm of self-awareness, the psychological. As shown above, it is difficult to separate it from the two between which it is a bridge; nevertheless, one can abstract some elements from them and discuss them independently.

The ambiguity of self-creation appears in terms of self-awareness in the ambiguities of pleasure and pain and in the ambiguities of "life instinct" and "death instinct." With respect to the first, it seems evident that every self-creative process of life is-if it reaches awareness-a source of pleasure, and every destructive process of life a source of pain. From this simple and seemingly unambiguous statement, the psychological law has been derived according to which every life process is a pursuit of pleasure and a flight from pain. The inference is thoroughly false. Healthy life follows the principle of self-creation, and in the moment of creativity the normal living being disregards both pain and pleasure. They may be present in or as consequences of the creative act, but they are not objects of pursuit or flight within the act itself. Therefore, it is totally misleading to ask: Does not the creative act itself provide a pleasure of a higher order, even if pain is connected with it, and does this not confirm the pleasure principle? It does not, because this principle asserts an intentional pursuit of happiness, and there is no such intention in the creative act itself. It certainly fulfils something toward which life is driven by its inner dynamics, the classical name of which is *eros.* This is the reason why successful production gives joy, but there would be no creative act and no joy of fulfilment if the act were intended as a means to bring about joy. Creative *eros* implies surrender to the object of *eros,* and it is destroyed by reflection upon its possible consequences in terms of joy or pain. The pain-pleasure principle is valid only in sick, uncentered, and therefore unfree and uncreative life.

The ambiguity of pain and pleasure is most conspicuous in a phenomenon which is often called morbid but which is universally present in healthy as well as sick life-the experience of pain in pleasure and of pleasure in pain. The psychological material substantiating this ambiguity in the self-creation of life is extensive but not fully understood. In itself it is not a matter of an unambiguous distortion of life-as the term morbid would indicate--but rather an ever present symptom of the ambiguity of life under the dimension of self-awareness. It appears most strikingly in two of the characteristics of the self-production of life-in struggle and in sex.

In the ambiguity of pain and pleasure, there is an anticipation of the ambiguity of life instinct and death instinct. The latter two phrases are questionable tools for grasping phenomena which are deeply rooted in the self-creative function of life. It is one of the contradictions of nature

that a living being affirms its life and denies it. The self-affirmation of life is usually taken for granted, its negation rarely, and if the latter is taught, as in Freud's doctrine of ***Todestrieb*** (poorly translated by "death instinct"), even otherwise orthodox pupils rebel. But the facts, given in immediate self-awareness, prove the ambiguity of life as described by Freud (and seen by Paul when he speaks of the sadness of this world which leads to death). In every conscious being, life is aware of its exhaustibility; it dimly feels that it must come to an end, and the symptoms of its exhaustion not only make it conscious of this fact but also awaken a longing for it. It is not an acute state of pain which produces the desire to be rid of oneself in order to be rid of the pain (although this may also happen) ; it is the existential awareness of one's finitude which poses the question of whether the continuation of finite existence is worth the burden of it. But as long as there is life, this tendency is counterbalanced by the self-affirmation of life, the desire to maintain its identity even if it is the identity of the life of a finite, exhaustible individual. Thus suicide actualizes an impulse latent in all life. This is the reason for the presence of suicidal fantasies in most people but the comparative rarity of actual suicide. It makes unambiguous what, according to the nature of life, is valid only in its ambiguity.

All these factors have been considered without regard to the dimensions of spirit and of history, but they have laid the foundations for a description of the self-creation of life under these dimensions.

c) ***The self-creativity of life under the dimension of spirit: culture***

(1) THE BASIC FUNCTIONS OF CULTURE : LANGUAGE AND THE TECHNICAL ACT.—Culture, *cultura,* is that which takes care of something, keeps it alive, and makes it grow. In this way, man can cultivate everything he encounters, but in doing so, he does not leave the cultivated object unchanged; he creates something new from it-materially, as in the technical function; receptively, as in the functions of *theoria*; or reactively, as in the functions of ***praxis.*** In each of these three cases, culture creates something new beyond the encountered reality.

The new in man's cultural activity is first of all the double creation of language and technology. They belong together. In the first book of the Bible, man in paradise is requested by God to give names to the animals (language) and to cultivate the garden (technology). Socrates discusses the meaning of words by referring to the technical problems of craftsmen and of military and political technicians. In pragmatism, the validity of

concepts is measured by their technical applicability. Speaking and using tools belong together.

Language communicates and denotes. Its communicative power is dependent upon such non-denotative means of communication as sounds and gestures, but communication reaches its fulfilment only when there is denotation. In language, communication becomes mutual participation in a universe of meanings. Man has the power of such communication because he has a world in correlation to a completely developed self. This liberates him from bondage to the concrete situation, that is, to the particular here and now of his environment. He experiences world in everything concrete, something universal in everything particular. Man has language because he has a world, and he has a world because he has language. And he has both because in the encounter of self with self he experiences the limit which stops him in his unstructured running from one "here and now" to the next and throws him back on himself and enables him to look at the encountered reality as a world. Here lies the common root of morality and culture. A confirmation of this statement can be observed in the effects of some mental disturbances-when a person loses his capacity for encountering other persons as persons, he also loses the capacity for meaningful talk. A stream of words without denotative structure or communicative power pours out of him; he is never aware of the "wall" of the listening thou. To a lesser degree, this is a danger for everyone. The inability to listen is both a cultural distortion and a moral fault.

We have not placed language at the basis of our analysis of culture in order to present a philosophy of language. In view of the tremendous amount of work done in this field by earlier and contemporary philosophers, such an attempt would be preposterous and, furthermore, unnecessary for our purpose. But language has been put at the beginning of our discussion of the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit because it is fundamental for all cultural functions. It is present in all of them, whether technical or political, cognitive or aesthetic, ethical or religious. In order to actualize this omnipresence, language is endlessly variable, both with respect to the particular cultural function in which it appears and with respect to the encounter with the reality which it expresses. In both respects language reveals the basic characteristics of man's cultural activities and affords a useful approach to their nature and their differences. If taken in this larger sense semantics could and

should become a door to life in the dimension of the spirit. Some indications of its significance for systematic theology may be given here.

Language grasps the encountered reality in terms of "being at hand"-in the literal sense of being as an object for "handling" or managing in order to reach ends (which may become means for other ends). This is what Heidegger has called *Zuhandensein* (being at disposal) in contrast to *Vorhandensein* (being in existence); the first form denotes a technical, the second a cognitive, relationship to reality. Each has its particular language--not excluding the other but trespassing on it. The language of "being at hand" is the ordinary, often very primitive and limited language, and the others borrow from it.

But in a temporal sense, it is perhaps not the first language. Mythological language seems to be equally old, combining the technical grasp of objects with the religious experience of a quality of the encountered that has highest significance even for daily life but transcends it in such a way that it demands another language, that of the religious symbols and their combination, the myth. Religious language is symbolic-mythological, even when it interprets facts and events which belong to the realm of the ordinary technical encounter with reality. The contemporary confusion of these two kinds of language is the cause of one of the most serious inhibitions for the understanding of religion, as it was in the prescientific period for the understanding of the ordinarily encountered reality, the object of technical use.

The language of myth, as well as the language of the ordinary technical encounter with reality, can be translated into two other kinds of language, the poetic and the scientific. Like religious language, poetic language lives in symbols, but poetic symbols express another quality of man's encounter with reality than religious symbols. They show in sensory images a dimension of being which cannot be shown in any other way, although like religious language they use the objects of ordinary experience and its linguistic expression. Again, the confusion of these kinds of language (the poetic with the religious and the technical with the poetic) is prohibitive for understanding the functions of the spirit to which both belong.

This is especially true of the cognitive function and the language created by it. It has been confused with all the others, partly because it is present in them in a prescientific form, partly because it gives a direct answer to the question which is asked indirectly in all functions of man's

cultural self-creativity-the question of truth. But the methodological search for empirical truth and the artificial language used for this purpose must be sharply distinguished from the truth implied in the technical, mythological, and poetic encounters with reality and their natural or symbolic kinds of language.

Another characteristic of culture which is universal and prefigured in language is the triad of elements in cultural creativity: subject matter, form, and substance. Out of the inexhaustible manifoldness of encountered objects, language chooses some which are of significance in the universe of means and ends or in the religious, poetic, and scientific universe of expression. They constitute the subject matter in cultural activities although differently in each.

The differences are caused by the form, the second and decisive element in a cultural creation. The form makes a cultural creation what it is-a philosophical essay, a painting, a law, a prayer. In this sense form is the essence of a cultural creation. Form is one of those concepts which cannot be defined, because every definition presupposes it. Such concepts as this can be explained only by being put into configuration with other concepts of the same character.

The third element can be called the substance of a cultural creation. Whereas its subject matter is chosen and its form is intended, its substance is, so to speak, the soil out of which it grows. Substance cannot be intended. It is unconsciously present in a culture, a group, an individual, giving the passion and driving power to him who creates and the significance and power of meaning to his creations. The substance of a language gives it its particularity and its expressive ability. This is the reason that translation from one language to another is fully possible only in those spheres in which form is predominant over substance (as in mathematics) and becomes difficult or impossible when substance is predominant. In poetry, for example, translation is essentially impossible because poetry is the most direct expression of the substance through an individual. The encounter with reality on which one language is based differs from the encounter with reality in any other language, and this encounter in its totality and its depth is the substance in the cultural self-creation of life.

The word "style" is ordinarily used in relation to works of art, but it is sometimes applied to a particular qualification of the form by the substance in all other functions of man's cultural life, so that one may speak

of a style of thinking, of research, of ethics, of law, of politics. And if one applies the term in this way, one often finds that analogies with respect to style can be discovered in all the cultural functions of a particular period, group, or cultural orbit. This makes style a key to understanding the way in which a particular group or period encounters reality, although it is also a source of conflicts between the demands of form-creation and of the expression of the substance.

The interpretation of language anticipates structures and tensions of cultural creativity which will frequently recur in the following discussion. The fundamental importance of language for the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit is mirrored in this way. In analyzing the different kinds of language, we started with language that expresses the ordinary technical encounter with reality, but, as indicated above, the technical function is itself one of the functions through which life creates itself under the dimension of spirit. As language liberates from bondage to the "here and now" through universals, so the technical handling of encountered reality liberates from bondage to the naturally given conditions of existence by the production of tools. Higher animals also use things at hand as tools under particular conditions, but they do not create tools as tools for unlimited use. In their production of nests, caves, hills, and so forth, they are bound to a definite plan, and they cannot use these tools beyond the scope of this plan. Man produces tools as tools, and for this the conception of universals is presupposed, i.e., the power of language. The power of tools is dependent on the power of language. Logos precedes everything. If man is called *homo faber*, he is implicitly called *anthropos logikos*, i.e., man who is determined by the logos and who is able to use the meaningful word.

The liberating power of the production of tools consists in the possibility of actualizing purposes which are not implied in the organic processes themselves. Preservation and growth in the organic dimension are surpassed wherever tools as tools appear. The decisive difference is that the inner aims (*tele*) of the organic process are determined by the process, whereas the external aims (purposes) of technical production are not determined but represent infinite possibilities. Space travel is a technical aim and somehow a technical possibility, but it is not determined by the organic needs of a living being. It is free, a matter of choice. However, this leads to a tension from which many conflicts of our contemporary culture arise: the perversion of the relation of means and

ends by the unlimited character of the technical possibilities. Means become ends simply because they are possible. But if possibilities become purposes only because they are possibilities, the genuine meaning of purpose is lost. Every possibility may be actualized. No resistance is forthcoming in the name of an ultimate end. The production of means becomes an end in itself, as in the case of the compulsive talker talking becomes an end in itself. Such distortion may affect a whole culture in which the production of means becomes the end beyond which there is no end. This problem, intrinsic in technical culture, does not deny the significance of technology but shows its ambiguity.

(2) THE FUNCTIONS OF "THEORIA": THE COGNITIVE AND THE AESTHETIC ACTS.-By their duality, the two basic functions of culture, the word and the technical act, point to a general duality in the cultural self-creation of life. This duality is based on the ontological polarity of individualization and participation and is actual in the life processes under all dimensions. Every individual being has the quality of being open for other individual beings. Beings "receive each other" and, by doing so, change each other. They receive and react. In the realm of the organic, this is called stimulus and response; under the dimension of self-awareness, it is called perception and reaction; under the dimension of spirit, I suggest calling it *theoria* and *praxis.* The original Greek forms of the words "theory" and "practice" are used because the modern forms have lost the meaning and power of the ancient words. *Theoria* is the act of looking at the encountered world in order to take something of it into the centered self as a meaningful, structured whole. Every aesthetic image or cognitive concept is such a structured whole. Ideally, the mind drives toward an image which embraces all images and a concept which contains all concepts, but in reality the universe never appears in a direct vision-it only shines through particular images and concepts. Therefore every particular creation of *theoria* is a mirror of encountered reality, a fragment of a universe of meaning. This is implied in the fact that language moves in universals. World breaks through environment in every universal. He who says, "This is a tree," has grasped treehood in an individual tree and with it a fragment of the universe.of meaning.

In this example, language is given as a cognitive expression of *theoria,* but the same example can also be used for the aesthetic sense of the term. If Van Gogh paints a tree, it becomes an image of his dynamic vision of the world. He contributes to the creation of the universe of meanings

by creating an image both of treehood and of the universe as reflected in the particular mirror of a tree.

The terms "images" and "concepts" for the two ways in which *theoria* receives reality through the aesthetic and cognitive functions need some justification. Both words are used in a very wide sense : images for all aesthetic creations, concepts for all cognitive creations. Most would probably agree that the visual, as well as the literary, arts create images, sensory or imaginary, but the application of the term "image" to music might be questioned. A justification for this enlargement of the meaning of "image" is that one can speak of musical "figures," thus transferring a term that is visual by definition to the sphere of sounds. And the movement is not one-sided: one speaks of colors, ornaments, poems, and plays in musical terms. Therefore, in spite of its visual origin, we use the term "image" for the whole of aesthetic creativity (as Plato used the visual term *eidos,* or "idea," universally).

The question whether a concept or a proposition is the most important tool of knowledge seems to me empty, because in every defined concept numerous propositions are implicit and at the same time every structured proposition leads in the direction of new concepts which presuppose old ones.

The distinction between the aesthetic and the cognitive has been explained before in connection with the description of the structure of reason,' but the structure of reason is only one element in the dynamics of life and the functions of spirit. It is the static element in the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit. When we spoke about the existential conflicts of reason in "Reason and Revelation" (Part I of the system), *we* might better have spoken, in a less condensed manner, of the existential conflicts produced by the ambiguous application of rational structures in the dynamics of the spirit. For reason is the structure of both mind and world, whereas spirit is their dynamic actualization in personality and community. Strictly speaking, ambiguities cannot occur in reason, which is structure, but only in spirit, which is life.

Most of the problems connected with the cognitive function of man's life have been discussed under "Reason and Revelation." Here we need only point to the basic tension in the nature of the cognitive processes which leads to their ambiguities. In the act of the cognitive creativity of life (as, analogously, in all functions of the self-creation of life under the

[1] *Systematic Theology,* I, *77-78.*

dimension of spirit, including morality and religion), there is a fundamental conflict between that which is intended and the situation that both causes the intention and at the same time prevents its fulfilment. This conflict is based on the estrangement between subject and object, an estrangement which is, at the same time, a condition for culture as the whole of creative, receiving, or transforming acts.

Therefore, one can say that the cognitive act is born out of the desire to bridge the gap between subject and object. The equivocal term for the result of such reunion is "truth." The word is claimed by both science and religion and sometimes even by the arts. If one of these claims is accepted exclusively, new words for the other claims must be found-which, it seems to me, is unnecessary because the basic phenomenon is the same in all cases: the fragmentary reunion of the knowing subject with the known object in the act of knowledge.

The intention of finding truth is only one element in the aesthetic function. The main intention is to express qualities of being which can be grasped only by artistic creativity. The result of such creativity has been called the beautiful and has sometimes been combined with truth, sometimes with the good, sometimes with both, in a triad of highest values. As a term, "beauty" has lost the power it had in the Greek combination of the beautiful and the good (*kalon k'agathon*), and in recent aesthetics it has been almost unanimously rejected because of its connections with the decadent phase of the classical style-beautifying naturalism. Perhaps one could speak of expressive power or expressiveness. This would not exclude aesthetic idealism or naturalism but would point to the aim of the aesthetic function, that is, to express. The tension which arises in the aesthetic function is that beween expression and the expressed. One could speak of expressive truth or untruth. But one should instead speak of the authenticity of the expressive form or of its unauthenticity. It can be unauthentic for two reasons: either because it copies the surface instead of expressing the depth or because it expresses the subjectivity of the creating artist instead of his artistic encounter with reality. A work of art is authentic if it expresses the encounter of mind and world in which an otherwise hidden quality of a piece of the universe (and implicitly of the universe itself) is united with an otherwise hidden receptive power of the mind (and implicitly of the person as a whole). Innumerable combinations, which determine the artistic styles as well as the individual work, are possible betwen the two elements of the aesthetic encounter. The tension in the aesthetic function is different in character from that in the cognitive function. To be sure, it is also ultimately rooted in the existential estrangement of self and world which, in the cognitive function, is the separation of subject and object. But a real union of self and world is achieved in the aesthetic encounter. There are degrees of depth and authenticity in this union, depending on the creative powers of the artists, but there is always some kind of union. This is the reason that philosophers, for example, in the Kantian school (classical as well as Neo-Kantian), have seen in art the highest self-expression of life and the answer to the question implied in the limitations of all other functions. And this is the reason that sophisticated cultures tend to replace the religious by the aesthetic function. But this attempt is untrue to the human situation and to the nature of aesthetics. A work of art is a union of self and world within limitations both on the side of the self and on the side of the world. The limitation on the side of the world is that although in the aesthetic function as such one, otherwise hidden, quality of the universe is reached, ultimate reality, which transcends all qualities, is not reached; the limitation on the side of the self is that in the aesthetic function the self grasps reality in images and not with the totality of its being. The effect of this double limitation is to give union in the aesthetic function an element of unreality. It is "seeming"; it anticipates something that does not yet exist. The ambiguity of the aesthetic function is its oscillation between reality and unreality.

The aesthetic function is not restricted to artistic creativity, as the cognitive function is not restricted to scientific creativity. We have pre-scientific and pre-artistic functions of the spirit. They permeate the whole life of man, and it would be very wrong were the term "creative" to be applied only to vocational, scientific, and artistic creativity. For instance, the knowledge and expressive power embodied in myth-often experienced at a very early age-has become for most people the door into all aspects of culture. And ordinary observation of facts and events, as well as direct aesthetic experience with nature and man, are effective daily in the self-creation of life under the dimension of the spirit.

(3) **THE FUNCTIONS OF "PRAXIS": THE PERSONAL AND THE COMMUNAL ACTS.-Praxis** is the whole of cultural acts of centered personalities who as members of social groups act upon each other and themselves. Praxis in this sense is the self-creation of life in the personal-communal realm.

Therefore, it includes the acts of persons on themselves and on other persons, on the groups to which they belong and through them on other groups, and indirectly on mankind as a whole.

In the functions of *praxis,* life creates itself in a particular way under the dimension of spirit. There are tensions in all of the functions which lead to ambiguities and the quest for the unambiguous. It is difficult to find traditional names for them, for there is much overlapping and a frequent lack of differentiation between the activities themselves and their scholarly interpretations. One can speak of social relations, of law, of administration, of politics, and one can speak of personal relations and personal development. And in so far as there are norms directing the cultural acts in all these modes of transformation, one could subsume the whole realm under the term "ethics" and distinguish between individual and social ethics. But the term "ethics" designates primarily the principles, validity, and motivation of the moral act as described earlier, and it is probably more expedient for our understanding of the functions of the spirit to define ethics as the science of the moral act and to subsume the theory of the cultural functions of praxis under the whole of a "theory of culture." The decisive reason for such a semantic distinction is the fundamental position which the moral act assumes when understood as the self-constitution of spirit. At the same time this terminology makes it obvious that the special content of morality is a creation of the ***cultural*** self-creativity of life.

Praxis is action aiming at growth under the dimension of spirit; as such it uses means for ends and, in this respect, is a continuation of the technical act (as ***theoria*** is the continuation of the word which grasps encountered reality). In this connection, "continuation" means that the different functions of *praxis* employ tools adequate to their purposes and transcend the production of physical tools by which, in union with the word, man was first liberated from bondage to his environment. Some of the most important technical activities are economy, medicine, administration, and education. They are complex functions of the spirit, combining ultimate norms, scientific material, human relations, and a large accumulation of technical experience. Their high valuation in the Western world is caused partly by the Jewish-Christian symbol of the Kingdom of God's subjecting encountered reality to its purposes.

Under the heading of *theoyia, we* found truth and authentic expressiveness as aims of cultural creativity. Now we would like to discover the

corresponding terms under the heading of ***praxis.*** The first is "the good," the ***agathon,*** *the* ***bonum;*** and the good must be defined as the essential nature of a thing and the fulfilment of the potentialities implied in it. However, this applies to everything that is and describes the inner aim of creation itself. It does not provide a special answer to the question of the good toward which ***praxis*** aspires. To supply this we need other concepts which are subordinate to the good but which express a particular quality of it. One of these concepts is justice. It corresponds to truth in the sphere of ***theoria.*** Justice is the aim of all cultural actions which are directed toward the transformation of society. The word can also be applied to the individual, in so far as he behaves in a just way. But more frequently another term, namely, righteous, is used in this sense: he who is righteous exercises justice. But this does not end the search for a term which designates the personal good in the same way that justice covers the social good. One must regret that the Greek word *ayete* (in Latin ***virtus,*** in English "virtue") has so completely lost its original power that today it has ridiculous connotations. It would be a confusing anticipation of later discussions were such religious terms as pious, justified, holy, spiritual, and so forth, to be used here, because they are dependent on the Christian answer to the questions implied in the ambiguities of *praxis.*

Such a term as *ayete* (virtue) points to the actualization of essential human potentialities. In view of this, it might be possible to speak directly of the fulfilment of human potentialities and to call the inner aim of *praxis,* directed toward individuals as individuals, "humanity." Yet the use of "humanity" is also problematical because of the different meanings of "humanity" in ordinary language and because of the philosophical connotation of "humanism" as a special interpretation of the potentialities of man. In view of this connotation, humanity, as the aim of man's *praxis,* could be contrasted with divinity as the aim, in the sense of "becoming similar to God." In spite of these dangers, I suggest using the word "humanity" in the sense of the fulfilment of man's inner aim with respect to himself and his personal relations, in co-ordination with justice as the fulfilment of the inner aim of social groups and their mutual relations.

At this point the question arises as to what produces the tensions in the nature of humanity and justice, from which the ambiguities of their actualization result. The general answer is the same as that given in the description of the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit: the

infinite gap between subject and object under the conditions of existential estrangement. In the functions of *theoria* the gap lies between the knowing subject and the object to be known and between the expressing subject and the object to be expressed. In the functions of *praxis* the gap lies between the existing human subject and the object for which he strives-a state of essential humanity-and the gap between the existing social order and the object toward which it strives-a state of universal justice. This practical gap between subject and object has the same consequences as the theoretical gap; the subject-object scheme is not only the epistemological but also the ethical problem.

Every cultural act is the act of a centered self and is based on the moral self-integration of the person within the community. In so far as the person is the bearer of the cultural self-creation of life, he is subjected to all the tensions of culture we have discussed and all the ambiguities of culture we will discuss in the following sections. A person who participates in a culture's movement, growth, and possible destruction is culturally creative. In this sense, every human being is culturally creative, simply by virtue of speaking and using tools. This universal characteristic should be distinguished from original creativity, which in the full sense of the word "original" can be applied to only a few; but despite the necessity for this distinction, it should not be distorted into a mechanical division. There are unnoticeable transitions.

Therefore, everyone is subjected to the ambiguities of culture, both in the subjective and the objective senses. They are inseparable from historical destiny.

d) The ambiguities of the cultural act: the creation and the destruction of meaning

(1) THE AMBIGUITIES IN THE LINGUISTIC, COGNITIVE, AND AESTHETIC SELF-CREATION OF LIFE.-The word is the bearer of meaning; therefore, language is the first result of the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit. It permeates every cultural act and, indirectly, all functions of the spirit. But it has a special relation to the functions of *theoria*—cognition and expression—as the technical act, though present in every function of cultural self-creation, has a special relation to the functions of *praxis.* For this reason I want to discuss the ambiguities of the word together with the ambiguities of truth and expressiveness and the ambiguities of the technical act together with the ambiguities of humanity and justice.

As the bearer of meaning, the word liberates from bondage to the environment, a bondage to which life in all previous dimensions is subjected. Meaning presupposes a self-awareness of life which has transpsychological validity. Something universally valid is intended in every meaningful sentence, even if the subject spoken about is particular and transitory. Cultures live in such meanings. The meanings are as like and as different as are the languages of particular social groups. The meaning-creating power of the word depends on the different ways in which the mind encounters reality, as expressed in language from the mythical to that of daily life and, between these, as expressed in the scientific and the artistic functions. All this is continuous activity of the self-creation of life in producing a universe of meaning. Logic and semantics deal scientifically with the structures and norms through which this universe is created.

The ambiguity that enters into this process results from the fact that the word, while creating a universe of meaning, also separates the meaning from the reality to which it refers. The act of grasping objects by the mind, on which language is based, opens up a gap between the object grasped and the meaning created by the word. The inherent ambiguity of language is that in transforming reality into meaning it separates mind and reality. Countless examples could be given, but one can distinguish the following main kinds of ambiguity of the word: the poverty in the midst of richness that falsifies that which is grasped through neglect of innumerable other possibilities; the limitation on universality imposed by expressing a definite encounter with reality in a particular structure that is strange to other linguistic structures, and the indefiniteness within definite meaning that leads to the betrayal of the mind by words, the ultimately uncommunicative character of this main tool of communication as a result of the unintended as well as intended connotations in the self of the centered person; the unlimited character of the freedom of language when limitations by persons or objects are rejected, the empty talk and the reaction against it, the flight into silence; the manipulation of language for the sake of purposes with no basis in reality, such as flattery, polemics, intoxication, or propaganda; and finally, the perversion of language to the exact opposite of the function intended by the self-creative power of life through hiding, distorting, and contradicting that which it is supposed to present.

These are examples of processes going on in all speech in one way or

another, despite the continuous, but only fragmentarily successful, fights against avoidable ambiguities waged by semantic analysis. This makes it understandable that in biblical thought the word is united with power in the Creator, that it becomes a historical personality in the Christ, and that it is ecstatic self-manifestation in the Spirit. In these symbols the word not only grasps encountered reality; it is itself reality beyond the split between subject and object.

The ambiguities of the cognitive act of the self-creation of life are rooted in the split between subject and object. This split is the precondition of all knowledge and, at the same time, the negative power in all knowledge. The whole history of epistemology is a cognitive attempt to bridge this split by showing the ultimate unity of subject and object, either by annihilating one side of the gap for the sake of the other or by establishing a uniting principle which contains both of them. All this was and is being done in order to explain the possibility of knowledge. The reality of the split, of course, cannot be avoided; every act of cognitive existence is determined by it. And cognitive existence as an act of cultural self-creation is the subject matter of our inquiry.

Again, only a limited number of examples can be mentioned. We may start with the "ambiguity of observation," the observation which is usually understood as the solid basis of all knowledge, although its solidity does not prevent ambiguity. In history as well as in physics, in ethics as well as in medicine, the observer wants to regard the phenomenon as it "really" is. "Really" means independent of the observer. However, there is no such thing as independence from the observer. The observed changes in being observed. This has always been obvious in philosophy, the humanities, and history, but now it has also become so in biology, psychology, and physics. The result is not the "real" but encountered reality, and from the point of view of the meaning of absolute truth, encountered reality is distorted reality.

The next example of the ambiguity of the self-creation of life in the cognitive function of culture is the "ambiguity of abstraction." Cognition tries to reach the essence of an object or a process by abstraction from the many particulars in which this essence is present. This is so even in history where such all-embracing concepts as "Renaissance" or "Chinese art" include, interpret, and hide innumerable concrete facts. Every concept shows this ambiguity of abstraction, which has frequently resulted in a pejorative use of the word "abstract." But every concept is an abstraction-and according to the neurologist, Kurt Goldstein, it is the power of abstraction that makes man man.

Much discussion has resulted from the "ambiguity of truth as a whole." Obviously, every statement about an object uses concepts which themselves need definition, and the same is true of the concepts used in these definitions, and so on, ad infinitum. Every particular assertion is preliminary, because a finite being cannot comprehend the whole, and if he claims to, as some metaphysicians have, he deceives himself. Therefore, the only truth given to man in his finitude is fragmentary, broken, and untrue if measured by the truth embodied in the whole. But to apply this measure is itself untrue, for it would exclude man from any truth, even from the truth of this statement. The ambiguity of the conceptual pattern leads deep into a metaphysical discussion. Today it is predominantly a problem in physics, where some physicists interpret the determining physical patterns, such as atom, power field, and so on, as mere products of the human mind without any *fundamentum* in re (foundation in reality), whereas others attribute such a foundation to them. The same problem has arisen in sociology with the concept of social classes, in psychology with the concept of complexes, and in history with the names for historical periods. The ambiguity lies in the fact that in creating large conceptual patterns the cognitive act changes the encountered reality in such a way that it becomes unrecognizable.

Finally, one must point to the "ambiguity of argumentation," in which a chain of arguments is intended to conceptualize the structure of things but in which undiscussed assumptions that are unnoticed by the cognitive subject play a determining role. This is true of the historical context in which the argument takes place, of the unnoticed influence of the cognitive subject's sociological position on the argument-an influence called ideology-and finally, of the unconscious impact of the cognitive subject's psychological situation, which is called rationalization. Every argument depends on these forces, even if a strong scientific discipline is practiced. The basic gap between subject and object cannot be bridged by method.

These examples explain why those who are aware of the ambiguities of the cognitive act often try to escape them by transcending the gap in the direction of a mystical unity; truth for them is the mystical conquest of the subject-object scheme.

Another attempt to find the unambiguous is made in images created

by the arts. In artistic intuition and its images, a reunion of *theoria* and reality, which otherwise could not be reached, is believed possible. But the aesthetic image is no less ambiguous than the cognitive concept and the grasping word. In the aesthetic function the gap between expression and that which is expressed represents the split between the acts of *theoria* and encountered reality. The ambiguities resulting from this split can be shown in the conflicts of stylistic elements which characterize every work of art-and indirectly, every aesthetic encounter with reality. These elements are the naturalistic, the idealistic, and the expressionistic. Each of these terms suffers under several of the ambiguities of language mentioned before, but we cannot dispense with them. Naturalism in this context refers to the artistic impulse to present the object as ordinarily known or scientifically sharpened or drastically exaggerated. If this impulse is radically followed through, subject matter overpowers expression and results in a questionable imitation of nature-the "ambiguity of stylistic naturalism." Idealism in this context refers to the contrary artistic impulse, that of going beyond ordinarily encountered reality in the direction of what things essentially are and therefore ought to be. It is the anticipation of a fulfilment that cannot be found in an actual encounter and that is, theologically speaking, eschatological. Most of what we call classical art is strongly determined by this impulse, although not exclusively, for no style is completely ruled by any one of the three stylistic elements. But here also the ambiguities are manifest; the natural object, the expression of which is the aim of the aesthetic self-creation of life, is lost in the anticipated idea of it, and this is the "ambiguity of stylistic idealism." An ideal without realistic foundation is set up against the encountered reality, which is beautified and corrected to conform with the ideal in a manner which combines sentimentality and dishonesty. This is what has marred the religious art of the last hundred years. Such art still expresses something, although not encountered reality-the low taste of a culturally empty period.

(2) THE **AMBIGUITIES OF TECHNICAL AND PERSONAL** TRANSFORMATION. -All ambiguities of the self-creation of life in the functions of *theoria* are ultimately dependent on the cleavage between subject and object under the conditions of existence: the subject tries to bridge the gap by receiving the object in words, concepts, and images, but never achieves this aim. There is reception, grasp, and expression, but the gap remains and the subject remains within itself. The opposite happens in the self-

creation of life by the functions of *praxis,* including their technical element. In them it is the object that is to be transformed according to concepts and images, and it is the object which causes the ambiguous character of cultural self-creation.

We have linked together the liberating power of the word and of the technical act, i.e., in the production of tools as tools. Language and techniques enable the mind to set and pursue purposes which transcend the environmental situation. But in order to produce tools, one must know and comply with the inner structure of the materials used and their behavior under anticipated conditions. The tool which liberates man also subjects him to the rules of its making.

This consideration leads to three ambiguities of all technical production, whether it involves the hammer which helps to produce a hut or the set of machines which help to produce a man-made satellite. The first is the "ambiguity of freedom and limitation" in technical production; the second is the "ambiguity of means and ends"; and the third is the "ambiguity of self and thing." From mythical times to our own period, these ambiguities have largely determined the destiny of mankind, but perhaps no period has been as aware of this as ours.

The ambiguity of freedom and limitation in technical production is powerfully expressed in myths and legends. It underlies the biblical story of the tree of knowledge from which Adam eats against the will of the gods and in the Greek myth of Prometheus, who brings fire to men, also against their will. Perhaps the story of the Tower of Babel, telling of man's desire to be united under a symbol in which his finitude is overcome and the divine sphere reached, is nearest to our own situation. In all these cases, the result is both creative and destructive; and this remains the destiny of technical production in all periods. It opens up a road along which no limit can be seen, but it does so through a limited, finite being. Awareness of this conflict is clearly expressed in the myths referred to, and it is also voiced today by our scientists, who are aware of the destructive possibilities into which their creation of scientific knowledge and technical tools has thrown all mankind.

The second ambiguity, that of "means and ends," is related to this basic ambiguity of technical production. It renders concrete the limitlessness of technical freedom by asking: For what? So long as this question is answered by the basic needs of man's physical existence, the problem is hidden, though not absent, since the question of what a

basic need is cannot be answered with assurance. But the problem comes into the open if, after the satisfaction of basic needs, new needs are endlessly engendered and satisfied and-in a dynamic **economy**—engendered in order to be satisfied. Technical possibility becomes social and individual temptation in this situation. The production of **means**—of gadgets-becomes an end in itself, since no superior end is visible. This ambiguity is largely responsible for the emptiness of contemporary life. But it is not possible to change this by simply saying: Do not continue production1 This is as impossible as saying to the scientist, with respect to the ambiguity of freedom and limitation: Do not continue research! Ambiguities cannot be overcome by cutting off an element which essentially belongs to the process of the self-creation of life.

This is also true of the "ambiguity of self and thing." A technical product, in contrast to a natural object, is a "thing." There are no "things" in nature, that is, no objects which are nothing but objects, which have no element of subjectivity. But objects that are produced by the technical act ***are*** things. It belongs to man's freedom in the technical act that he can transform natural objects into things: trees into wood, horses into horsepower, men into quantities of workpower. In transforming objects into things, he destroys their natural structures and relations. But something also happens to man when he does this, as it happens to the objects which he transforms. He himself becomes a thing among things. His own self loses itself in objects with which he cannot communicate. His self becomes a thing by virtue of producing and directing mere things, and the more reality is transformed in the technical act into a bundle of things, the more the transforming subject himself is transformed, He becomes a part of the technical product and loses his character as an independent self. The liberation given to man by technical possibilities turns into enslavement to technical actuality. This is a genuine ambiguity in the self-creation of life, and it cannot be overcome by a romantic, that is, pre-technical, return to the so-called natural. For man, the technical is something natural, and enslavement to natural primitivism would be unnatural. The third ambiguity of technical production cannot be overcome by annihilating technical production. With the other ambiguities, it leads to the quest for unambiguous relations of means and ends, that is, for the Kingdom of God.

The technical act permeates all functions of ***praxis*** and contributes in

part to their ambiguities. But they have their own sources of creation and destruction, the discussion of which will deal first with the personal and then with the communal ambiguities of ***praxis.***

In the realm of the personal self-creation of life, we must distinguish between the personal in itself and the personal in relation, although in reality they are inseparable. In both respects the aim of the cultural act is the actualization of the potentialities of man as man. It is "humanity" in the sense of this definition. Humanity is attained by self-determination and other-determination in mutual dependence. Man strives for his own humanity and tries to help others reach humanity, an attempt which expresses his own humanity. But both sides-determining one's self by one's self and being determined by others-manifest the general ambiguity of the personal self-creation of life. It is the relation of the one who determines and the one who is determined. Semantically speaking, even the term "self-determination" points to the ambiguity of ***identity*** and ***non-identity.*** The determining subject can determine only in the power of **what** it essentially is. But under the conditions of existential estrangement, it is separated from what it essentially is.Therefore, self-determination into fulfilled humanity is impossible; nevertheless, it is necessary, because a self determined completely from outside would cease to be a self-it would become a thing. This is the "ambiguity of self-determination," the dignity and the despair of every responsible personality ("responsible" in the sense of responding to the "silent voice" of one's essential being). One could also speak of the "ambiguity of the good will." In order to will the good, the will itself must be good. **Self**-determination must make it good, which is to say that the good will must create the good will, and so on ad infinitum in an endless regression. In light of these considerations, such terms as "self-education," "self-discipline," "self-healing," show their profound ambiguity. They imply either that their objects have already been reached or that they must be rejected altogether, and the absurd concept of self-salvation is completely ruled out.

In contrast to self-determination, one can speak of "other-determination," meaning personal self-creation in so far as it depends on actions of one person upon another. This happens unintentionally in every act of personal participation and intentionally wherever unorganized or organized education, or a guiding impulse, is at work. An ambiguity appears in these relations which can be formulated in the following

way: working toward the growth of a person is at the same time working toward his depersonalization. Trying to enhance a subject as subject makes it into an object. First of all, one can observe the practical problems implied in this ambiguity in educational activity, whether it is unintentional or intentional. In communicating cultural contents by education, the extremes of totalitarian indoctrination and liberal unconcern are rarely reached, but they are always present as elements and cause the attempt to educate the person as a person to be one of a culture's most ambiguous tasks. The same is true of the attempt to educate the person by inducting him into the actual life of the educational group. Here the extremes of authoritarian discipline and liberal permissiveness, although rarely practiced to the full, appear as elements in the educational process and tend either to break the person as person or to prevent him from reaching any definite form. In this respect the main problem of education is that every method, however refined, increases the "objectifying" tendency which it tries to avoid.

Another example of the "ambiguity of personal growth" is the guiding activity. The term "guiding" is used here in the sense of "helper" in the growth of a person. This help can be psychotherapy or counseling; it can be the aid which is a basic part of family relationships; it can be that which is unintentionally present in friendship and in all educational activities (to the extent that the latter are a consequence of the helping activity). The most conspicuous example today is psychoanalytic practice and its ambiguities. One of the great achievements of psychoanalytic theory is its insight into the depersonalizing consequences of the phenomenon of transference, not only on the patient, but also on the analyst, and into the attempts to overcome this situation by methods finally removing the transference in the healing process. However, this can be successful only if the ambiguity of working for personal growth is overcome. And this is possible only if the subject-object scheme is conquered. Unambiguous life is impossible wherever the subject-object scheme is unbroken.

If we now turn to the realm of human relations, we find the ambiguities of the self-creation of life in the "ambiguity of personal participation." This refers above all to the relationship of person to person, but it also includes the relation of the person to the non-personal. The ambiguity of participation is present in innumerable forms between the extremes of self-seclusion and self-surrender. In every act of participation

there is an element of holding one's self back and an element of giving one's self. In the attempts to know the other one, self-seclusion expresses itself in the projection of images of the other's being which disguise his real being and are only projections of the one who attempts to know. The screen of images between person and person makes every knowing participation between persons profoundly ambiguous (as, for instance, the analysis of childrens' images of parents has abundantly shown). And there is the other possibility of relinquishing one's images of the other one and receiving the images he either actually has of himself or wants to impose on those who try to participate cognitively in him.

Emotional participation is also subject to the ambiguities of self-seclusion and self-surrender. In reality, emotional participation in the other one is emotional oscillation within one's self, created by an assumed participation in the other one. Much so-called romantic love is of this character. It manifests the ambiguity of missing the other person just by the attempt to enter emotionally into his secret being. And there is also the opposite movement, the chaotic self-surrender which, in an act of throwing one's self away shamelessly, brings everything to the other one; but he who receives it cannot use it, because it has lost its secrecy and uniqueness. Again we must say that profound ambiguities are effective in every act of emotional participation which, together with the cognitive ambiguities, are responsible for the inexhaustible creative-destructive situations in the relation of person to person.

It is inevitable that active participation shows analogous structures. The self-produced images of the other one and the emotional self-seclusion in the gown of participation bring about manifold patterns of mutual destruction in the encounter of person with person. If the other one is attacked, it is his image and not his self that is attacked. It is one's own desire for self-surrender that is more often satisfied in surrender to the other one and not his. Participation, sought for, turns into self-seclusion after the experience of rejection, real or imagined. The innumerable mixtures of hostility and surrender are some of the most conspicuous examples of the ambiguity of life.

(3) THE AMBIGUITIES OF COMMUNAL TRANSFORMATION.—The frame in which cultural self-creation occurs is the life and growth of the social group under the dimension of spirit. Discussion of this framework has been deferred to this point because of the difference in structure between the personal self and the community.

Whereas the centered self is the knowing, deliberating, deciding, and acting subject in every personal act, a social group has no such center. One can only call the seat of authority and power the "center" of a group by analogy, for in many cases authority and power are split, although the cohesion of the group persists, being rooted in life processes that may reach back into the past or that may be determined by unconscious forces which are stronger than any political or social authority. A person's free act makes him responsible for the consequences of the act. An act of the representative of authority in a group may be highly responsible, or completely irresponsible, with the whole group's having to bear the consequences. But the group is not a personal unity which becomes responsible for acts which, for example, are forced upon it against the will of the majority or through the preliminary superiority of one part in a situation where power is split. The life of a social group belongs under the historical dimension, which unites the other dimensions, adding to them the direction toward the future. Although we intend to deal with the historical dimension in Part V of the present system, at this point we must deal with the ambiguities which follow from the principle of justice as such, without entering upon a discussion of justice in the historical dimension.

Under the dimension of spirit and in the function of culture, life creates itself in human groups whose nature and development is the subject matter of sociology and historiography. Here we ask the normative question: What are social groups intended to be by their essential nature, and what ambiguities appear in the actual processes of their self-creation? Whereas in the previous descriptions we have shown the ambiguities of the growth of the person toward humanity, we must now discuss the ambiguities of the growth of the social group toward justice.

One may distinguish between social organisms and the organizational forms which special human activities take to enable them to grow toward justice. Families, friendship groups, local and vocational communities, tribal and national groups, have grown naturally within the cultural self-creation of life. But as parts of cultural creativity they are, at the same time, objects of organizing activity; in fact, they are never the one without the other. This distinguishes them from flocks in the organic-psychological dimension. The justice of a flock or a grove of trees is the natural power of the more powerful ones to force their

potentialities into actualization against the natural resistance of the others. In a human group the relation of the members is ordered under traditional rules, conventionally or legally fixed. The natural differences in the power of being are not excluded in the organizational structure, but they are ordered according to the principles implied in the idea of justice. The interpretation of these principles is endlessly varied, but justice itself is the point of identity in all interpretations. The relations of man and wife, parents and children, relatives and strangers, members of the same local group, citizens of the same nation, and so on, are ordered by rules which, consciously or unconsciously, seek to express some form of justice. This is true even in the relation of the conquering group to the conquered within the same social context. The justice given to the slave is still justice, however unjust slavery may be from a higher point of view. According to the polarity of dynamics and form, a social group could not have being without form. And the social group's form is determined by the understanding of justice effective in the group.

The ambiguities of justice appear wherever justice is demanded and actualized. The growth of life in social groups is full of ambiguities which-if not understood-lead either to an attitude of despairing resignation of all belief in the possibility of justice or to an attitude of utopian expectation of a complete justice, which is later frustrated.

The first ambiguity in the actualization of justice is that of "inclusiveness and exclusion." A social group is a group because it includes a particular kind of people and excludes all others. Social cohesion is impossible without such exclusion. At this point the ambiguities of self-integration and self-creation must be discussed together, prior to an introduction of the historical dimension of life processes. The special character of social groups, as described before, makes it impossible to subsume them totally under the dimension of spirit. Their life does not possess the moral centeredness of the personal self, and for this reason, one often separates the social-political from the cultural self-creation of life. But this is also impossible, since, on the one hand, the element of justice present in all groups is created by acts of the spirit and, on the other hand, all realms dominated by the dimension of the spirit are, in their cultural forms, partly dependent on the social-political forces. It is inherent in the essential justice of a group to preserve its centeredness, and the group tries to establish a center in all acts in which

it actualizes itself. A center does not precede growth in the life of social groups, but self-integration and self-creation are identical at every moment. The difference in this respect is obvious, both from the dimensions preceding that of the spirit and from the dimension of the spirit itself. In the historical dimension, self-integration and self-creation are one and the same act of life. The processes of life coincide under the all-embracing dimension of the historical.

A consequence of the convergence of the life processes under the historical dimension is the application of the "ambiguity of social cohesion and social exclusion" both to the process of self-integration and to the process of self-creation. This is the subject of countless sociological inquiries, and the practical consequences of every suggested solution are very great. The ambiguity of cohesion implies that in every act by which social cohesion is strengthened individuals or groups on the boundary line are expelled or rejected and, conversely, that every act in which such individuals or groups are retained or accepted weakens the cohesion of the group. Those on the boundary line include individuals from a different social class, individuals who enter closed family and friendship groups, national or racial strangers, minority groups, dissenters, or newcomers simply because they are newcomers. In all these cases, justice does not demand unambiguous acceptance of those who would possibly disturb or destroy group cohesion, but it certainly does not permit their unambiguous rejection.

The second ambiguity of justice is that of "competition and equality." Inequality in the power of being between individuals and groups is not a matter of static differences but of continuous dynamic decisions. This happens in every encounter of being with being, in every glimpse of each other, in every conversation, in every demand, question, or appeal. It happens in the competitive life in family, school, work, business, intellectual creation, social relations, and the struggle for political power. There is a pushing ahead in all these encounters, a trying, a withdrawing into an existing unity, a pushing out of it, a coalescing, a splitting, a continuous alteration between victory and defeat. These dynamic inequalities are actual under all dimensions from the beginning of each life process to its end. Under the dimension of the spirit, they are judged by the principle of justice and the element of equality in it. The question is, In what respect does justice include equality?

There is one unambiguous answer: every person is equal to every

other, in so far as he is a person. In this respect there is no difference between an actually developed personality and a mentally diseased one who is merely a potential personality. By the principle of justice incarnate in them, they both demand to be acknowledged as persons. The equality is unambiguous up to this point, and the implications are also logically unambiguous: equality before the law in all those respects in which the law determines the distribution of rights and duties, chances and limitations, goods and burdens, and in just returns for obedience to or defiance of the law, for merit and demerit, for competence and incompetence.

However, although the logical implications of the principle of equality are unambiguous, every concrete application is ambiguous. Past and present history incontestably documents this fact. In the past not even the recognition of a mentally diseased individual of the human genus as a potential person has been acknowledged, and there are still limits to this recognition in the present. In addition, there are the terrifying relapses which have occurred in the demonic destruction of justice in our century. However, even if this situation should change in the future, it could not change the ambiguities of competition, which work continuously for inequality in the encounters of people in daily life, in the stratification of society, and in the political self-creation of life. The very attempt to apply the principle of equality, as contained unambiguously in the acknowledgment of the person as person, can have destructive consequences for the realization of justice. It may deny the right embodied in a particular power of being and give it to individuals or groups whose power of being does not warrant it. Or it may keep individuals or groups under conditions which make growth of their potentialities technically impossible. Or it may prevent one kind of competition and foster another kind, thus removing one source of unjust inequality only to produce another. Or it may apply unjust power in order to crush unjust power. These examples make it clear that a state of unambiguous justice is a figment of the utopian imagination.

The third ambiguity in the self-actualization of a social group is "the ambiguity of leadership." It runs through all human relations from the parent-child to the ruler-subject relationship. And in its many forms it shows the ambiguity of creativity and destruction which characterizes all life processes. "Leadership" is a structure which starts rather early in the organic realm and which is effective under the dimensions of inner

awareness, of the spirit, and of history. It is very poorly interpreted if it is derived from the existence of different degrees of strength and the drive of the stronger to enslave the weaker. This is a permanent abuse of the principle of leadership and not its essence. Leadership is the social analogy to centeredness. As we have seen, it is only an analogy, but it is a valid one. For without the centeredness given by leadership, no self-integration and self-creation of a group would be possible. This function of leadership can be derived from the very fact that would seem to be its refutation-the personal centeredness of the individual member of the group. Without a leader or leading group, a group could be united only through a psychological power, directing all individuals in a way similar to mass shock reactions, by which spontaneity and freedom would be lost in the movement of a mass in which the particles had no independent decision. Propagandists of all kinds try to produce such behavior. They do not want to be leaders but managers of a causally-determined mass movement. But just this possibility of using the power of leadership for transforming leadership into mass-management shows that this is not the intrinsic nature of leadership, which presupposes and preserves the centered person whom it leads. The possibility just mentioned shows the ambiguity of leadership. The leader represents not only the power and justice of the group but also himself, his power of being, and the justice implied in it. This applies not only to him as an individual but to the particular social stratum in which he stands and which, willingly or unwillingly, he also represents. This situation is the permanent source of the ambiguity of every ruling power, whether it is a dictator, an aristocracy, or a parliament. And this is true also of voluntary groups whose chosen leaders manifest the same ambiguous motives as do political rulers. The ambiguity of rationalization or ideology production is present in every leadership structure. But the attempt to remove such a structure, for example, in a state of anarchy, is self-defeating because chaos breeds dictatorship and the ambiguities of life cannot be conquered by producing a vacuum.

Leaders in special functions have been called "authorities," but this is a misleading application of a term which has a more fundamental meaning than leadership and, consequently, more conspicuous ambiguities. "Authority," first of all, denotes the ability to start and to augment (*augere, auctor*) something. In this sense, there are authorities in all realms of cultural life. They result from the "division of experience" and

are necessary because of every individual's finite range of knowledge and ability. There is nothing ambiguous in this situation, but the ambiguity of leadership in the sense of authority starts the moment that actual authority, which is based on the division of experience, is frozen into an authority bound to a particular social position, for example, to scholars as scholars, kings as kings, priests as priests, or parents as parents. In these cases, persons with less knowledge and ability come to exert authority over some who have more, and thus the genuine meaning of authority is distorted. This, however, is not only a regrettable fact which could and should be prevented but also an inevitable ambiguity, because of the unavoidable transformation of actual into established authority. This is most obvious in the case of parental authority but is also true of the relations of age-classes in general, of the professions to those whom they serve, and of representatives of power to those whom they direct or rule. All institutional hierarchy is based on this transformation of actual into established authority. But authority is authority over persons and therefore open to rejection in the name of justice. Established authority tries to prevent such rejection, and here an ambiguity appears: a successful rejection of authority would undercut the social structure of life, whereas a surrender to authority would destroy the basis of authority-the personal self and its claim for justice.

The fourth ambiguity of justice is the "ambiguity of legal form." We have discussed the ambiguity of the moral law, its right and its inability to create what it is supposed to create-the reunion of man's essential being with his existential being. The ambiguities of the legal form as expressed in the laws of states, for example, in civil and criminal law, are similar. They are supposed to establish justice but instead give rise to both justice and injustice. The ambiguity of the legal form has two causes, one external, the other internal. The external cause is the relation between the legal form and the legalizing, interpreting, and executing powers. There the ambiguities of leadership exert their influence on the character of the legal form. It claims to be the form of justice, but it is the legal expression of a particular-individual or social-power of being. This in itself is not only unavoidable; it is also true to the essential nature of being, that is, the multidimensional unity of life.

Every creation under the dimension of spirit unites expression with validity. It expresses an individual or social situaion, which is indicated by the particular style. The legal style of a law-establishing group in a

special period tells us not only about logical solutions of legal problems but also about the nature of the economic and social stratification existing at the time and about the character of the ruling classes or groups. Nevertheless, the logic of the law is not replaced by the will to power and the pressure of ideologies which serve the preservation of or the attack on the existing power structure. The legal form is not used simply for other purposes; it retains its own structural necessities and can serve those other purposes only because it retains its own structure, for power without valid legal form destroys itself.

The internal ambiguity of the legal form is independent of the law-giving, interpreting, and executing authorities. Like the moral law, it is abstract and, consequently, inadequate to any unique situation, for according to the principle of individualization every situation is unique—even if very similar to others in some respects. Many legal systems are aware of this fact and have built-in safety measures against the abstract equality of everyone before the law, but they can only partly remedy the injustice which is based on the abstract character of the law and the uniqueness of every concrete situation.

e) ***The ambiguity of humanism***.-Culture, creating a universe of meaning, does not create this universe in the empty space of mere validity. It creates meaning as the actualization of what is potential in the bearer of the spirit-in man. This statement has already been defended against the anti-ontological philosophers of value. It must now be discussed in one of its decisive consequences, that is, the answer it implies to the question of the ultimate aim of the cultural self-creation of life: What is the meaning of the creation of a universe of meaning?

Following from the ontological derivation of values, the answer has two sides, the one macrocosmic, the other microcosmic. The macrocosmic can be expressed in the following way : the universe of meaning is the fulfilment of the potentialities of the universe of being. Thus, in the human world, the unfulfilled potentialities of matter, as they appear, for example, in the atom, are actualized. However, they are not actualized in the atoms, or molecules, or crystals, or plants, or animals themselves, but only in so far as parts and forces that are actualized under these dimensions are present in man. This leaves the question of the fulfilment of the universe as a whole open for the consideration of the self-transcendence of life, its ambiguities, and the symbol of unambiguous or eternal life.

In the microcosmic answer, man is seen as the point at which and the instrument through which a universe of meaning is actualized. Spirit and man are bound to each other, and only in man does the universe reach up to an anticipatory and fragmentary fulfilment. This is the root of the humanistic idea as the microcosmic answer to the question of the aim of culture, and this is the justification'of humanism, which is not the principle of a particular philosophical school, but is common to all of them. However, we must make the limiting statement that the humanistic idea can be maintained only if its ambiguities, together with the ambiguities of all cultural self-creation, are emphasized and if humanism is followed up to the point at which it asks the question of unambiguous life.

Humanism is a more embracing concept than humanity. We have defined humanity as the fulfilment of the personal life as personal and have coordinated it with justice and, in the larger view which includes all functions of the spirit, with truth and expressiveness. Humanism embraces these principles and relates them to the actualization of man's cultural potentialities. Humanity, like justice, is a concept, subordinated to humanism, which designates the intrinsic aim of all cultural activity.

Humanism cannot be criticized as rationalism. It cannot be criticized at all in so far as it asserts that the aim of culture is the actualization of the potentialities of man as the bearer of spirit. But a humanistic philosophy which tries to hide the ambiguities in the idea of humanism must be rejected. The ambiguities of humanism are based on the fact that, as humanism, it disregards the self-transcending function of life and absolutizes the self-creative function. This does not mean that humanism ignores "religion." Ordinarily, though not always, it subsumes religion under the human potentialities and considers it accordingly as a cultural creation. But in doing so humanism actually denies the self-transcendence of life and with it the innermost character of religion.

Since humanism as a term and as an attitude is intimately connected with education, it is most illuminating to demonstrate its ambiguities by considering an ambiguity of education which applies to both the personal and the communal realms. "Educating" means leading out from something-that is, from the state of "rudeness," as the word "e-rudition" indicates. But neither these words nor present educational practice answer the question: Leading into what? Unqualified humanism would reply: Into the actualization of all human potentialities.

However, since the infinite distance between the individual and the species makes this impossible, the answer, in the humanistic view, would have to be : the actualization of those human potentialities which are possible in terms of the historical destiny of this particular individual. This qualification, however, is fatal for the humanist ideal in so far as it claims to give the final answer to the educational and general cultural question. Because of human finitude, no one can fulfil the humanist ideal, since decisive human potentialities will always remain unrealized. But even worse, the human condition always exclude-whether under aristocratic or democratic systems-the vast majority of human beings from the higher grades of cultural form and educational depth. The intrinsic exclusiveness of the humanist ideal prevents it from being the final aim of human culture. It is the ambiguity of humanistic education that it isolates individuals and groups from the masses, and the more it isolates them, the more successful it is. But in doing so, it diminishes its own success, for the community of man to man, as an ever open possibility, belongs to the humanist ideal itself. If such openness is reduced by humanist education, such education defeats itself. Therefore the question "Educating into what?" must be answered in a way which includes everyone who is a person. But culture cannot do that by itself-just because of the ambiguities of humanism. Only a self-transcending humanism can answer the question of the meaning of culture and the aim of education.

In addition, we must remember (Part III, Sec. I E, 2) the failure of the humanist ideal to consider the human predicament and its existential estrangement. Without self-transcendence the demand of humanist fulfilment becomes a law and falls under the ambiguities of the law. Humanism itself leads to the question of culture transcending itself.

3. The Self-transcendence of Life and Its Ambiguities

a) **Freedom *and finitude*.**—The polarity of freedom and destiny (and its analogies in the realms of being which precede the dimension of the spirit) creates the possibility and reality of life's transcending itself. Life, in degrees, is free from itself, from a total bondage to its own finitude. It is striving in the vertical direction toward ultimate and infinite being. The vertical transcends both the circular line of centeredness and the horizontal line of growth. In the words of Paul (Romans 8:19–22), the longing of all creation for the liberation from the "subjection to

futility" (R.S.V.) **and "the shackles of mortality" (N.E.B.) is described** with a profound poetic empathy. These words are a classical expression of the self-transcendence of life under all dimensions. One can also think of Aristotle's doctrine that the movements of all things are caused by their *eros* toward the "unmoved mover."

The question as to how the self-transcendence of life manifests itself cannot be answered in empirical terms, as is possible in the case of self-integration and self-creativity. One can speak about it only in terms which describe the reflection of the inner self-transcendence of things in man's consciousness. Man is the mirror in which the relation of everything finite to the infinite becomes conscious. No empirical observation of this relation is possible, because all empirical knowledge refers to finite interdependences, not to the relation of the finite to the infinite.

The self-transcendence of life is contradicted by the profanization of life, a tendency which, like self-transcendence, cannot be described empirically but only through the mirror of man's consciousness. But profanization appears in man's consciousness, like self-transcendence, as an experience which has been expressed and was extremely effective in all epochs of man's history. Man has witnessed to the conflict between the affirmation and the denial of the holiness of life wherever he has reached full humanity. And even in such ideologies as communism, the attempt toward a total profanization of life has resulted in the unexpected consequence that the profane itself received the glory of holiness. The term "profane" in its genuine meaning expresses exactly what we call "resisting self-transcendence," that is, remaining before the door of the temple, standing outside the holy, although in English "profane" has received the connotation of attacking the holy in vulgar or blasphemous terms and consequently has come to mean vulgar language in general. In religious terminology (though not in German and the Romance languages), "profane" has been replaced by "secular," derived from *saeculum* in the sense of "world." But this does not express the contrast to the holy as graphically as "profane" does, and therefore I wish to keep the word for the important function of expressing the resistance against self-transcendence under all dimensions of life.

The general assertion may be made that in every act of the self-transcendence of life profanization is present or, in other words, that life transcends itself ambiguously. Although this ambiguity is most conspicuous in the religious realm, it is manifest under all dimensions.

b) Self-transcendence and profanization in general: the greatness of life and its ambiguities.—Life, transcending itself, appears in the mirror of man's consciousness as having greatness and dignity. Greatness can be used as a quantitative term and in this sense can be measured; however, the greatness of life in the sense of self-transcendence is qualitative. The great in the qualitative sense shows a power of being and meaning that makes it a representative of ultimate being and meaning and gives it the dignity of such representation. The classical example is the Greek hero, who represents the highest power and value within the group to which he belongs. Through his greatness he comes near to the divine sphere in which the fulfilment of being and meaning is seen in divine figures. But if he trespasses the limits of his finitude, he is thrown back upon it by the "anger of the gods." Greatness implies risk and the willingness of the great to take tragedy upon themselves. If they perish in these tragic consequences, this does not diminish their greatness and their dignity. Only smallness, the fear of reaching beyond one's finitude, the readiness to accept the finite because it is given, the tendency to keep one's self within the limits of the ordinary, the average existence and its security-only smallness radically conflicts with the greatness and dignity of life.

Human literature abounds in praise of the greatness of the physical universe, but "greatness" in this respect is not usually defined. In this case the word obviously includes the quantitative vastness of the universe in time and space. But it points more emphatically to the qualitative mystery of the structures of every particle of the physical universe as well as to the structure of the whole. "Mystery" here means the infinity of questions with which every answer confronts the human mind. Reality, every bit of reality, is inexhaustible and points to the ultimate mystery of being itself which transcends the endless series of scientific questions and answers. The greatness of the universe lies in its power of resisting ever threatening chaos, of which the myths, including the biblical stories, manifest a keen awareness. The same awareness is expressed in ontology and the cosmological interpretations of history in a rationalized form. It underlies the feeling for reality in all sensitive forms of poetry and the visual arts.

But where the holy is, there is also the profane. Life in the inorganic realm is not only great; it is also small in its greatness, hiding its potential holiness and manifesting only its finitude. It is, in religious language, "dust and ashes"; it is, as the cyclical interpretation of history asserts, fuel for the final burning of the cosmos; and it is, as technical use of it implies, material for analysis and calculation, for the production of tools. Far from being great, life under the dimension of the inorganic is nothing but the material out of which things are being made. And some philosophers see the whole physical universe as a large thing-a divinely created (or eternally given) cosmic machine. The universe is completely profanized, first in the inorganic realm and, then, by reduction of everything else to the latter, in its entirety. It belongs to life's ambiguity that both qualities, the holy and the profane, are always present in its structures.

To find a conspicuous example of this ambiguity in the inorganic sphere, we may look at the technical structures which as mere things are open to distortion, dismemberment, and the ugliness of dirt and waste. But technical things can also manifest a sublime adequacy to their purpose, an aesthetic expressiveness not due to external ornamentation but intrinsic to their form. In this way things which are mere things can transcend themselves toward greatness.

Self-transcendence in the sense of greatness implies self-transcendence in the sense of dignity. It might seem that this term belongs exclusively to the personal-communal realm because it presupposes complete centeredness and freedom. But one element of dignity is inviolability, which is a valid element of all reality, giving dignity to the inorganic as well as to the personal. The sense in which life in the personal realm is inviolable lies in the unconditional demand of a person to be acknowledged as a person. Although it is technically possible to violate anybody, morally it is impossible because it violates the violator and destroys him morally. But the question is whether dignity in the sense of inviolability can be ascribed to all life, including the inorganic realm. Myth and poetry express such a valuation of the whole of encountered reality, including the inorganic, especially the four elements and their manifestation in nature. A derivation of polytheism from the overwhelming greatness of natural powers has been attempted. But the gods never represent greatness alone; they also represent dignity. They not only act; they also command, and a basic commandment in all religions is to acknowledge the superior dignity of the god. If a god represents one of the basic elements of being, this element is honored and its violation is revenged by the wrath of the god. This is the way in which the dignity

of reality under the predominance of its inorganic elements was recognized by mankind. The elements were represented by gods, and they could be so represented only because they participate in the self-transcending function of all life. The self-transcendence of life in all dimensions makes polytheism possible. The hypothesis that man first encountered reality as the totality of things and then elevated these things to divine dignity is more absurd than the absurdities it attributes to primitive man. Actually, mankind encountered the sublimity of life, its greatness and dignity, but he encountered it in ambiguous unity with profanization, smallness, and desecration. The ambiguities of the polytheistic gods represent the ambiguities of the self-transcendence of life. This is the lasting and irrepressible validity of polytheistic symbolism. It expresses the self-transcendence of life under all dimensions against an abstract monotheism which, in order to give all power and honor to one god, transforms everything into mere objects, thus depriving reality of its power and its dignity.

The foregoing discussion anticipates the analysis of religion and its ambiguities, and is justified by the multidimensional unity of life and the necessity of going back from analogous concepts to that to which they are analogous. Only in this way can anything at all be said about such terms as "greatness" and "dignity" in their application to the inorganic realm. But a question remains from the discussion of the greatness of life-that of how the technical use of the inorganic (and organic) undermines its greatness and its dignity. The problem of the technical use of organic or inorganic material has usually been discussed from the point of view of its effect on man, but some romantic philosophers have discussed it from the point of view of the material itself. It is easy to dismiss these philosophers as romanticists, but it is not so easy todismiss the question in light of the symbol of creation. If a created section of reality is pressed into a tool, is it dishonored? Perhaps the answer to this uninvestigated question could be that the total movement of the inorganic universe contains innumerable encounters of particles and masses in which some of them undergo the loss of their identity. They are burned or frozen or taken into another entity. The technical act of man is a continuation of these processes. But beyond this, man introduces another conflict, that between the intensification of potentialities (as in electrical light, airplanes, chemical components) and the unbalancing of the structure of smaller or larger parts of the universe (as

when wastelands are produced or the atmosphere is poisoned). Here technical sublimation of matter includes its profanization. Such ambiguities lie behind the anxiety of myth-creating mankind about man's overstepping his limits and the anxiety of recent scientists about the same problem : a taboo is broken.

Much of what has been said about greatness and dignity in the inorganic universe is immediately valid in the organic realm and its several dimensions. The greatness of a living being and the infinite sublimity of its structure have been expressed by poets, painters, and philosophers in all ages. The inviolability of living beings is expressed in the protection given to them in many religions, in their importance for polytheistic mythology, and in the actual participation of man in the life of plants and animals, practically and poetically. All this is so much a part of universal human experience that it does not require expanded comment, but the ambiguities implied in it call for a full discussion, because of their own significance and because they anticipate ambiguities in the dimensions of spirit and history.

The holiness of a living being, its greatness and dignity, is ambiguously united with its profanization, its smallness, and its violability. The general rule that all organisms live through the assimilation of other organisms implies that they become "things" for each other, "food-things," so to speak, to be digested, absorbed as nourishment, and thrown out as debris. This is radical profanization in terms of their independent life. This law of life-living-from-life has even been practiced by men against men in anthropophagy. But here the reaction started on the basis of the person-to-person encounter. Man ceased to be transformed into a food-thing, although he still remained a "labor-thing." But in the relation of man to all other living beings a change took place only where the relation of man to some animals (or, as in India to animals in general) became analogous to the relation of man to man. This shows most clearly the ambiguity between the dignity or inviolability of life and the actual violation of life by life. The biblical vision of peace in nature envisages an unambiguous self-transcendence in the realm of the organic which would change the actual conditions of organic life (Isaiah 11: 6-9).

Under the dimension of self-awareness, self-transcendence has the character of intentionality; to be aware of one's self is a way of being beyond one's self. The subject-element in all life becomes a subject, and

the object-element in all life becomes an object-something that is thrown opposite the subject (*ob-jectum*). The greatness of this event in the history of nature is tremendous, and so is the new dignity following from it. The state of being beyond one's self in terms of self-awareness, even the most rudimentary, is a mark of greatness surpassing that in all preceding dimensions. The expression of this situation is the polarity of pleasure and pain, which now receives a new valuation. Pleasure can be considered as the awareness of one's self as a subject in the sense in which it was discussed earlier as the bearer of creative *eros*. Pain must then be considered as the awareness of one's self made into an object deprived of self-determination; the animal which is being made into a food-thing suffers and tries to escape it. Some higher animals and all men experience pain if their dignity as subject is violated. They suffer feelings of shame if they are made into things to be looked at, bodily or psychologically, or if they are treated as objects of valuating judgments, even if the judgment is favorable, or if they are punished in consequence of condemning judgments, the shame in this case being more painful than the physical suffering. In all these cases the sublime center of self-awareness is deprived of its greatness and its dignity. It is not the dimension of the spirit which is here referred to but that of self-awareness, which, however, reaches into the dimensions both of the organic and of the spirit.

This valuation of the subject-object scheme as a decisive moment in the self-transcendence of life seems to contradict the mystical tendency of identifying self-transcendence with the transcendence of the subject-object split. But there is no contradiction in this, for even in the most outspoken form of mysticism the mystical self-transcendence has nothing in common with the vegetative state under the dimension of the organic. Its very nature is to overcome the subject-object split after it has fully developed in the personal realm-not to annihilate it, but to find something above the split in which it is conquered and preserved.

c) ***The great and the tragic.***—The self-transcendence of life, which reveals itself to man as the greatness of life, leads under the conditions of existence to the tragic character of life, to the ambiguity of the great and the tragic. Only the great is able to have tragedy. In Greece the heroes, the bearers of highest value and power, and the great families are the subjects of tragedy in myths as well as in plays. The small ones, or those who are ugly or evil, are below the level at which tragedy

starts. But there is a limit to this aristocratic feeling: every Athenian citizen was asked by the government to participate in the performance of the tragedies, thus implying that no human being is without some greatness, that is, the greatness of being of divine nature. The performance of the tragedy, appealing to every citizen, is an act of democratic valuation of man as man, as a potential subject of tragedy, and therefore as a bearer of greatness.

We may ask whether something analogous can be said of greatness under all dimensions of life, and the question may be answered affirmatively. All beings affirm themselves in their finite power of being; they affirm their greatness (and dignity) without being aware of it. They do it in their relation to other beings and, in doing so, bring upon themselves the reaction of the logos-determined laws, which push back anything that trespasses the limits given to it. This is the tragic explanation of suffering in nature, an explanation which is neither mechanistic nor romantic but realistic in terms of the spontaneous character of life processes.

But in spite of these natural analogies to the human situation, consciousness of the tragic, and therefore pure tragedy, is possible only under the dimension of the spirit. The tragic, though first formulated in the context of the Dionysian religion, is, like the Apollonian logos, a universally valid concept. It describes the universality of man's estrangement and its inescapable character, which nevertheless is a matter of responsibility. We have used the term *hubris* to describe one element in man's estrangement; the other element is "concupiscence," In the description of existence (in Part III of ***Systematic Theology), hubris*** and concupiscence appear merely as negative elements. In the present part, dealing with life processes, they appear in their ambiguity-hubris ambiguously united with greatness and concupiscence with ***eros. Hubris*** in this sense is not pride-the compulsive overcompensation of actual smallness-but the self-elevation of the great beyond the limits of its finitude. The result is both the destruction of others and self-destruction.

If greatness is inescapably connected with tragedy, it is natural that people should try to avoid tragedy by avoiding greatness. This, of course, is an unconscious process, but it is the most widespread of all life processes under the dimension of the spirit. In many respects it is possible to avoid tragedy by avoiding greatness, although not ultimately, for every man has the greatness of being partially responsible for his

destiny. And if he avoids the amount of greatness that is possible for him he becomes a tragic figure. This anxiety of avoiding tragedy throws him into the tragic loss of himself and of the greatness to be a self.

It belongs to the ambiguity of greatness and tragedy that the subjects of tragedy are not aware of their situation. Several great tragedies are tragedies of the revelation of the human predicament (as in the case of Oedipus, who blinds himself after his eyes have seen himself in the mirror held before him by the messengers) ; and there have been entire civilizations, such as the later ancient and the modern Western, whose tragic ***hubris*** has been revealed by prophetic messengers at the moment that its catastrophe was approaching (for example, the pagan and Christian seers of the end of the empire in late ancient Rome and the existentialist prophets of the arrival of Western nihilism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). If one asks what the guilt of the tragic hero is, the answer must be that he perverts the function of self-transcendence by identifying himself with that to which self-transcendence is directed—the great itself. He does not resist self-transcendence, but he resists the demand to transcend his own greatness. He is caught by his own power of representing the self-transcendence of life.

It is impossible to speak meaningfully of tragedy without understanding the ambiguity of greatness. Sad events are not tragic events. The tragic can be understood only on the basis of the understanding of greatness. It expresses the ambiguity of life in the function of self-transcendence, including all dimensions of life but becoming conscious only under the dominance of the dimension of spirit.

But under the dimension of the spirit something else happens. The great reveals its dependence on its relation to the ultimate, and with this awareness the great becomes the holy. The holy is beyond tragedy, although those who represent the holy stand with all other beings under the law of greatness and its consequence, tragedy (compare the section on the tragic involvement of the Christ, Vol. II, pp. 132-34).

d) Religion in relation to morality and culture.—Since the concept of the holy has been discussed in the second part of the theological system, and since implicit definitions of religion are present in every part of it, we can restrict ourselves at this point to a discussion of religion in its basic relation to morality and culture. In this way the highly dialectical structure of man's spirit and its functions will appear. Logically, this

could be the place for a fully developed philosophy of religion (including an interpretation of the history of religion). But practically this is impossible in the limits of this system, which is not a ***summa.***

In accordance with their essential nature, morality, culture, and religion interpenetrate one another. They constitute the unity of the spirit, wherein the elements are distinguishable but not separable. Morality, or the constitution of the person as person in the encounter with other persons, is essentially related to culture and religion. Culture provides the contents of morality-the concrete ideals of personality and community and the changing laws of ethical wisdom. Religion gives to morality the unconditional character of the moral imperative, the ultimate moral aim, the reunion of the separated in ***agape,*** and the motivating power of grace. Culture, or the creation of a universe of meaning in ***theoria*** and ***praxis,*** is essentially related to morality and religion. The validity of cultural creativity in all its functions is based on the person-to-person encounter in which the limits to arbitrariness are established. Without the force of the moral imperative, no demand coming from the logical, aesthetic, personal, and communal forms could be felt. The religious element in culture is the inexhaustible depth of a genuine creation. One may call it substance or the ground from which culture lives. It is the element of ultimacy which culture lacks in itself but to which it points. Religion, or the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit, is essentially related to morality and culture. There is no self-transcendence under the dimension of the spirit without the constitution of the moral self by the unconditional imperative, and this self-transcendence cannot take form except within the universe of meaning created in the cultural act.

This picture of the essential relation of the three functions of the spirit is both "transhistorical remembrance" and "utopian anticipation." As such, it judges their actual relations under the conditions of existence. But it is more than an external judge. It is actual in so far as essential and existential elements are mixed in life and since the unity of the three functions is as effective as their separation. It is just this that is the root of all ambiguities under the dimension of the spirit. And only because the essential element is effective in life-though ambiguously-can its image be drawn as the criterion of life.

The three functions of life under the dimension of spirit separate in order to become actual. In their essential unity there is no moral act

which is not at the same time an act both of cultural self-creation and of religious self-transcendence.There is no independent morality in "dreaming innocence." And in the essential unity of the three functions, there is no cultural act which is not at the same time an act of moral self-integration and religious self-transcendence. There is no independent culture in dreaming innocence. And in the essential unity of the three functions, there is no religious act which is not at the same time an act of moral self-integration and cultural self-creation. There is no independent religion in dreaming innocence.

But life is based on the loss of dreaming innocence, on the self-estrangement of essential being and the ambiguous mixture of essential and existential elements. In the actuality of life, there is separated morality with the ambiguities it implies; there is separated culture with its ambiguities; and there is separated religion with its most profound ambiguities. We must now turn to these.

Religion was defined as the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit. This definition makes the image of the essential unity of religion with morality and culture possible, and it also explains the ambiguities of the three functions in their separation. The self-transcendence of life is effective in the unconditional character of the moral act and in the inexhaustible depth of meaning in all meanings created by culture. Life is sublime in every realm dominated by the dimension of the spirit. The self-integration of life in the moral act and the self-creativity of life in the cultural act are sublime. Within them, life transcends itself in the vertical direction, the direction of the ultimate. But because of the ambiguity of life, they are also profane; they resist self-transcendence. And this is inevitable because they are separated from their essential unity with religion and are actualized independently.

The definition of religion as self-transcendence of life in the dimension of the spirit has the decisive implication that religion must first of all be considered as a quality of the two other functions of the spirit and not as an independent function. Such a consideration is logically necessary, for self-transcendence of life cannot become a function of life beside others, because if it did it would have to be itself transcended, and so on in endless repetition. Life cannot genuinely transcend itself in one of its own functions. This is the argument against religion as a function of the spirit, and one cannot deny that theologians who advance this argument have a strong point. Therefore, if religion is defined as a function of

the human mind, they are consistent in rejecting the concept of religion altogether in a theology which is supposed to be based on revelation.

But these assertions make incomprehensible the fact that there is religion in life under the dimension of the spirit, not only as a quality in morality and culture, but also as an independent reality beside them. This fact of the existence of religion in the ordinary sense of the word is one of the great stumbling blocks in life under the dimension of the spirit. According to the definition of religion as the self-transcendence of life, there should be no religion, individual or organized, as a particular function of the spirit. Every act of life should in itself point beyond itself, and no realm of particular acts should be necessary. But, as in all realms of life, self-transcendence is resisted by profanization in the realm of the spirit. Morality and culture in existential separation from religion become what is usually called "secular." Their greatness is contradicted by their profanity. Under the pressure of profanization the moral imperative becomes conditional, dependent on fears and hopes, a result of psychological and sociological compulsion; an ultimate moral aim is replaced by utilitarian calculations, and the fulfilment of the law is a matter of futile attempts at self-determination. The self-transcendence of the moral act is denied; morality is activity between finite possibilities. In the sense of our basic definition it is profanized-even if, in conflict with the meaning of grace, it is as restrictive as some forms of religious morality. It is unavoidable that such morality should fall under the ambiguities of the law. Under the analogous pressure of profanization, the cultural creation of a universe of meanings loses the substance which is received in self-transcendence-an ultimate and inexhaustible meaning. This phenomenon is well known and has been widely discussed by the analysts of our present civilization, usually under the heading of the secularization of culture. They have often rightly referred to the analogous phenomenon in ancient civilization and derived a general rule about the relation of religion and culture from these two examples of Western intellectual history. With the loss of its religious substance, culture is left with an increasingly empty form. Meaning cannot live without the inexhaustible source of meaning to which religion points.

Out of this situation religion arises as a special function of the spirit. The self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit cannot become alive without finite realities which are transcended. Thus there is a dialectical problem in self-transcendence in that something is tran-

scended and at the same time not transcended. It must have concrete existence, otherwise nothing would be there to be transcended; yet it should not "be there" anymore but should be negated in the act of being transcended. This is exactly the situation of all religions in history. Religion as the self-transcendence of life needs the religions and needs to deny them.

e) ***The ambiguities of religion***

(1) THE HOLY AND THE SECULAR (PROFANE).—In contrast to all other realms in which the ambiguities of life appear, the self-transcendence of life in religion shows a double ambiguity. The first has already been mentioned as one which is a universal characteristic of life, the ambiguity of the great and the profane. We have seen how in the process of profanization life, in all cultural acts of self-creativity and in the moral act of self-integration, loses its greatness and dignity. And we have seen why, in order to maintain itself as self-transcendent, life under the dimension of spirit expresses itself in a function which is defined by self-transcendence, that is, religion.

But this character of religion leads to a reduplication of ambiguities. Religion, as the self-transcending function of life, claims to be the answer to the ambiguities of life in all other dimensions; it transcends their finite tensions and conflicts. But in doing so, it falls into even profounder tensions, conflicts, and ambiguities. Religion is the highest expression of the greatness and dignity of life; in it the greatness of life becomes holiness. Yet religion is also the most radical refutation of the greatness and dignity of life; in it the great becomes most profanized, the holy most desecrated. These ambiguities are the central subject of any honest understanding of religion, and they are the background with which church and theology must work. They are the decisive motive for the expectation of a reality which transcends the religious function.

The first ambiguity of religion is that of self-transcendence and profanization in the religious function itself. The second ambiguity of religion is the demonic elevation of something conditional to unconditional validity. One can say that religion always moves between the danger points of profanization and demonization, and that in every genuine act of the religious life both are present, openly or covertly.

The profanization of religion has the character of transforming it into a finite object among finite objects. In religion as a particular function of the spirit, it is the process of the profanization of the holy to which we

refer. If in religion the great is called the holy, this indicates that religion is based on the manifestation of the holy itself, the divine ground of being. Every religion is the receptive answer to revelatory experiences. This is its greatness and its dignity; this makes religion and its expressions holy in ***theoria*** as well as in ***praxis.*** In this sense one can speak of Holy Scriptures, holy communities, holy acts, holy offices, holy persons. These predicates mean that all these realities are more than they are in their immediate finite appearance. They are self-transcendent, or, seen from the side of that to which they transcend-the holy-they are translucent toward it. This holiness is not their moral or cognitive or even religious quality but their power of pointing beyond themselves. If the predicate "holiness" refers to persons, the actual participation of the person in it is possible in many degrees, from the lowest to the highest. It is not the personal quality that decides the degree of participation but the power of self-transcendence. Augustine's great insight in the Donatist struggle was that it is not the quality of the priest that makes a sacrament effective but the transparency of his office and the function he performs. Otherwise the religious function would be impossible, and the predicate of the holy could not be applied at all.

From this it follows that the ambiguity of religion is not identical with the "paradox of holiness" to which we have referred and shall refer more fully in connection with the image of the Christian and the church. The first ambiguity of religion is the presence of profanized elements in every religious act, There are two opposite ways in which this is true, the one institutional, the other reductive. The institutional way is not restricted to so-called institutionalized religion, for, as psychology has shown, there are institutions in the inner life of the individual, "ritual activities" as Freud has called them, which produce and preserve methods of action and reaction. The relentless attacks on "organized religion" are mostly based on a deeply rooted confusion, for life is organized in all its self-actualizations; without form it could not even have dynamics, and this is true of the personal as well as the communal life. But the real object of honest attacks on organized religion is the ambiguity of religion in the context of its institutional form. Instead of transcending the finite in the direction of the infinite, institutionalized religion actually becomes a finite reality itself-a set of prescribed activities to be performed, a set of stated doctrines to be accepted, a social pressure group along with others, a political power with all the implications of power politics. The

critics cannot see the self-transcendent, great, and holy character of religion in this structure, which is subject to the sociological laws which govern all secular groups. But even if all this is internalized and performed by individuals in their personal religious life, the institutional character is not removed. The content of the personal religious life is always taken from the religious life of a social group. Even the silent language of prayer is formed by tradition. The critics of such profanized religion are justified in their criticism and often serve religion better than those whom they attack. It would, however, be a utopian fallacy to attempt to use these criticisms to remove the profanizing tendencies in the religious life and to retain pure self-transcendence of holiness. Insight into the inescapable ambiguity of life prevents such a fallacy. In all forms of communal and personal religion, profanizing elements are effective; and conversely, the most profanized forms of religion draw their power to continue from the elements of greatness and holiness within them. The pettiness of average daily-life religion is no argument against its greatness, and the way in which it is drawn down to the level of undignified mechanization is no argument against its dignity. Life, transcending itself, at the same time remains within itself, and the first ambiguity of religion follows from this tension.

The preceding description deals with only one way in which religion shows its ambiguity, the "institutional" way. There is another, the "reductive" way, based on the fact that culture is the form of religion and that morality is the expression of its seriousness. This fact can lead to the reduction of religion to culture and morality, whereby its symbols are interpreted as results merely of cultural creativity, whether as veiled concepts or as images. If one takes away the veil of self-transcendence, one finds cognitive insight and aesthetic expression. In this view the myths are a combination of primitive science and primitive poetry; they are creations of *theoria* and as such have lasting significance, but their claim to express transcendence must be discarded. The same kind of interpretation is given of the manifestations of religion in *praxis:* the holy personality and the holy community are developments of personality and community which must be judged by the principles of humanity and justice, but their claim to transcend these principles must be rejected,

As it appears in such ideas, the reduction of religion is not radical. Religion is given a place in the whole of man's cultural creativity, and its usefulness for moral self-actualization is not denied. But this is a

preliminary state in the process of a reductionist profanization of religion. It soon becomes clear either that the claim of religion must be accepted or that it has no claim to a place among the functions of cultural creativity and morality has no need of it. Religion, which in principle has a home in every function of the spirit, has become homeless in all of them. The benevolent treatment it has received from those who reject its claim to self-transcendence does not help it, and its benevolent critics soon become much more radical. Religion is explained away in the cognitive realm as being derived from psychological or sociological sources and is considered as illusion or ideology, while in the aesthetic realm, religious symbols are replaced by finite objects in the different naturalistic styles, especially in critical naturalism and some types of non-objective art. Education does not initiate into the mystery of being to which religion points, but introduces people only into the needs of a society whose needs and ends remain finite in spite of their endlessness. All communities become agents for the actualization of such a society, rejecting any kind of self-transcending symbols and trying to dissolve the churches into the organizations of secular life. Within large sections of contemporary mankind, this reductive way of profanizing religion, reduction by annihilation, is tremendously successful-not only in the communist East, but also in the democratic West. In the world-historical view, one must say that in our period this way is much more successful than the institutional way of profanizing religion.

Nevertheless, here also the ambiguity of life resists an unambiguous solution. First of all, we must remind ourselves of the fact that the profanizing forces are not simply the negation of religion as a function of the spirit but that they are present in its very nature: actual religion lives in the cognitive forms, from language to ontology, which are the results of cultural creativity. In using language, historical research, psychological descriptions of human nature, existentialist analyses of man's predicament, prephilosophical and philosophical concepts, it uses the secular material which becomes independent in the processes of reductive profanization. Religion can be secularized and finally dissolved into secular forms only because it has the ambiguity of self-transcendence.

But when this is attempted, the ambiguity of religion shows its effect on these processes of reductive profanization, just as it shows its effect in the center of religious self-transcendence. The way in which this happens suggests the larger concept of religion as experience of the unconditional,

both in the moral imperative and in the depth of culture. The ambiguity of radical secularism is that it cannot escape the element of self-transcendence which appears in these two experiences. Often these experiences are rather hidden and any expression of them is carefully avoided; but if the radically secular philosopher is asked by a tyrannical power—dictatorial or conformist-to give up his secularism, he resists such a demand, experiencing the unconditional imperative of honesty up to total self-sacrifice. In the same way, if the radically secular writer whose novel has been written with the totality of his being sees that it is being used as a mere piece of entertainment, he feels this as an abuse and as profanization. Reductive profanization may succeed in abolishing religion as a special function, but it is not able to remove religion as a quality that is found in all functions of the spirit-the quality of ultimate concern.

(2) THE DIVINE AND THE DEMONIC.-In religion the ambiguity of self-transcendence appears as the ambiguity of the divine and the demonic. The symbol of the demonic does not need justification as it did thirty years ago, when it was reintroduced into theological language. It has become a much-used and much-abused term to designate antidivine forces in individual and social life. In this way it has frequently lost the ambiguous character implied in the word itself. Demons in mythological vision are divine-antidivine beings. They are not simply negations of the divine but participate in a distorted way in the power and holiness of the divine. The term must be understood against this mythological background. The demonic does not resist self-transcendence as does the profane, but it distorts self-transcendence by identifying a particular bearer of holiness with the holy itself. In this sense all polytheistic gods are demonic, because the basis of being and meaning on which they stand is finite, no matter how sublime, great, or dignified it may be. And the claim of something finite to infinity or to divine greatness is the characteristic of the demonic. Demonization of the holy occurs in all religions day by day, even in the religion which is based on the self-negation of the finite in the Cross of the Christ. The quest for unambiguous life is, therefore, most radically directed against the ambiguity of the holy and the demonic in the religious realm.

The tragic is the inner ambiguity of human greatness. But the subject of tragedy does not aspire to divine greatness. He does not intend "to be like God." He touches, so to speak, the divine sphere, and he is rejected by it into self-destruction, but he does not claim divinity for himself.

Wherever *this* is done, the demonic appears. A main characteristic of the tragic is the state of being blind; a main characteristic of the demonic is the state of being split.

This is easily understandable on the basis of the demonic's claim to divinity on a finite basis: the elevation of one element of finitude to infinite power and meaning necessarily produces the reaction from other elements of finitude, which deny such a claim or make it for themselves. The demonic self-elevation of one nation over against all the others in the name of her God or system of values produces the reaction from other nations in the name of their God. The demonic self-elevation of particular forces in the centered personality and the claim of their absolute superiority leads to the reaction of other forces and to a split consciousness. The claim of *one* value, represented by *one* God, to be the criterion of all others leads to the splits in polytheistic religion.

A consequence of these splits, connected with the nature of the demonic, is the state of being "possessed' by the power which produces the split. The demoniacs are the possessed ones. The freedom of centeredness is removed by the demonic split. Demonic structures in the personal and communal life cannot be broken by acts of freedom and good will. They are strengthened by such acts—except when the changing power is a divine structure, that is, a structure of grace.

Wherever the demonic appears, it shows religious traits, even if the appearance is moral or cultural. This is a logical consequence of the mutual immanence of the three functions of life in the dimension of spirit and of the dual concept of religion as unconditional concern and as a realm of concrete symbols that express concrete concerns. Here also examples are abundant: the unconditional demands of commitment by states which vest themselves with religious dignity, by cultural functions which control all others (as in scientific absolutism), by individuals who seek idolization of themselves, by particular drives in the person which take over the personal center—in all these cases, distorted self-transcendence takes place.

A revealing example of the ambiguity of the demonic in the cultural realm is the Roman empire, whose greatness, dignity, and sublime character was universally acknowledged, but which became demonically possessed when it vested itself with divine holiness and produced the split which led to the antidemonic struggle of Christianity and the demonic persecution of the Christians.

This historical reminder furnishes a transition to the discussion of religion in the narrower sense of the word and its demonization. The basic ambiguity of religion has a deeper root than any of the other ambiguities of life, for religion is the point at which the answer to the quest for the unambiguous is received. Religion in this respect (that is, in the respect of man's possibility of receiving this answer) is unambiguous; the actual reception, however, is profoundly ambiguous, for it occurs in the changing forms of man's moral and cultural existence. These forms participate in the holy to which they point, but they are not the holy itself. The claim to be the holy itself makes them demonic.

This is the reason why theologians have protested against applying the term "religion" to Christianity. They have contrasted religion with revelation and have described religion as man's attempt to glorify himself. This is, indeed, a correct description of demonized religion, but it ignores the fact that every religion is based on revelation and that every revelation expresses itself in a religion. In so far as religion is based on revelation it is unambiguous; in so far as it receives revelation it is ambiguous. This is true of all religions, even those which their followers call revealed religion. But no religion is revealed; religion is the creation and the distortion of revelation.

The concept of religion cannot be avoided in any theology, although the criticism of religion is an element in the history of all religions. The revelatory impact behind the religions awakens people everywhere to an awareness of the contrast between the unambiguous life toward which the self-transcendence of life is directed and the often terrifying ambiguities of actual religions. One can read the history of religion, especially of the great religions, as a continuous inner religious struggle against religion for the sake of the holy itself. Christianity claims that in the Cross of the Christ the final victory in this struggle has been reached, but even in claiming this, the form of the claim itself shows demonic traits; that which is rightly said about the Cross of the Christ is wrongly transferred to the life of the church, whose ambiguities are denied, although they have become increasingly powerful throughout its history.

But at this point it is the demonization of religion in general of which we want to give some examples. Religion as a historical reality uses cultural creations both in *theoria* and *praxis*. It uses some and rejects others, and in doing so it establishes a realm of religious culture which lies

alongside the other cultural creations. But religion as the self-transcendence of life in all realms claims a superiority over them which is justified in so far as religion points to that which transcends all of them, but the claim to superiority becomes demonic when religion as a social and personal reality makes this claim for itself and the finite forms by which it points to the infinite.

We can show this in the four functions of man's cultural creativity discussed before (but in reverse order) : the communal, the personal, the aesthetic, the cognitive. Religion is actual in social groups which are united with or separated from political groups. In both cases they constitute a social, legal, and political reality which is consecrated by the holy embodied in them. In the power of this consecration they consecrate the other communal structures and in this way try to control them. In case of their resistance, they try to destroy them. The power of the bearers of the holy is the unconditional character of the holy, in whose name they break the resistance of all those who do not accept the symbols of self-transcendence under which the religious community lives. This is the source of the power of those who represent a religious community, as it is the source of the solidity of the holy institutions, sacred customs, divinely ordered systems of law, hierarchical orders, myths and symbols, and so on. But this very solidity betrays its divine-demonic ambiguity; it is able to reject all criticisms which are raised in the name of justice. It overrules them in the name of the holy, which has the principle of justice within itself, breaking the minds and bodies of those who try to resist. No examples need be given for this ambiguity of religion, for they fill the pages of world history. It is enough to show why the quest for unambiguous life must transcend religion, even though the answer is given in religion.

In the realm of the personal life, the divine-demonic ambiguity of religion appears in the idea of the saint. Here is reflected the conflict between humanity and holiness and the divine support and demonic suppression of personal development toward humanity. These conflicts with their integrating, disintegrating, creative, and destructive consequences go on first of all within the individual person. One of the ways religion uses its own consecrated idea of personality to suppress the idea of humanity within the individual is by engendering an uneasy conscience in him who does not accept the absolute claim of religion. The

psychologist knows the devastation in personal development which is caused by this conflict. Very often in the history of religion it is the negative, ascetic principle which receives religious consecration and which stands as a condemning judge against the positive implications of the idea of humanity. But the power contained in the religious image of personal holiness would not exist if there were not the other side-the impact on the development of the person coming from the divine, anti-demonic (and antiprofane) character of the holy to which religion points. But again one must say that the answer to the quest for unambiguous life is not in the idea of the saint, although the answer can be received only in the depth of the self-transcending personality-religiously speaking, in the act of faith.

The discussion about the divine-demonic ambiguity in the relation of religion to *theoria* naturally focuses on the problem of religious doctrine, particularly when it appears in the form of an established dogma. The conflict arising here is one between the consecrated truth of the dogma and the truth which unites dynamic change and creative form. But it is not the theoretical conflict as such in which the divine-demonic ambiguity appears but in its significance for the holy community and holy personality. The demonic suppression of honest obedience to the structures of truth is at stake here. What is happening in this respect to the cognitive function happens equally to the aesthetic function; the suppression of authentic expressiveness in art and literature is equal to the suppression of honest cognition. It is done in the name of a religiously consecrated truth and a religiously consecrated style. There is no doubt that self-transcendence opens the eyes to cognitive truth and aesthetic authenticity. Divine power lies behind religious doctrines and religious art. But the demonic distortion begins when new insight presses toward the surface and is trodden down in the name of the dogma, the consecrated truth, or when new styles seek to express the drives of a period and are prevented from doing so in the name of religiously approved forms of expression. In all these cases the resisting community and the resisting personalities are victims of the demonic destruction of truth and expressiveness in the name of the holy. As in relation to justice and to humanity directly, so in relation to truth and to expressiveness indirectly -religion is not the answer to the quest for unambiguous life, although the answer can only be received through religion.

C. THE QUEST FOR UNAMBIGUOUS LIFE AND THE SYMBOLS OF ITS ANTICIPATION

In all life processes an essential and an existential element, created goodness and estrangement, are merged in such a way that neither one nor the other is exclusively effective. Life always includes essential and existential elements; this is the root of its ambiguity.

The ambiguities of life are manifest under all dimensions, in all processes and all realms of life. The question of unambiguous life is latent everywhere. All creatures long for an unambiguous fulfilment of their essential possibilities; but only in man as the bearer of the spirit do the ambiguities of life and the quest for unambiguous life become conscious. He experiences the ambiguity of life under all dimensions since he participates in all of them, and he experiences them immediately within himself as the ambiguity of the functions of the spirit: of morality, culture, and religion. The quest for unambiguous life arises out of these experiences; this quest is for a life which has reached that toward which it transcends itself.

Since religion is the self-transcendence of life in the realm of the spirit, it is in religion that man starts the quest for unambiguous life and it is in religion that he receives the answer. But the answer is not identical with religion, since religion itself is ambiguous. The fulfilment of the quest for unambiguous life transcends any religious form or symbol in which it is expressed. The self-transcendence of life never unambiguously reaches that toward which it transcends, although life can receive its self-manifestation in the ambiguous form of religion.

Religious symbolism has produced three main symbols for unambiguous life: Spirit of God, Kingdom of God, and Eternal Life. Each of them and their relation to each other require a short preliminary consideration. The Spirit of God is the presence of the Divine Life within creaturely life. The Divine Spirit is "God present." The Spirit of God is not a separated being. Therefore one can speak of "Spiritual Presence" in order to give the symbol its full meaning.

The word "presence" has an archaic connotation, pointing to the place where a sovereign or a group of high dignitaries is. In capitalizing it, we indicate that it is supposed to express the divine presence in creaturely life. "Spiritual Presence," then, is the first symbol expressing unambiguous life. It is directly correlated to the ambiguities of life under the dimen-

sion of spirit although, because of the multidimensional unity of life, it refers indirectly to all realms. In it both "Spiritual" and "Presence" are capitalized, and the word "Spiritual" is used for the first time in this part of Systematic *Theology*. It has not been used as an adjective from spirit with a small "s," designating a dimension of life. This symbol will guide our discussion in the fourth part of the system.

The second symbol of unambiguous life is the "Kingdom of God." Its symbolic material is taken from the historical dimension of life and the dynamics of historical self-transcendence. Kingdom of God is the answer to the ambiguities of man's historical existence but, because of the multidimensional unity of life, the symbol includes the answer to the ambiguity under the historical dimension in all realms of life. The dimension of history is actualized, on the one hand, in historical events which reach out of the past and determine the present, and on the other hand, in the historical tension which is experienced in the present, but runs irreversibly into the future. Therefore, the symbol of the Kingdom of God covers both the struggle of unambiguous life with the forces which make for ambiguity, and the.ultimate fulfilment toward which history runs.

This leads to the third symbol: unambiguous life is Eternal Life. Here the symbolic material is taken from the temporal and spatial finitude of all life. Unambiguous life conquers the servitude to the categorical limits of existence. It does not mean an endless continuation of categorical existence but the conquest of its ambiguities. This symbol, together with that of the Kingdom of God, will be the leading notions in the fifth part of the theological system : "History and the Kingdom of God."

The relation of the three symbols, "Spiritual Presence," "Kingdom of God," and "Eternal Life" can be described in the following way: all three are symbolic expressions of the answer revelation gives to the quest for unambiguous life. Unambiguous life can be described as life under the Spiritual Presence, or as life in the Kingdom of God, or as Eternal Life. But as shown before, the three symbols use different symbolic material and in doing so express different directions of meaning within the same idea of unambiguous life. The symbol "Spiritual Presence" uses the dimension of spirit, the bearer of which is man, but in order to be present in the human spirit, the Divine Spirit must be present in all the dimensions which are actual in man, and this means, in the universe.

The symbol Kingdom of God is a social symbol, taken from the

historical dimension in so far as it is actualized in man's historical life. But the historical dimension is present in all life. Therefore, the symbol "Kingdom of God" embraces the destiny of the life of the universe, just as does the symbol "Spiritual Presence." But history's quality of running irreversibly toward a goal introduces another element into its symbolic meaning, and that is the "eschatological" expectation, the expectation of the fulfilment toward which self-transcendence strives and toward which history runs. Like Spiritual Presence, the Kingdom of God is working and struggling in history; but as eternal fulfilment of life, the Kingdom of God is above history.

The symbolic material of the third symbol of unambiguous life, Eternal Life, is taken from the categorical structure of finitude. Unambiguous life is Eternal Life. As with Spiritual Presence and Kingdom of God, Eternal Life is also a universal symbol, referring to all dimensions of life and including the two other symbols. Spiritual Presence creates Eternal Life in those who are grasped by it. And the Kingdom of God is the fulfilment of temporal life in Eternal Life.

The three symbols for unambiguous life mutually include each other, but because of the different symbolic material they use, it is preferable to apply them in different directions of meaning: Spiritual Presence for the conquest of the ambiguities of life under the dimension of the spirit, Kingdom of God for the conquest of the ambiguities of life under the dimension of history, and Eternal Life for the conquest of the ambiguities of life beyond history. Yet in all three of them we find a mutual immanence of all. Where there is Spiritual Presence, there is Kingdom of God and Eternal Life, and where there is Kingdom of God there is Eternal Life and Spiritual Presence, and where there is Eternal Life there is Spiritual Presence and Kingdom of God. The emphasis is different, the substance is the same-life unambiguous.

The quest for such unambiguous life is possible because life has the character of self-transcendence. Under all dimensions life moves beyond itself in the vertical direction. But under no dimension does it reach that toward which it moves, the unconditional. It does not reach it, but the quest remains. Under the dimension of the spirit it is the quest for an unambiguous morality and an unambiguous culture reunited with an unambiguous religion. The answer to this quest is the experience of revelation and salvation; they constitute religion above religion, although they become religion when they are received. In religious symbolism they arc

the work of the Spiritual Presence or of the Kingdom of God or of Eternal Life. This quest is effective in all religions and the answer received underlies all religions, giving them their greatness and dignity. But both quest and answer become matters of ambiguity if expressed in the terms of a concrete religion. It is an age-old experience of all religions that the quest for something transcending them is answered in the shaking and transforming experiences of revelation and salvation; but that under the conditions of existence even the absolutely great-the divine self-manifestation-becomes not only great but also small, not only divine but also demonic.

II

THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE

A. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE IN THE SPIRIT OF MAN

1. THE CHARACTER OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT IN THE HUMAN SPIRIT

a) Human spirit and divine Spirit in principle.-We have dared to use the almost forbidden word "spirit" (with a small "s") for two purposes: first, in order to give an adequate name to that function of life which characterizes man as man and which is actualized in morality, culture, and religion; second, in order to provide the symbolic material which is used in the symbols "divine Spirit" or "Spiritual Presence." The dimension of spirit provides this material. As we have seen, spirit as a dimension of life unites the power of being with the meaning of being. Spirit can be defined as the actualization of power and meaning in unity. Within the limits of our experience this happens only in man-in man as a whole and in all the dimensions of life which are present in him. Man, in experiencing himself as man, is conscious of being determined in his nature by spirit as a dimension of his life. This immediate experience makes it possible to speak symbolically of God as Spirit and of the divine Spirit. These terms, like all other statements about God, are symbols. In them, empirical material is appropriated and transcended. Without this experience of spirit as the unity of power and meaning in himself, man would not have been able to express the revelatory experience of "God present" in the term "Spirit" or "Spiritual Presence." This shows again that no doctrine of the divine Spirit is possible without an understanding of spirit as a dimension of life.

The question of the relation between Spirit and spirit is usually answered by the metaphorical statement that the divine Spirit dwells and works in the human spirit. In this context, the word "in" implies all the problems of the relation of the divine to the human, of the unconditional to the conditioned, and of the creative ground to creaturely existence. If

the divine Spirit breaks into the human spirit, this does not mean that it rests there, but that it drives the human spirit out of itself. The "in" of the divine Spirit is an "out" for the human spirit. The spirit, a dimension of finite life, is driven into a successful self-transcendence; it is grasped by something ultimate and unconditional. It is still the human spirit; it remains what it is, but at the same time, it goes out of itself under the impact of the divine Spirit. "Ecstasy" is the classical term for this state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. It describes the human situation under the Spiritual Presence exactly.

We described the nature of the revelatory experience, its ecstatic character, and its relation to the cognitive side of the human spirit, in the section on "Reason and Revelation" (Part I of the system). In that section, we also gave a similar description of the nature of the saving experience, which is an element in the revelatory experience precisely as the latter is an element in the saving experience. The Spiritual Presence creates an ecstasy in both of them which drives the spirit of man beyond itself without destroying its essential, i.e., rational, structure. Ecstasy does not destroy the centeredness of the integrated self. Should it do so, demonic possession would replace the creative presence of the Spirit.

Although the ecstatic character of the experience of Spiritual Presence does not destroy the rational structure of the human spirit it does something the human spirit could not do by itself. When it grasps man, it creates unambiguous life. Man in his self-transcendence can reach for it, but man cannot grasp it, unless he is first grasped by it. Man remains in himself. By the very nature of his self-transcendence, man is driven to ask the question of unambiguous life, but the answer must come to him through the creative power of the Spiritual Presence. "Natural theology" describes man's self-transcendence and the questions implied in his consciousness of its ambiguity. But "natural theology" does not answer the question.

This illustrates the truth that the human spirit is unable to compel the divine Spirit to enter the human spirit. The attempt to do so belongs directly to the ambiguities of religion and indirectly to the ambiguities of culture and morality. If religious devotion, moral obedience, or scientific honesty could compel the divine Spirit to "descend" to us, the Spirit which "descended" would be the human spirit in a religious disguise. It would be, and often is, simply man's spirit ascending, the natural form of man's self-transcendence. The finite cannot force the infinite; man

cannot compel God. The human spirit as a dimension of life is ambiguous, as all life is, whereas the divine Spirit creates unambiguous life.

This drives us to the question as to how the thesis of the multidimensional unity of life is related to the Spiritual Presence. The multidimensional unity of life has functioned to preclude dualistic and supranaturalistic doctrines of man in himself and in his relation to God. Now it is unavoidable that the question should arise as to whether the contrast between human spirit and divine Spirit reintroduces a dualistic-supranatural element. The basic answer to this question is that the relation of the finite to that which is infinite-and which is therefore above all comparison to the finite-is incommensurable and cannot adequately be expressed by the same metaphor which expresses the relations between finite realms. On the other hand, there is no way to express any relation to the divine ground of being other than by using finite material and the language of symbols. This difficulty cannot be completely overcome, for it reflects the human situation itself. But it is possible in theological language to indicate an awareness of the human situation, including the inevitable limitations on all attempts to express the relation to the ultimate. One way to do this is to use the metaphor "dimension," but to use it with the radical qualification implied in speaking of the "dimension of depth" or of the "dimension of the ultimate" or of "the eternal" (as I myself have done on several occasions). It is obvious that the metaphor "dimension*' as it is used in these phrases means something other than what it means in the series of the dimensions of life we have described. It is not one dimension in this series, dependent for its actualization upon that of the preceding one, but it is the ground of being of them all and the aim toward which they are self-transcendent. Therefore, if the term "dimension" is used in such combinations as "dimension of depth" (which has become quite popular), it means the dimension in which all dimensions are rooted and negated and affirmed. However, this transforms the metaphor into a symbol, and it is doubtful whether this double use of the same word is to be recommended.

Another way to deal with the difficulty of expressing the relation of the human spirit to the divine Spirit is by replacing the metaphor "dimension" with the statement that, since the finite is potentially or essentially an element in the divine life, everything finite is qualified by this essential relation. And since the existential situation in which the finite is actual implies both separation from and resistance to the essential unity

of the finite and the infinite, the finite is no longer actually qualified by its essential unity with the infinite. It is only in the self-transcendence of life that the "memory" of the essential unity with the infinite is preserved. The dualistic element implied in such a terminology is, so to speak, preliminary and transitory; it simply serves to distinguish the actual from the potential and the existential from the essential. Thus it is neither a dualism of levels nor supranaturalistic.

It has been asked if the substitution of the metaphor "dimension" for the metaphor "level" does not contradict the method of correlation of existential questions with theological answers. This would indeed be the case were the divine Spirit to represent a new dimension within the series of life's dimensions. But this is not intended and should rather be precluded by the preceding consideration. "Dimension," like the categories and polarities, is used symbolically when it is applied to God. Therefore, in the phrase "the dimension of the ultimate," it is used symbolically, whereas in reference to the different dimensions of life, it is used metaphorically. Man's existential situation requires the method of correlation and prohibits the dualism of levels. In the human spirit's essential relation to the divine Spirit, there is no correlation, but rather, mutual immanence.

b) Structure and ecstasy.-The Spiritual Presence does not destroy the structure of the centered self which bears the dimension of spirit. Ecstasy does not negate structure. This is one of the consequences of the doctrine of "transitory dualism," discussed in the last few paragraphs. A dualism of levels logically leads to the destruction of the finite, for example, the human spirit for the sake of the divine Spirit. But, religiously speaking, God does not need to destroy his created world, which is good in its essential nature, in order to manifest himself in it. We discussed this in connection with the meaning of "miracle." We rejected miracles in the supranaturalistic sense of the word, and we also rejected the miracle of ecstasy created by the Spiritual Presence when this is understood as inviting the destruction of the structure of the spirit in man ***(Systematic Theology,*** I, 111-14).

However, should we give a "phenomenology" of the Spiritual Presence, we should find in the history of religion a large number of reports and descriptions which indicate that ecstasy as the work of the Spirit disrupts created structure. The Spiritual Presence's manifestations since the earliest times, as well as in biblical literature, have a miraculous character.

The Spirit has bodily effects: the transference of a person from one place to another, changes within the body, such as generation of new life in it, penetration of rigid bodies, and so on. The Spirit also has psychological effects of an extraordinary character which endow the intellect or will with powers not within the scope of a person's natural capacity, such as knowledge of strange tongues, penetration into the innermost thoughts of another person, and healing influences even at a distance. However questionable their historical reliability may be, these reports point to two important qualities of Spiritual Presence: its universal and extraordinary character. The universal impact of the Spiritual Presence on all realms of life is expressed in these reports of miracles in all dimensions; in supranaturalistic language they point to the truth of the unity of life. Spiritual presence answers questions implied in the ambiguities of all life's dimensions: spatial and temporal separation and bodily and psychological disorders and limitations are overcome. We shall develop this more fully later in "demythologized" terms.

The two terms "inspiration" and "infusion" express the way in which man's spirit receives the impact of Spiritual Presence. Both terms are spatial metaphors and involve, respectively, "breathing" and "pouring" into the human spirit. In the discussion of revelation, we sharply rejected the distortion which occurs when the experience of inspiration is turned into an informative lesson about God and divine matters. The Spiritual Presence is not that of a teacher but of a meaning-bearing power which grasps the human spirit in an ecstatic experience. After the experience, the teacher can analyse and formulate the element of meaning in the ecstasy of inspiration (as the systematic theologian does), but when the analysis of the teacher begins, the inspirational experience has already passed.

The other term which describes the impact of the Spiritual Presence in a spatial metaphor is "infusion." This concept is central in the early church and later in the Catholic church, where it describes the relation of the divine Spirit to the human spirit. Such terms as ***infusio fidei*** or *infusio amoris* derive faith and love from *infusio Spiritus* ***Sancti*** ("the infusion of the Holy Spirit"). Protestantism was and remains suspicious of this terminology because of the magic-materialistic perversion to which the idea was subjected in the later Roman church. The Spirit became a substance the reality of which was not necessarily noticed by the centered self-awareness of the person. It became a kind of "matter"

which was transmitted by the priest in the performance of the sacraments, provided that the receiving subject did not resist. This a-personalistic understanding of the Spiritual Presence resulted in an objectivation of the religious life which culminated in the business practice of selling indulgence. For Protestant thinking, the Spirit is always personal. Faith and love are impacts of the Spiritual Presence on the centered self, and the vehicle of this impact is the "word," even within the administration of the sacraments. This is why Protestantism is reluctant to use the term "infusion" for the impact of the Spiritual Presence.

But this reluctance is not wholly justified, and Protestantism is not wholly consistent about it. When reading and interpreting the story of Pentecost and similar stories in the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts and in passages of the Epistles (particularly Paul's), the Protestant also uses the metaphor of the "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit. And he does so rightly, because even if we prefer "in-spiration," we do not escape a substantial metaphor, for "breath" is also a substance entering him who receives the Spirit. But there is another reason for using the term "infusion" as well as "inspiration," and that is contemporary psychology's rediscovery of the significance of the unconscious and the consequent re-evaluation of symbols and sacraments that has taken place in contrast to the traditional Protestant emphasis on the doctrinal and moral word as the medium of the Spirit.

But if the ecstatic reception of the Spiritual Presence is described as "inspiration" or "infusion" or as both, we must observe the basic rule that the Spiritual Presence's reception can only be described in such a way that ecstasy does not disrupt structure. The unity of ecstasy and structure is classically expressed in Paul's doctrine of the Spirit. Paul is primarily the theologian of the Spirit. His Christology and his eschatology are both dependent on this central point in this thinking. His doctrine of justification through faith by grace is a matter of support and defense of his main assertion that with the appearance of the Christ a new state of things came into being, created by the Spirit. Paul strongly emphasizes the ecstatic element in the experience of the Spiritual Presence, and he does so in accordance with all the New Testament stories in which it is described. These experiences, which he acknowledges in others, he claims also for himself. He knows that every successful prayer, i.e., every prayer which reunites with God, has ecstatic character. Such a prayer is impossible for the human spirit, because man does not know

how to pray; but it is possible for the divine Spirit to pray through man, even should man not use words ("unspeakable sighs"-Paul). The formula-being in Christ-which Paul often uses, does not suggest a psychological empathy with Jesus Christ; rather it involves an ecstatic participation in the Christ who "is the Spirit," whereby one lives in the sphere of this Spiritual power.

At the same time, Paul resists any tendency that would permit ecstasy to disrupt structure. The classical expression of this is given in the first letter to the Corinthians where Paul speaks of the gifts of the Spirit and rejects ecstatic speaking in tongues if it produces chaos and disrupts the community, the emphasis on personal ecstatic experiences if they produce *hubris*, and the other charismata (gifts of the Spirit) if they are not subjected to agape. He then discusses the greatest creation of the Spiritual Presence, agape itself. In the hymn to agape in I Corinthians, chapter 13, the structure of the moral imperative and the ecstasy of the Spiritual Presence are completely united. Similarly, the first three chapters of the same letter indicate a way to unite the structure of cognition with the ecstasy of the Spiritual Presence. The relation to the divine ground of being through the divine Spirit is not agnostic (as it is not amoral); rather it includes the knowledge of the "depth" of the divine. However, as Paul shows in these chapters, this knowledge is not the fruit of *theoria*, the receiving function of the human spirit, but has an ecstatic character, as indicated by the language Paul uses in these chapters as well as in the chapter on *agape*. In ecstatic language Paul points to agape and *gnosis*—forms of morality and knowledge in which ecstasy and structure are united.

The church had and continues to have a problem in actualizing Paul's ideas, because of concrete ecstatic movements. The church must prevent the confusion of ecstasy with chaos, and it must fight for structure. On the other hand, it must avoid the institutional profanization of the Spirit which took place in the early Catholic church as a result of its replacement of charisma with office. Above all, it must avoid the secular profanization of contemporary Protestantism which occurs when it replaces ecstasy with doctrinal or moral structure. The Pauline criterion of the unity of structure and ecstasy stands against both kinds of profanization. The use of this criterion is an ever present duty and an ever present risk for the churches. It is a duty, because a church which lives in its institutional forms and disregards the Spiritual Presence's ecstatic side

opens the door to the chaotic or disrupting forms of ecstasy and is even responsible for the growth of secularized reactions against the Spiritual Presence. On the other hand, a church which takes ecstatic movements seriously risks confusing the Spiritual Presence's impact with that of a psychologically determined overexcitement.

This danger can be reduced by investigating ecstasy's relation to the different dimensions of life. The ecstasy which is created by the divine Spirit occurs under the dimension of spirit, as discussed in the preceding chapter on the relations of the human spirit and the divine Spirit. However, because of the multidimensional unity of life, all dimensions, as they are effective in man, participate in the Spirit-created ecstasy. This refers directly to the dimension of self-awareness and indirectly to the organic and inorganic dimensions. It is a reductionist profanization of self-transcendence to attempt to derive religion, especially in its ecstatic side, from psychological dynamics. This takes place predominantly with regard to those aspects which are evaluated negatively and are assumed to be susceptible **to** removal through psychotherapy. Religious movements of emotional character in our society, as well as in former societies, give much weight to such reductionist attempts, and ecclesiastical authoritarianism is always ready to co-operate with these attacks from the opposite side. Spirit-movements find it difficult to defend themselves against this alliance of ecclesiastical and psychological critics. This whole part of the present system is a defense of the ecstatic manifestations of the Spiritual Presence against its ecclesiastical critics; in this defense, the whole New Testament is the most powerful weapon. Yet, this weapon can be used legitimately only if the other partner in the alliance-the psychological critics- i s also rejected or at least put into proper perspective.

The doctrine of the multidimensional unity of life provides the basis for this defense. The psychological (and biological) basis of all ecstasy is accepted as a matter of course in the context of this doctrine. But because the dimension of the spirit is potentially present in the dimension of self-awareness, the dynamics of the psychological self can be the bearer of meaning in the personal self. This happens whenever a mathematical problem is solved, a poem is written, or a legal decision is rendered, It occurs in every prophetic pronouncement, every mystical contemplation, and every successful prayer: the dimension of the spirit actualizes itself within the dynamics of self-awareness and under its biological conditions.

In the last examples, we have pointed to experiences of Spirit-created ecstasy. At this point, however, a special phenomenon must be considered. Ecstasy, in its transcendence of the subject-object structure, is the great liberating power under the dimension of self-awareness. But this liberating power creates the possibility of confusing that which is "less" than the subject-object structure of the mind with that which is "more" than this structure. Whether it takes biological or emotional form, intoxication does not reach the actuality of self-awareness. It is always less than the structure of objectivation. Intoxication is an attempt to escape from the dimension of spirit with its burden of personal centeredness and responsibility and cultural rationality. Although ultimately it can never succeed, for the reason that man bears the dimension of spirit, it does give temporary release from the burden of personal and communal existence. In the long run, however, it is destructive, heightening the tensions it wants to avoid. Its main distinguishing feature is that it lacks both spiritual productivity and Spiritual creativity. It returns to an empty subjectivity which extinguishes these contents coming from the objective world. It makes the self a vacuum.

Ecstasy, similarly to the productive enthusiasm of cultural dynamics in ***theoria*** as well as in ***praxis,*** has in itself the manifold richness of the objective world, transcended by the Spiritual Presence's inner infinity. He who pronounces the divine Word is, as is the keenest analyst of society, aware of the social situation of his time, but he sees it ecstatically under the impact of the Spiritual Presence in the light of eternity. He who contemplates is aware of the ontological structure of the universe, but he sees it ecstatically under the impact of the Spiritual Presence in light of the ground and aim of all being. He who prays earnestly is aware of his own situation and his "neighbor's," but he sees it under the Spiritual Presence's influence and in the light of the divine direction of life's processes. In these experiences, nothing of the objective world is dissolved into mere subjectivity. Rather, it is all preserved and even increased. But it is not preserved under the dimension of self-awareness and in the subject-object scheme. A union of subject and object has taken place in which the independent existence of each is overcome; new unity is created. The best and most universal example of an ecstatic experience is the pattern of prayer. Every serious and successful prayer-which does not talk to God as a familiar partner, as many prayers do-is a speaking to God, which means that God is made into an object for him

who prays. However, God can never be an object, unless he is a subject at the same time. We can only pray to the God who prays to himself through us. Prayer is a possibility only in so far as the subject-object structure is overcome; hence, it is an ecstatic possibility. Herein lies both the greatness of prayer and the danger of its continuous profanization. The term "ecstatic," the use of which ordinarily carries many negative connotations, can perhaps be saved for a positive meaning if it is understood as the essential character of prayer.

The criterion which must be used to decide whether an extraordinary state of the mind is ecstasy, created by the Spiritual Presence, or subjective intoxication is the manifestation of creativity in the former and the lack of it in the latter. The use of this criterion is not without risk, but it is the only valid criterion the church can employ in "judging the Spirit."

c) ***The media of the Spiritual Presence***

(1) SACRAMENTAL ENCOUNTERS AND THE SACRAMENTS.-According to theological tradition the Spiritual Presence is effective through the Word and the sacraments. Upon these, the church is founded and their administration makes the church the church. It is our twofold task to interpret this tradition in terms of our understanding of the relation of Spirit to spirit and to enlarge the question of the media of the divine Spirit so that it will include all personal and historical events in which the Spiritual Presence is effective. The duality of Word and sacrament would not be as significant as it is if it did not represent the primordial phenomenon that reality is communicated either by the silent presence of the object as object or by the vocal self-expression of a subject to a subject. In both ways, communication can be received by beings under the dimensions of self-awareness and spirit. An encountered reality can impress itself upon a subject through the indirect means of giving signs of itself as a centered subjectivity. This occurs through sounds which become words under the dimension of the spirit. Because of the sequence of the dimensions, the objective sign precedes the subjective, which in this context means that the sacrament is "older" than the Word.

The terms "word" and "sacrament" designate the two modes of communication in relation to the Spiritual Presence. Words which communicate the Spiritual Presence become the Word (with a capital "W"), or in traditional terms, the Word of God. Objects which are vehicles of the divine Spirit become sacramental materials and elements in a sacramental act.

As indicated, the sacrament is older than the word, although the word is implicit in the completely silent sacramental material. This is so because the experience of sacramental reality belongs to the dimension of the spirit and concretely to its religious function. Therefore, it cannot be without the word even if it remains voiceless. The term "sacramental," in this larger sense, needs to be freed from its narrower connotations. The Christian churches, in their controversies over the meaning and number of the particular sacraments, have disregarded the fact that the concept "sacramental" embraces more than the seven, five, or two sacraments that may be accepted as such by a Christian church. The largest sense of the term denotes everything in which the Spiritual Presence has been experienced; in a narrower sense, it denotes particular objects and acts in which a Spiritual community experiences the Spiritual Presence; and in the narrowest sense, it merely refers to some "great" sacraments in the performance of which the Spiritual Community actualizes itself. If the meaning of "sacramental" in the largest sense is disregarded, sacramental activities in the narrower sense (sacramentalia) lose their religious significance-as happened in the Reformation-and the great sacraments become insignificant-as happened in several Protestant denominations. This development is rooted in a doctrine of man which has dualistic tendencies, and can only be overcome by an understanding of man's multidimensional unity. If the nature of man is conceived simply in terms of conscious self-awareness, of intellect and will, then only words, doctrinal and moral words, can bear the Spiritual Presence. No Spirit-bearing objects or acts, nothing sensuous which affects the unconscious, can be accepted. Sacraments, if retained, become obsolete rudiments of the past. But it is not only the emphasis on the conscious side of the psychological self that is responsible for the disappearance of sacramental thinking; magical distortion of the sacramental experience, even in Christianity is also responsible. The Reformation was a concentrated attack on Roman Catholic sacramentalism. The argument was that the doctrine of ***"opus operatum"*** in the Roman church distorted the sacraments into non-personal acts of magical technique. If the sacrament has effects by virtue of its mere performance, the centered act of faith is not essential to its saving power. (Only conscious resistance to the meaning of the sacrament would annihilate its effect.) According to the judgment of the Reformation, this perverts religion into magic in order to gain objective grace from the divine power.

Therefore, it is important to draw the boundary line between the impact of a sacrament on the conscious through the unconscious self and magical techniques which influence the unconscious without the consent of the will. The difference is that in the first case the centered self consciously participates in the experience of the sacramental act, whereas in the second case the unconscious is influenced directly without participation of the centered self. Although magic as a technical method has been replaced since the late Renaissance by technical sciences, the magical element in the relation between human beings is still a reality-however scientifically it might be explained. It is an element in most human encounters, including such encounters as those of the listeners to a sermon or a political speech with the speaker, of the counseled with the counselor, of the spectator with the actor, of the friend with the friend, of the beloved with the lover. As an element in a larger whole which is determined by the centered self, it expresses the multidimensional unity of life. But if it is exercised as a particular, intentional act-by-passing the personal center-it is a demonic distortion. And every sacrament is in danger of becoming demonic.

The fear of such demonization has induced reformed Protestantism and many of the so-called sectarian groups, in contrast to Lutheranism, to reduce the sacramental mediation of the Spirit drastically or even totally. The result is either an intellectualization and moralization of the Spiritual Presence or, as in Quakerism, a mystical inwardness. In light of the twentieth-century rediscovery of the unconscious, it is now possible for Christian theology to re-evaluate positively the sacramental mediation of the Spirit. One could even say that a Spiritual Presence apprehended through the consciousness alone is intellectual and not truly Spiritual. This means that the Spiritual Presence cannot be received without a sacramental element, however hidden the latter may be. In religious terminology, one could say that God grasps every side of the human being through every medium. The formula "Protestant principle and Catholic substance" refers definitively to the sacrament as the medium of the Spiritual Presence. The concept of the multidimensional unity of life provides for this formula. Catholicism has always tried to include all dimensions of life in its system of life and thought; but it has sacrificed the unity, that is, the dependence of life in all dimensions, including the religious, on the divine judgment. The sacramental material is not a sign pointing to something foreign to itself. To put it in terms

of the theory of symbolism, the sacramental material is not a sign but a symbol. As **symbols** the sacramental materials are intrinsically related to what they express; they have inherent qualities (water, fire, oil, bread, wine) which make them adequate to their symbolic function and irreplaceable. The Spirit "uses" the powers of being in nature in order to "enter" man's spirit. Again, it is not the quality of the materials as such which makes them media of the Spiritual Presence; rather, it is their quality as brought into sacramental union. This consideration excludes both the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation which transforms a symbol into a thing to be handled, and the reformed doctrine of the sign character of the sacramental symbol. A sacramental symbol is neither a thing nor a sign. It participates in the power of what it symbolizes, and therefore, it can be a medium of the Spirit.

Concrete sacraments develop over long periods of time. No part of encountered reality is excluded beforehand from the possibility that it might become sacramental material; anything may prove adequate for it in certain constellations. Often a magic tradition is transformed into a religious one (the sacramental "food"), and sometimes a historical moment is remembered and transformed into a sacred legend (the Last Supper). Ordinarily, sacramental symbolism is connected with great moments in the individual's life, birth, maturity, marriage, and imminent death, or with special religious events, such as entering a religious group and being assigned special tasks within it. Above all, sacramental symbolism is associated with the ritual activities of the group itself. Events in both series often become identical.

In view of this situation one must ask whether the Spiritual Community is bound to definite media of the Spiritual Presence. The answer must unite an **affirmative** and a negative element: In so far as the Spiritual Community actualizes the New Being in Jesus as the Christ no sacramental act can take place in it which is not subject to the criterion of that reality on which the community is based. This excludes all **demonized** sacramental acts, such as bloody sacrifices. A second limitation must be added to this. The sacramental acts through which the Spirit of the New Being in Christ is mediated must refer to the historical and doctrinal symbols in which revelatory experiences leading to the central revelation have been expressed, for example, the crucifixion of the Christ or eternal life. But within these limits the Spiritual Community is free to appropriate all symbols which are adequate and which possess **sym-**

bolic power. The debate over the number of sacraments is justified only if it is the form in which genuine theological problems are discussed, for example, the Spiritual problems of marriage and divorce or of priesthood and laity. Otherwise, the Protestant reduction of the number of the sacraments from seven to two is not theologically justifiable. And the biblicistic argument that they are prescribed by Jesus will not stand. The Christ has not come to give new ritual laws. He is the end of the law. The definitive selection of great sacraments from the large number of sacramental possibilities depends on tradition, evaluation of importance, and criticism of abuses. However, the decisive question is whether they possess and are able to preserve their power of mediating the Spiritual Presence. For example, if a large number of the Spiritual Community's serious members are no longer grasped by certain sacramental acts, however old they are and however solemn their performance, it must be asked whether a sacrament has lost its sacramental power.

(2) **WORD AND SACRAMENT.**-In our analysis of the sacramental character of objects or acts, we found that they are not without words even if voiceless, because language is the fundamental expression of man's spirit. Therefore the word is the Spirit's other and ultimately more important medium. If human words become vehicles of the Spiritual Presence they are called the "Word of God." We discussed this term and its many meanings in the first part of the system (Part I, Sec. II D, 13). In connection with the doctrine of the Spirit the following points must be repeated: first, one should emphasize that the "Word of God" is a term which qualifies human words as media of the Spiritual Presence. God does not use a particular language, and special documents written in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, or any other language are not as such words of God. They can become the Word of God if they become mediators of the Spirit and have the power to grasp the human spirit. This applies both positively and negatively to biblical as well as to all other literature. The Bible does not contain words of God (or as Calvin has said divine "oracles"), but it can and in a unique way has become the "Word of God." Its uniqueness resides in the fact that it is the document of the central revelation, with respect to both its giving and its receiving sides. Every day, by its impact on people inside and outside the church, the Bible proves that it is the Spirit's most important medium in the Western tradition. But it is not the only medium, nor is everything in it always such a medium. In many of its parts it is always

a potential medium, but it only becomes an actual medium to the degree that it grasps the spirit of men. No word is the Word of God unless it is the Word of God for someone; nor is it, in our present terminology, unless it is a medium whereby the Spirit enters the spirit of someone.

This enlarges indefinitely the number of words which can become the Word of God. It includes all religious and 'cultural documents, that is, the whole of human literature-not only that which is sublime, great, and dignified, but also that which is average, small, and profane-if it hits the human mind in such a way that an ultimate concern is created. Even the spoken word of an ordinary conversation can become a medium of the Spirit-as an ordinary object can acquire sacramental qualities-in a special configuration of physical and psychological circumstances.

Again, however, we must establish a criterion to use against the false elevation of human words to the dignity of the Word of God. The biblical words are this criterion. They constitute the ultimate touchstone for what can and cannot become the Word of God for someone. Nothing is the Word of God if it contradicts the faith and love which are the work of the Spirit and which constitute the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus as the Christ.

(3) THE **PROBLEM OF THE "INNER WORN."The** preceding discussion has related the working of the Spiritual Presence to media which, however internal their impact on the human spirit may be, also have an external objective side: objects, acts, sounds, letters. The question now arises as to whether or not such media are necessary at all or whether it is not possible to have an internal working of the Spirit without external vehicles. This question has been raised with great power by Spirit-movements in all periods of Christianity, most conspicuously in the Reformation period. The liberation of the Christian conscience from the church's authority by the reformers also produced the desire for liberation from the new authorities, i.e., from the letter of the Bible and the creedal statements of its theological interpreters. It was an attack, in the name of the Spirit, both on the pope of Rome and on the new pope—the Bible and its scholarly guardians. Since the Spirit means "God present," no human form of life and thought can be shut off from the Spirit. God is not bound to any of his manifestations. The Spiritual Presence breaks through the established Word and the established sacrament. The conclusion drawn by the Spirit-movement is that the Spirit

does not need such mediations. He dwells in the depth of the person, and when he speaks he speaks through the "inner word." He who listens to it receives new and personal revelations, independent of the churches' revelatory traditions. When regarded in light of the doctrine of the Spirit, as we have developed it, the truth in these ideas is their emphasis on the Spirit's freedom from any of the ambiguous forms in which it is received in religion. At this point, I must confess that the present system is essentially, but indirectly, influenced by the Spirit-movements, both through their impact on Western culture in general (including such theologians as Schleiermacher) and through their criticism of the established forms of religious life and thought. But some critical remarks are in order precisely because of this influence.

First, the term "inner word" is unfortunate. When the Franciscan theologians of the thirteenth century insisted on the divine character of the principles of truth in the human mind or when German mystics of the fourteenth century insisted on the Logos' presence in the soul, they expressed motifs of the Spirit-movements of past and future. In spite of this, however, they did not cut off the Spirit's working in the individual from the revelatory tradition. Yet the term "inner word" can have the connotation of this "cutting-off" of the Spirit's work from the revelatory tradition, and this leads us to the question: Is not "word" by its very definition a means of communication between two beings with centered self-awareness? If there are not two centers, what does the "inner word" mean? Is the implication that God or the Logos or the Spirit is this other self? This certainly can be said symbolically, as in the claims of the prophets to have heard the "voice of Jahweh" in an ecstatic experience and in the claims of many people at all times to similar experiences. Even the "voice of conscience" (which is voiceless) has been interpreted as the divine Spirit's speaking to the human spirit. However, if "inner word" has this meaning, it is not completely inner, because what has happened in that other finite self, which is a necessary condition of all human language, is replaced by the divine "self." However, even in symbolic language, this is a questionable way of talking. Certainly, if we ascribe omniscience, love, wrath, and mercy to God, we speak in symbols, applying material to God which is taken from a centered self as we experience it. But "self" is a structural concept and not adequate symbolic material. When the New Testament says that God is Spirit

or when Paul speaks of the witness of the divine Spirit to our spirit, the self-structure we need for religious symbolism is implicit. But it is misleading if made explicit. (Of the basic polarity of self and world, neither pole can be applied symbolically to God.) If God speaks to us, this is not the "inner word"; rather, 'it is the Spiritual Presence grasping us from "outside." But this "outside" is above outside and inside; it transcends them. If God were not also in man so that man could ask for God, God's speaking to man could not be perceived by man. The categories "inner" and "outer" lose their meaning in the relation of God and man.

We must give a negative answer to the question : Does God speak to man without a medium? The medium of the word is always present, because man's life under the dimension of spirit is determined by the word, whether or not this word has a voice. The thinking mind thinks in words. It speaks in the mode of silence, but it does not speak to itself in order to communicate something to itself. Man remembers what has been spoken to him since his life's beginning and organizes it into a meaningful whole. Therefore the speeches and writings of all prophets and mystics and of all those who claim to have had a divine inspiration are couched in the language of the tradition from which they come but are driven in the direction of the ultimate. When God spoke to the prophets, he did not give them new words or new facts, but he put the facts known to them in the light of ultimate meaning and instructed them to speak out of this situation in the language they knew. When the enthusiasts of the Reformation period expressed the "inner word" they had received in their language, it was the word of the Bible, of the tradition, and of the reformers, but illuminated by their own experience of the Spiritual Presence. By this light they gained insight into the social situation of the lowest classes in their society and further insights into the Spirit's freedom to work in the personal life over against ecclesiastical and biblicistic heteronomy, just as it had worked in the reformers themselves. The first-mentioned insight's prophetic character foreshadowed many Christian social movements in the last centuries up to the social gospel and the religious socialist movements of our own time. The other insights were the source of mystical tendencies such as those of the Quakers and the philosophies of religion in which religious "experience" is the decisive principle.

This analysis shows that the concept of the "inner word" is misleading.

The inner word is the refocusing into contemporary relevance of the words from traditions and former experiences. This refocusing occurs under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. The medium of the word is not excluded.

But the reformers' opposition to the Spirit-movements of their time had still another motive. The reformers (in agreement with the whole tradition of the church) were afraid that the ultimate criterion of all revelatory experiences—the New Being in Jesus as the Christ-would be lost in the name of the immediacy of the Spirit. Therefore they bound the Spirit to the Word, to the biblical message of the Christ. Certainly, this is theologically sound, for theology is based on the revelation in Jesus Christ as the central revelation. But it became unsound the moment revelation in the Christ was identified with a forensic doctrine of justification "by" faith, in which the Spiritual Presence's impact was replaced by an intellectual acknowledgment of the doctrine of forgiveness by grace alone. This certainly was not the intention, but it was the effect of the principle of "the Word alone." The Spirit's function was described ambiguously as the Spirit's testimony to the truth of the biblical message or to the truth of the biblical words. The former understanding of the doctrine is adequate to its genuine meaning, for the Spiritual Presence elevates the human spirit into the transcendent union of unambiguous life and gives the immediate certainty of reunion with God. The latter understanding of the doctrine reduces the Spirit's work to the one act of establishing a conviction of the literal truth of the biblical words, a function which contradicts the nature of the Spirit and therefore amounts to a security-seeking surrender to authority. This disregards the continuity of the Spiritual Presence and its impact on personality and community in conquering the ambiguities of life. Here again, the Spirit-movements pointed to a biblical characteristic which was present in the early Luther and which has been lost in the latter's victory over the Spirit in the orthodox development of the Reformation. In the ensuing struggles, the Spirit-movements lost something which justified orthodoxy's resistance. They concentrated on the inner movements of their souls under the impact of the Spirit instead of looking outside themselves, in Luther's manner, at the divine acceptance in spite of their actual unacceptability. They misinterpreted the Word spoken to them as the words of piety which they spoke to themselves. But this consideration transcends the problem of the media of the Spiritual Presence.

2. The Content of the Manifestation of the Divine Spirit in the Human Spirit: Faith and Love

a) The transcendent union and the participation in it.-All ambiguities of life are rooted in the separation and interplay of essential and existential elements of being. Therefore, the creation of unambiguous life brings about the reunion of these elements in life processes in which actual being is the true expression of potential being, an expression, however, which is not immediate, as in "dreaming innocence," but which is realized only after estrangement, contest, and decision. In the reunion of essential and existential being, ambiguous life is raised above itself to a transcendence that it could not achieve by its own power. This union answers the question implied in the processes of life and the function of the spirit. It is the direct answer to the process of self-transcendence-which in itself remains a question.

The "transcendent union" answers the general question implied in all ambiguities of life. It appears within the human spirit as the ecstatic movement which from one point of view is called "faith," from another, "love." These two states manifest the transcendent union which is created by the Spiritual Presence in the human spirit. The transcendent union is a quality of unambiguous life, a quality which we shall meet again in our discussion of the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

The two points of view determining the two terms can be distinguished in the following way: faith is the state of being ***grasped*** by the transcendent unity of unambiguous life-it embodies love as the state of being ***taken into*** that transcendent unity. From this analysis, it is obvious that faith logically precedes love, although in actuality neither can be present without the other. Faith without love is a continuation of estrangement and an ambiguous act of religious self-transcendence. Love without faith is an ambiguous reunion of the separated without the criterion and the power of the transcendent union. Neither of them is a creation of the Spiritual Presence, but both result from religious distortions of an original Spiritual creation.

These statements presuppose a full discussion of faith and love in order to be understandable. Such discussion could fill a large volume. [I myself have dealt with faith and love, each in a small book.'] However, this is not the present task, which is to determine the place of the two

'Faith: ***Dynamics of Faith (New*** York: Harper & Bros., 1957); love: ***Love, Power, and Justice (New*** York: Oxford University Press, 1954).

concepts within the theological system and to show in this way their relation to other theological concepts and religious symbols. Their central position in Christian life and theological thought has always been acknowledged since the time of the New Testament but, as is evident from the state of the contemporary discussion, they have not always been equally or adequately interpreted.

b) The Spiritual Presence manifest as faith.-There are few words in the language of religion which cry for as much semantic purging as the word "faith." It is continually being confused with belief in something for which there is no evidence, or in something intrinsically unbelievable, or in absurdities and nonsense. It is extremely difficult to remove these distorting connotations from the genuine meaning of faith. One of the reasons is that the Christian churches have often preached the message of the New Being in Christ as an "absurdity" which must be accepted on biblical or ecclesiastical authority whether the statements of the message are comprehensible or not. Another reason is the readiness of religion's many critics to concentrate their forces upon such a distorted image of faith as an easy object of attack.

Faith must be defined both formally and materially. The formal definition is valid for every kind of faith in all religions and cultures. Faith, formally or generally defined, is the state of being grasped by that toward which self-transcendence aspires, the ultimate in being and meaning. In a short formula, one can say that faith is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern. The term "ultimate concern" unites a subjective and an objective meaning: somebody is concerned about something he considers of concern. In this formal sense of faith as ultimate concern, every human being has faith. Nobody can escape the essential relation of the conditional spirit to something unconditional in the direction of which it is self-transcendent in unity with all life. However unworthy the ultimate concern's concrete content may be, no one can stifle such concern completely. This formal concept of faith is basic and universal. It refutes the idea that world history is the battlefield between faith and un-faith (if it is permissible to coin this word in order to avoid the misleading term "unbelief"). There is no un-faith in the sense of something antithetical to faith, but throughout all history and, above all, in the history of religion, there have been faiths with unworthy contents. They invest something preliminary, finite, and conditioned with the dignity of the ultimate, infinite, and unconditional.

The continuing struggle through all history is waged between a faith directed to ultimate reality and a faith directed toward preliminary realities claiming ultimacy.

This leads us to the material concept of faith as formulated before. Faith is the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence and opened to the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. In relation to the christological assertion, one could say that faith is the state of being grasped by the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus as the Christ. In this definition of faith, the formal and universal concept of faith has become material and particular; it is Christian. However, Christianity claims that this particular definition of faith expresses the fulfilment toward which all forms of faith are driven. Faith as the state of being opened by the Spiritual Presence to the transcendent unity of unambiguous life is a description which is universally valid despite its particular, Christian background.

Such a description, however, bears little resemblance' to the traditional definitions in which the intellect, will, or feeling is identified with the act of faith. In spite of the psychological crudeness of these distinctions, they remained decisive in both scholarly and popular conceptions of faith. It is therefore necessary to make some statements about faith's relation to the mental functions.

Faith, as the Spiritual Presence's invasion of the conflicts and ambiguities of man's life under the dimension of the spirit, is not an act of cognitive affirmation within the subject-object structure of reality. Therefore it is not subject to verification by experiment or trained experience. Nor is faith the acceptance of factual statements or valuations taken on authority, even if the authority is divine, for then the question arises, On the basis on what authority do I call an authority divine? Such a statement as "a being, called God, does exist" is not an assertion of faith but a cognitive proposition without sufficient evidence. The affirmation and the negation of such statements are equally absurd. This judgment refers to all attempts that would give divine authority to statements of fact in history, mind, and nature. No such assertions have the character of faith, nor can they be made in the name of faith. Nothing is more undignified than to make faith do duty for evidence which is lacking.

An awareness of this situation has led to the establishment of a more intimate relationship between faith and moral decision. An endeavor

is made to overcome the shortcomings of the cognitive-intellectual understanding of faith by a moral-voluntaristic understanding. In such an endeavor, "faith" is defined as the result of a "will to believe" or as the fruit of an act of obedience. But one asks: The will to believe what? Or, obedience to whom? If these questions are taken seriously, the cognitive interpretation of faith is reestablished. Faith cannot be defined as "will to believe at large," and it cannot be defined as "obedience to order at large." But in the moment in which the contents of the will to believe or of the obedience to order are sought, the shortcomings of the cognitive interpretation of faith reappear. For instance, if one is asked to accept the Word of God in obedience-and if this acceptance is called "obedience of faith"—one is asked to do something which can be done only by one already in the state of faith who acknowledges the word heard to be the Word of God. The "obedience of faith" presupposes faith but does not create it.

The most popular identification is that of faith with feeling. Moreover, it is not only popular but also readily accepted by scientists and philosophers who reject the religious claim to truth but who cannot deny its tremendous psychological and sociological power. This they ascribe to the indefinite yet indisputable realm of "oceanic" or other feeling and oppose it only when it tries to surpass its limits and trespass upon the solid land of knowledge and action. Certainly, faith as an expression of the whole person includes emotional elements, but it does not consist solely of them. It draws every element of *theoria* and *praxis* into itself and its ecstatic openness toward the Spiritual Presence; beyond these, it also includes elements of the life processes under all dimensions. As classical theology has rightly taught, there is "assent" in faith-there is cognitive acceptance of truth, not of true statements about objects in time and space but of the truth about our relation to that which concerns us ultimately and the symbols expressing it. (The full development of this assertion has been given in the first part of the system, "Reason and Revelation.")

There is also obedience in faith, a point in which Paul and Augustine, Thomas and Calvin, agree. But "obedience of faith" is not the heteronomous subjection to a divine-human authority. It is the act of keeping ourselves open to the Spiritual Presence which has grasped us and opened us. It is obedience by participation and not by submission (as in love relations).

Finally, there is an emotional element in the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. This is not the feeling of a completely indefinite character referred to above. It is the oscillation between the anxiety of one's finitude and estrangement and the ecstatic courage which overcomes the anxiety by taking it into itself in the power of the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.

The preceding discussion of faith and the mental function has shown two things: first, that faith can neither be identified with nor derived from any of the mental functions. Faith cannot be created by the procedures of the intellect, or by endeavors of the will, or by emotional movements. But, second, faith comprehends all this within itself, uniting and subjecting it to the Spiritual Presence's transforming power. This implies and confirms the basic theological truth that in relation to God everything is by God. Man's spirit cannot reach the ultimate, that toward which it transcends itself, through any of its functions. But the ultimate can grasp all of these functions and raise them beyond themselves by the creation of faith.

Although created by the Spiritual Presence, faith occurs within the structure, functions, and dynamics of man's spirit. Certainly, it is not from man, but it is in man. Therefore, in the interest of a radical transcendence of the divine activity, it is wrong to deny that man is aware of his being grasped by the divine Spirit, or as it has been said, "I only believe that I believe." Man is conscious of the Spiritual Presence's work in him. But that phrase does serve to provide us with a warning against self-assurance about the state of being in faith.

Considered as material concept, faith has three elements: first, the element of being opened up by the Spiritual Presence; second, the element of accepting it in spite of the infinite gap between the divine Spirit and the human spirit; and third, the element of expecting final participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. These elements are within one another; they do not follow one after the other, but they are present wherever faith occurs. The first element is faith in its receptive character, its mere passivity in relation to the divine Spirit. The second element is faith in its paradoxical character, its courageous standing in the Spiritual Presence. The third element characterizes faith as anticipatory, its quality as hope for the fulfilling creativity of the divine Spirit. These three elements express the human situation and the situation of life in general in relation to the ultimate in being and

meaning. They reflect the characterization of the New Being (as it is given in the christological section of Part III [Sec. II]) as "regeneration," "justification," and "sanctification." These three elements will reappear in subsequent descriptions of the Spiritual Presence's conquest of life's ambiguities.

Faith is actual in all life processes-in religion, in the other functions of the spirit, and in the preceding realms of life-in so far as they condition the actualization of the spirit. At this point, however, it is relevant to elaborate only the essential nature and basic structure of faith. Faith's actual function of conquering the ambiguities of life in the power of its Spiritual origin is a subject of the last section of this part of the system (Part IV). It is to be noted that this dealing with faith as a kind of independent reality has biblical support, just as the vision of sin as a kind of mythological power ruling the world is also in the line of biblical, especially Pauline, thought. The subjective actualization of sin and faith and the problems arising therein are secondary to the objectivity of the two powers although the objective and subjective sides cannot be separated in reality.

c) ***The Spiritual Presence manifest as*** love.-Whereas faith is the state of being grasped by -the Spiritual Presence, love is the state of being taken by the Spiritual Presence into the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. Such a definition requires a semantic as well as an ontological explanation. Semantically speaking, love, as faith, must be purged from many distorting connotations. The first is the description of love as emotion. Later, we shall speak about the genuine emotional element in love. Here we need state only that love is actual in all functions of the mind and that it has roots in the innermost core of life itself. Love is the drive toward the reunion of the separated; this is ontologically and therefore universally true. It is effective in all three life processes; it unites in a center, it creates the new, and it drives beyond everything given to its ground and aim. It is the "blood" of life and therefore has many forms in which dispersed elements of life are reunited. We have pointed to the ambiguities in some of these forms and to the disintegrating forces in the processes of integration. But in discussing the person-to-person encounter and the moral imperative intrinsic to it, we also asked the question of an unambiguous reunion, the question of love as participation in the other one through participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. The answer to this question

is given in the Spiritual Presence's creation of ***agape. Agape*** is unambiguous love and therefore impossible for the human spirit by itself. As faith, it is an ecstatic participation of the finite spirit in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. He who is in the state of ***agape*** is drawn into this unity.

This description makes it possible to resolve the Catholic-Protestant controversy about the relation of faith and love. We have already indicated that faith logically precedes love, because faith is, so to speak, the human reaction to the Spiritual Presence's breaking into the human spirit; it is the ecstatic acceptance of the divine Spirit's breaking-up of the finite mind's tendency to rest in its own self-sufficiency. This view affirms Luther's statement that faith is receiving and nothing but receiving. At the same time, the Catholic-Augustinian emphasis on love is asserted with equal strength, by virtue of the insight into the essential inseparability of love and faith in the participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. In this view, love is more than a consequence of faith, albeit a necessary one; it is one side of the ecstatic state of being of which faith is the other. A distortion of this relation occurs only if the acts of love are understood as conditioning the act by which the Spiritual Presence takes hold of man. The Protestant principle-that in relation to God everything is done by God-remains the weapon against such a distortion.

At this point an answer may be given to another question: Why does this presentation of the fundamental creation of the divine Spirit not add hope to faith and love rather than consider it as the third element of faith, that is, as the anticipatory direction of faith? The answer is that if hope were considered systematically (and not only homiletically, as in Paul's formula) as a third creation of the Spirit, its standing in man would be on a par with faith. It would be an independent act of anticipatory expectation whose relation to faith would be ambiguous. It would fall under the attitude of "believing that," an attitude which is in sharp contrast with the meaning of "faith." Hope is either an element of faith or a preSpiritual "work" of the human mind. Of course, this discussion strengthens the insight into the essential unity of faith and love. Love also becomes a preSpiritual "work" of the human spirit if we deny the essential inseparability of faith and love.

Love is not an emotion, but strong emotional elements are implied in it, as are the other functions of the human mind. For this reason it

is justifiable to open the discussion of love and the mental functions with the question of the relation of love to emotion (as we started the discussion of faith and the mental functions with the question of the relation of faith and intellect). The emotional element in love is, as emotion always is, the participation of the centered whole of a being in the process of reunion, whether it is in anticipation or in fulfilment. It would be incorrect to say that the anticipated fulfilment is the driving power in love. Driving power toward reunion also exists in dimensions where awareness, and therefore anticipation, is lacking. And even where there is full consciousness, the drive toward reunion is not caused by the anticipation of an expected pleasure (as it would be on the basis of the pain-pleasure principle which we have rejected), but the drive for reunion belongs to the essential structure of life and, consequently, is experienced as pleasure, joy, or blessedness, according to the different dimensions of life. As the ecstatic participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life, agape is experienced as blessedness (*makaria* or *beatitudo* in the sense of the beatitudes). Therefore agape can be applied symbolically to the divine life and its trinitarian movement, making the symbol of the divine blessedness concrete. The emotional element cannot be separated from love; love without its emotional quality is "good will" toward somebody or something, but it is not love. This is also true of man's love of God, which cannot be equated with obedience, as some antimystical theologians teach.

But love is not only related to emotion; it is the whole being's movement toward another being to overcome existential separation. As such it includes a volitional element under the dimension of self-awareness, i.e., the will to unite. Such a will is essential in every love relation, because the wall of separation could not be pierced without it. The emotional element alone is not strong enough if desire and fulfilment do not coincide. As this is always the case under the conditions of existence, there is resistance on both sides of a love relationship. It is this volitional element in love to which the great commandment primarily refers. Love without the will to love, relying solely on the force of emotion, can never penetrate to the other person.

The relation between love and the intellectual function of the mind is most fully developed in Greek and Hellenistic-Christian thought against a mystical background. Plato's *eros*-doctrine points to love's function in creating the knower's awareness of his own emptiness as against the

abundance of the known. In Aristotle the *eros* of everything moves the universe toward the pure form. In Hellenistic-Christian language, the word *gnosis* means knowledge, sexual intercourse, and mystical union. And the German word *erkennen,* which means to know, is also used for sexual union. Love includes the knowledge of the beloved, but it is not the knowledge of analysis and calculating manipulation; it is rather the participating knowledge which changes both the knower and the known in the very act of loving knowledge. Love, as faith, is a state of the whole person; all functions of the human mind are alive in every act of love.

While the word "faith" has a predominantly religious meaning, the word "love" is so equivocal that in many cases it is necessary to substitute the New Testament word *agape* for love as a creation of the Spiritual Presence. This is not always feasible, however, especially in homiletic and liturgical contexts, and beyond this limitation, there is a systematic problem in the equivocal use of the word "love" in English and other modern languages. In spite of the many kinds of love, which in Greek are designated as *philia* (friendship), *eros* (aspiration toward value), and *epithymia* (desire), in addition to *agape,* which is the creation of the Spirit, there is one point of identity in all these qualities of love which justifies the translation of them all by "love"; and that identity is the "urge toward the reunion of the separated," which is the inner dynamics of life. Love in this sense is one and indivisible. The attempt has been made to establish an absolute contrast between *agape* and *eros* (comprising the three other kinds of love); but as a result *agape* was reduced to a moral concept, not only in relation to God, but also in relation to man, and *eros* (which includes, in this terminology, *philia* and *epithymia* or *libido)* became profanized in a merely sexual direction and deprived of possible participation in unambiguous life. Nevertheless, one important truth stands out in the contrast of *agape* with the other kinds of love: *agape* is an ecstatic manifestation of the Spiritual Presence. It is possible only in unity with faith and is the state of being drawn into the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. For this reason, it is independent of the other qualities of love and is able to unite with them, to judge them, and to transform them. Love as *agape* is a creation of the Spiritual Presence which conquers the ambiguities of all other kinds of love.

Agape has this power because, similarly to faith, it has the basic

structure of the New Being: the receptive, paradoxical, and anticipatory character. In the case of agape, the first quality is evident in its acceptance of the object of love without restrictions; the second quality is disclosed in agape's holding fast to this acceptance in spite of the estranged, profanized, and demonized state of its objects, and the third quality is seen in ***agape's*** expectation of the re-establishment of the holiness, greatness, and dignity of the object of love through its accepting him. ***Agape*** takes its object into the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.

All this is said of ***agape*** as Spiritual power, prior to any personal or social actualization. In this, it is the equal of sin and faith as powers controlling life. But there is a difference between ***agape*** and the two others (which makes ***agape*** greater than faith, in the words of Paul). ***Agape*** characterizes the divine life itself, symbolically and essentially. Faith characterizes the New Being in time and space but it does not characterize the divine life, and sin characterizes only estranged being. ***Agape*** is first of all the love God has toward the creature and through the creature toward himself. The three characteristics of ***agape*** must first be ascribed to God's ***agape*** toward his creatures and then to the ***agape*** of creature toward creature.

However, this leaves one relation still to be understood, and this is the love of the creature toward God. The New Testament uses the word ***agape*** for this relation also, disregarding the three elements in the ***agape*** of God toward the creatures and of the creatures toward each other. None of these elements is present in the love of man for God. Nevertheless, love as the drive toward the reunion of the separated can be used most emphatically of man's love for God. It unites all kinds of love. and yet is something else beyond them all. The best way of characterizing it is to say that in relation to God the distinction between faith and love disappears. Being grasped by God in faith and adhering to him in love is one and the same state of creaturely life. It is participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.

B. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE IN HISTORICAL MANKIND

1. SPIRIT AND NEW BEING: AMBIGUITY AND FRAGMENT

The Spiritual Presence, elevating man through faith and love to the transcendent unity of unambiguous life, creates the New Being above the gap between essence and existence and consequently above the ambiguities of life. In the preceding chapter we have described the manifestation of the divine Spirit in the human spirit. We must now determine the place in historical mankind in which the New Being as the creation of the Spiritual Presence is manifest. Of course this cannot be done without reference to the historical dimension of life which has been reserved as the subject of the last part of the system, "History and the Kingdom of God." But references to history are frequent in all parts of the theological system. Such concepts as revelation, providence, and the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, are possible only in the historical context. Yet it is one thing to see theological problems in their historical implications and another thing to make a theological problem of history as such. While the latter is reserved for the last part of this system, the former approach must be made here as it has been at many previous points of the discussion.

The divine Spirit's invasion of the human spirit does not occur in isolated individuals but in social groups, since all the functions of the human spirit—moral self-integration, cultural self-creation, and religious self-transcendence-are conditioned by the social context of the ego-thou encounter. It is therefore necessary to show the working of the divine Spirit at those points in history which are decisive for its self-manifestation within mankind.

The Spiritual Presence is manifest in all history; but history as such is not the manifestation of the Spiritual Presence. As in the spirit of the individual, there are particular marks which indicate the Spiritual Presence in a historical group. First, there is the effective presence of symbols in ***theoria*** and ***praxis*** through which a social group expresses its openness to the impact of the Spirit, and second, there is the rise of personalities and movements which fight against the tragically unavoidable profanization and demonization of these symbols. These two marks of the Spiritual Presence are found in religious as well as in quasi-religious groups, and in a sense they are a single phenomenon. This is so because a successful struggle for the purification of the symbols transforms them and creates a changed social group.

The most familiar example of these dynamics is the fight of the prophets in Israel and Judah against the profanization and demonization of the desert religion of Jahweh, and the radical transformation of the social group under the impact of the Spiritual Presence communicated by the prophets. Similar developments, especially radical movements

of purification with their impact on the social group, are found everywhere in historical mankind. The mark of the Spiritual Presence is not lacking at any place or time. The divine Spirit or God, present to man's spirit, breaks into all history in revelatory experiences which have both a saving and transforming character. We have already pointed to this fact in the discussion of universal revelation and the idea of the holy. Now we relate it to the doctrine of the divine Spirit and its manifestations, and we can assert: Mankind is never left alone. The Spiritual Presence acts upon it in every moment and breaks into it in some great moments, which are the historical *kairoi.*

Since mankind is never left alone by God, since it is continuously under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, there is always New Being in history. There is always participation in the transcendent union of unambiguous life. But this participation is fragmentary. We must give some attention to this concept; it is quite a different thing from ambiguity. When we say "Spiritual Presence" or "New Being" or *agape,* we point to something unambiguous. It may be drawn into the ambiguous actualizations of life, especially of life under the dimension of the spirit. But in itself it is unambiguous. However, it is fragmentary in its manifestation in time and space. The fulfilled transcendent union is an eschatological concept. The fragment is an anticipation (as Paul speaks of the fragmentary and anticipatory possession of the divine Spirit, of the truth, of the vision of God, and so on). The New Being is fragmentarily and anticipatorily present, but in so far as it is present it is so unambiguously. The fragment of a broken statue of a god points unambiguously to the divine power which it represents. The fragment of a successful prayer elevates to the transcendent union of unambiguous life. The fragmentary character of a group's acceptance of the Spirit makes this group, in the moment of acceptance, a holy community. The fragmentary experience of faith and the fragmentary actualization of love create the individual's participation in the transcendent union of unambiguous life. This distinction between the ambiguous and the fragmentary makes it possible for us to give full affirmation and full commitment to the manifestations of the Spiritual Presence while remaining aware of the fact that in the very acts of affirmation and commitment the ambiguity of life reappears. Awareness of this situation is the decisive criterion for religious maturity. It belongs to the quality of the New Being that it puts its own actualization in time and space

under the criteria by which it judges the ambiguities of life in general. Yet in doing so, the New Being does conquer (though fragmentarily) the ambiguities of life in time and space.

2. The Spiritual Presence and the Anticipation of the New Being in the Religions

One could give a whole history of religion under this heading, because it provides a key with which one can discover meaning in the seemingly chaotic religious life of mankind. And one could also find many quasi-religious phenomena in which it is possible to see manifestations of the Spiritual Presence. But such a program oversteps the limits of a theological system. Only a few typical manifestations of the Spirit can be discussed, and even they are subject to the serious limitation that existential knowledge presupposes participation. One can learn many things about strange religions and cultures by means of detached observation and even more through empathetic understanding. But neither way leads to the central experience of an Asian religion for one who has grown within the Christian-humanist civilization of the West. Serious encounters between representatives of the two worlds prove this. In view of the popular superficial reception of, for example, Buddhist attitudes, one should be warned by the statement of a great interpreter of Chinese ideas that after thirty years of living among the Chinese he has just begun to understand a little of their Spiritual life. The only authentic way to it is through actual participation. Typological considerations such as the following are justified only by the identity of the dimension of spirit in every articulate being with whom, therefore, communication is possible and the person-to-person encounter is demanded. From this common source spring similarities under the dimension of the spirit, which make possible a certain amount of existential participation. Every great religion has elements in its total structure which are subordinate in one religion and dominant in another. The Christian theologian can understand Eastern mysticism only to the degree in which he has experienced the mystical element in Christianity. But since the dominance or subordination of one of the elements changes the whole structure, even this limited way of understanding by participation can be deceptive. The following statements must be read with this in mind.

It seems that the original *mana* religion places a strong emphasis on the Spiritual Presence in the "depth" of everything that is. This divine

power in all things is invisible, mysterious, approachable only through definite rituals, and known to a particular group of men, the priests. This early substantial vision of the Spiritual Presence survives with many variations in almost all the so-called high religions, even in some forms of Christian sacramentalism, and is secularized in the romantic philosophy of nature (in which ecstasy becomes aesthetic enthusiasm).

Another example is the religion of the great mythologies, such as those of India and Greece. The divine powers are separated from the world of existence although they rule it, either in part or as a whole. Their manifestations have an extraordinary character, physical as well as psychological. Nature and mind become ecstatic when the Spiritual Presence manifests itself. The influence of this mythological stage of Spiritual experience on all later stages, including Christianity, is obvious and is justified by the fact that the experience of the Spiritual Presence is ecstatic. For this reason, all radical attempts to demythologize religion are in vain. What one can and should do is to "deliteralize" them for those who are able and willing to apply rational criteria to the meaning of religious symbols.

At the mythological stage of religion (which itself is the result of a purifying impulse arising in the premythological stage, as discussed before), forces that fight its profanized and demonized forms appear and transform the reception of the Spiritual Presence in several directions. The Greek and Hellenistic mystery cults provide an example. The divine is embodied in them in the concrete figure of a mystery-god. The mystery element is emphasized more than it is in ordinary polytheism, which is very much open to profanization, and ecstatic participation in the god's destiny provides a pattern which is used by monotheistic Christianity to express its experience of the Spiritual Presence in the Christ.

The fight against the demonization of the Spirit appears conspicuously in the dualistic purifications of the mythological stage. The great attempt of religious dualism, which was made first in Persia, then in Manichaeism (the Mithraist cult, the Cathari, and similar groups), to concentrate demonic potentiality in one figure was supposed to liberate the opposite divine figure from any demonic contamination. Although it was not ultimately successful in this respect (because it assumed a split in the creative ground of being), its influence on such monotheistic religions as late Judaism and Christianity was and still is

very great. Anxiety over the demonization of the Spiritual Presence is expressed in the fear of Satan "and all his works" (the baptism and confirmation vow) and in the fact that the classical Christian language still abounds in dualistic symbolism.

The two most important examples of the experience of Spiritual Presence are mysticism, Asian as well as European, and the exclusive monotheism of Judaism and the religions based upon it.

Mysticism experiences the Spiritual Presence as above its concrete vehicles, which characterize the mythological stage, and its various transformations. Both the divine figures and the concrete realities—personal, communal, and apersonal-in which the divine figures enter temporal and spatial reality lose their ultimate significance, in spite of the fact that they often retain a preliminary importance as grades on a Spiritual stairway to the ultimate. But the Spiritual Presence is fully experienced only when the grades are left behind and the mind is grasped in ecstasy. In this radical sense, mysticism transcends every concrete embodiment of the divine by transcending the subject-object scheme of man's finite structure, but for this very reason, it is in danger of annihilating the centered self, the subject of the ecstatic experience of the Spirit. Communication between East and West is most difficult at this point, with the East affirming a "formless self" as the aim of all religious life, and the West (even in Christian mysticism) trying to preserve in the ecstatic experience the subjects of faith and love: personality and community.

This attitude is rooted in the prophets' way of fighting against the Spiritual Presence's profanization and demonization in the priestly religion of their time. In the religion of the Old Testament the divine Spirit does not eliminate centered selves and their encounters, but it does sublimate them into states of mind which transcend their ordinary possibilities and which are not produced by their toil or good will. The Spirit grasps them and drives them to the heights of prophetic power.

This attitude toward personality and community (and consequently, in contrast to the mystical religions, to sin and forgiveness) is rooted in the fact that for the prophetic religion the Spiritual Presence is the presence of the God of humanity and justice. The story of the conflict between the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal is significant, for it shows different kinds of ecstasy. The ecstasy produced by the presence

of the Baal Spirit in the minds and bodies of his priests is connected with self-intoxication and self-mutilation, whereas the ecstasy of Elijah is that of a person-to-person encounter in prayer which certainly transcends ordinary experiences in intensity and effect but which neither extinguishes nor disintegrates the personal center of the prophet and does not produce physical intoxication. In all its parts the Old Testament follows this line. There is no pure Spiritual Presence where there is no humanity and justice. Without them-and this is the judgment of the prophets against their own religion-there is demonized or profanized Spiritual Presence. This judgment is taken up in the New Testament and reappears in church history in all purification movements, of which the Protestant Reformation was one.

3. The Spiritual Presence in Jesus as the Christ: Spirit Christology

The divine Spirit was present in Jesus as the Christ without distortion. In him the New Being appeared as the criterion of all Spiritual experiences in past and future. Though subject to individual and social conditions his human spirit was entirely grasped by the Spiritual Presence; his spirit was "possessed" by the divine Spirit or, to use another figure, "God was in him." This makes him the Christ, the decisive embodiment of the New Being for historical mankind. Although the christological problem was the central subject of the third part of this theological system, the problem appears in all parts, and in connection with the doctrine of the divine Spirit, several additions to the earlier christological statements are necessary.

The Synoptic stories show that the earliest Christian tradition was determined by a Spirit-Christology. According to this tradition, Jesus was grasped by the Spirit at the moment of his baptism. This event confirmed him as the elected "Son of God." Ecstatic experiences appear again and again in the Gospel stories. They show the Spiritual Presence driving Jesus into the desert, leading him through the visionary experiences of temptation, giving him the power of divination with respect to people and events, and making him the conqueror of demonic powers and the Spiritual healer of mind and body. The Spirit is the force behind the ecstatic experience on the mount of transfiguration. And the Spirit gives him the certainty about the right hour, the *kairos*, for acting and suffering. As a consequence of this understanding, the question arose as to how the divine Spirit could find a vessel in which

to pour itself so fully, and the answer came in the form of the story of Jesus' procreation by the divine Spirit. This story was justified by the insight into the psychosomatic level at which the Spiritual Presence works and the legitimate conclusion that there must have been a teleological predisposition in Jesus to become the bearer of the Spirit without limit. However, this conclusion does not necessarily require an acceptance of this half-Docetic legend, which deprives Jesus of his full humanity by excluding a human father from his conception. The doctrine of the multidimensional unity of life answers the question of the psychosomatic basis of the bearer of the Spirit without such ambiguity.

We can now consider faith and love-the two manifestations of the Spiritual Presence—and their unity in the transcendent union of unambiguous life in relation to the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. Christ's self-sacrificial love is the center of the Gospels as well as of their apostolic interpretations. This center is the principle of agape embodied in his being and radiating from him into a world in which agape was and is known only in ambiguous expressions. The New Testament witness and the assertion of the greatest theologians in the history of the church are unanimous in this respect, in spite of many varieties of interpretations.

References to the faith of Jesus are rare in biblical literature as well as in later theology, although they are not altogether lacking. The reason for this seems to be that the term "faith" includes an element of "in spite of" which could not be applied to the one who as the Son is in continuous communication with the Father. Of course, this trend was strengthened by the Logos-Christology and its presuppositions in Paul's Christology. Such words as "I believe, help my unbelief" could not be put into the mouth of the Logos-Incarnate. Nor can more recent descriptions of faith-as a leap, as an act of courage, as a risk, as embracing itself and the doubt about itself-be applied to him who says that he and the Father are one. But we must ask whether this does not imply a tendency in church history which could be called "crypto-Monophysitic" and which runs the risk of depriving Jesus of his real humanity. This problem exists even in Protestantism, where the Monophysitic danger is substantially reduced by the reformers' emphasis on the "humble Christ" and the image of the "suffering servant." But the meaning of faith in Protestantism is determined by the doctrine of "justification through faith by grace," and it includes the paradox of the acceptance

as just of him who is unjust-the forgiveness of sins. Faith, in this sense, can certainly not be applied to the Christ. One cannot attribute to the Christ the paradox of faith, because the Christ himself is the paradox.

The problem can be resolved in terms of the basic definition of faith as the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence and through it by the transcendent union of unambiguous life. We also have seen that faith in this sense is a Spiritual reality above its actualization in those who possess it. The faith of the Christ is the state of being grasped unambiguously by the Spiritual Presence.

At this point the most important implication of our distinction between ambiguous and fragmentary becomes obvious. It makes the faith of the Christ understandable. The dynamic picture of this faith which we receive in the Gospel stories expresses the fragmentary character of his faith, wherein the elements of struggle, exhaustion-even despair-often appear. Yet this never leads to a profanization or demonization of his faith. The Spirit never leaves him; the power of the transcendent union of unambiguous life always bears him up. If we call this "the faith of the Christ," the word "faith" may be used, though essentially qualified by its unambiguous character. The word "faith" cannot be applied to the Christ unless it is taken in its biblical meaning of a Spiritual reality in itself. Only if this meaning is preserved can one speak properly of "the faith of the Christ," just as one speaks of "the love of the Christ,"-thus qualifying both faith and love by the words "of the Christ."

The Spirit-Christology of the Synoptic Gospels has two further theological implications. One is the assertion that it is not the spirit of the man Jesus of Nazareth that makes him the Christ, but that it is the Spiritual Presence, God in him, that possesses and drives his individual spirit. This insight stands guard against a Jesus-theology which makes the man Jesus the object of Christian faith. This can be done in seemingly orthodox terms, as in Pietism, or in humanist terms, as in theological liberalism. Both distort or disregard the Christian message that it is Jesus *as* the Christ in whom the New Being has appeared. And they contradict Paul's Spirit-Christology, which emphasizes that "the Lord is the Spirit" and that we do not "know" him according to his historical existence (flesh) but only as the Spirit who is alive and present. This saves Christianity from the danger of a heteronomous subjection to an individual as an individual. The Christ is Spirit and not law.

The other implication of the Spirit-Christology is that Jesus, the Christ, is the keystone in the arch of Spiritual manifestations in history. He is not an isolated event-something which, so to speak, fell from heaven. Again, it is pietistic and liberal thought that denies an organic relation between the appearance of Jesus and the past and future. Spirit-Christology acknowledges that the divine Spirit which made Jesus into the Christ is creatively present in the whole history of revelation and salvation before and after his appearance. The event "Jesus as the Christ" is unique but not isolated; it is dependent on past and future, as they are dependent on it. It is the qualitative center in a process which proceeds from an indefinite past into an indefinite future which we call, symbolically, the beginning and the end of history.

The Spiritual Presence in the Christ as the center of history makes possible a fuller understanding of the manifestation of the Spirit in history. The New Testament writers and the church were aware of this problem and gave significant answers to it. The general assertion was that the Spiritual Presence in history is essentially the same as the Spiritual Presence in Jesus as the Christ. God in his self-manifestation, wherever this occurs, is the same God who is decisively and ultimately manifest in the Christ. Therefore, his manifestations anywhere before or after Christ must be consonant with the encounter with the center of history.

In this context, "before" does not mean before the year A.D. 30 but before an existential encounter with Jesus as the Christ-which probably will never happen universally at any one time in history. For even were all pagans and Jews to accept Jesus as the answer to their ultimate question, movements away from him would arise in the midst of Christianity as they always have arisen. "Before" Christ means "before an existential encounter with the New Being in him." The assertion that Jesus is the Christ implies that the Spirit, which made him the Christ and which became his Spirit (with a capital "S"), was and is working in all those who have been grasped by the Spiritual Presence before he could be encountered as a historical event. This has been expressed in the Bible and the churches by the scheme of "prophecy and fulfilment." The often absurd distortion of this idea in primitive as well as theological literalism should not prevent us from perceiving its truth, which is the assertion that the Spirit who created the Christ within Jesus is the same Spirit who prepared and continues to prepare mankind for the encounter with

the New Being in him. The way in which this happens has been described positively and critically in the preceding chapter. That description is also valid for those who are directly or indirectly under the influence of an existential encounter with the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. There is always the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence, followed by the profanization and demonization in the process of reception and actualization and by the prophetic protest and renewal.

Nevertheless, since biblical times, serious theological discussions have arisen concerning the exact relation of the Spirit of Jesus as the Christ and the Spirit working in those who are grasped by the Spiritual Presence after his manifestation to them. The question is discussed in the Fourth Gospel in the form of Jesus' announcement concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter." The question was bound to arise after the Spirit-Christology had been replaced by the Logos-Christology in the Fourth Gospel. The answer is two-sided and has determined the church's attitude ever since: After the return of the Logos-Incarnate to the Father, the Spirit will take his place and reveal the implication of his appearance. In the divine economy, the Spirit follows the Son, but in essence, the Son is the Spirit. The Spirit does not himself originate what he reveals. Every new manifestation of the Spiritual Presence stands under the criterion of his manifestation in Jesus as the Christ. This is a criticism of the claim of old and new Spirit-theologies which teach that the revelatory work of the Spirit qualitatively transcends that of the Christ. The Montanists, the radical Franciscans, and the Anabaptists are examples of this attitude. The "theologies of experience" in our time belong to the same line of thought. To them progressive religious experience, perhaps in terms of an amalgamation of the world religions, will go qualitatively beyond Jesus as the Christ-and not only quantitatively, as the Fourth Gospel acknowledges. Obviously, such an expectation's realization would destroy the Christ-character of Jesus. More than one manifestation of the Spiritual Presence claiming ultimacy would deny the very concept of ultimacy; they would, instead, perpetuate the demonic split of consciousness.

Another facet of the same problem appears in the argument between the Eastern and Western churches about the so-called *processio* of the Spirit from God the Father and God the Son. The Eastern church asserted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, whereas the Western church insisted on the procession of the Spirit from the Father

and the Son (*filioque*). In its scholastic form this discussion seems completely empty and absurd to us, and we can hardly understand how it could have been taken seriously enough to contribute to the final schism between Rome and the Eastern churches. But stripped of its scholastic form, the discussion has a profound meaning. The Eastern church, when it asserted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, left open the possibility of a direct theocentric mysticism (of course, a "baptized mysticism"). The Western church, in contrast, insisted upon applying the Christocentric criterion to all Christian piety; and since the application of this criterion is the prerogative of the pope as the "vicar of Christ," the Roman church became less flexible and more legalistic than the Eastern churches. In Rome the freedom of the Spirit is limited by canon law. The Spiritual Presence is legally circumscribed. Certainly, this was not the intention of the writer of the Fourth Gospel when he had Jesus announce the coming of the Spirit who will lead into all truth.

4. The Spiritual Presence and the New Being in the Spiritual Community

a) The New Being in Jesus as the Christ and in the Spiritual Community.—As we have emphasized in the christological part of the system, the Christ would not be the Christ without those who receive him as the Christ. He could not have brought the new reality without those who have accepted the new reality in him and from him. Therefore, the creativity of the Spiritual Presence in mankind must be seen as a threefold one: in mankind as a whole in preparation for the central manifestation of the divine Spirit, in the divine Spirit's central manifestation itself, and in the manifestation of the Spiritual Community under the creative impact of the central event. We do not use the word "church" for the Spiritual Community, because this word has been used, of necessity, in the frame of the ambiguities of religion. At this point we speak instead of that which is able to conquer the ambiguities of religion-the New Being-in anticipation, in central appearance, and in reception. Such words as "body of Christ," "assembly (*ecclesia*) of God" or "of Christ," express the unambiguous life created by the divine Presence, in a sense similar to that of the term "Spiritual Community." Its relation to what is called "Church" or "church" in a rather equivocal terminology will be discussed later.

The Spiritual Community is unambiguous; it is New Being, created by the Spiritual Presence. But, although it is a manifestation of unambiguous life, it is nonetheless fragmentary, as was the manifestation of unambiguous life in the Christ and in those who expected the Christ. The Spiritual Community is an unambiguous, though fragmentary, creation of the divine Spirit. In this context, "fragmentary" means appearing under the conditions of finitude but conquering both estrangement and ambiguity.

The Spiritual Community is also Spiritual in the sense in which Luther often uses the word, that is, "invisible," "hidden," "open to faith alone," but nevertheless real, unconquerably real. This is analogous to the New Being's hidden presence in Jesus and in those who were vehicles of preparation for him. From the Spiritual Community's hiddenness, its "dialectical" relation (of identity and nonidentity) to the churches follows, just as the dialectical relation of Jesus and the Christ and, to take a similar case, of the history of religion and revelation also follows from the same hiddenness. In all three cases only the "eyes of faith" see what is hidden or Spiritual, and the "eyes of faith" are the Spirit's creation: only Spirit can discern Spirit.

The relation of the New Being in Christ to the New Being in the Spiritual Community is symbolized in several central stories of the New Testament. The first one, which is most significant for the meaning of "Christ," is also most significant for the relation of Christ to the Spiritual Community. It is the story of Peter's confession to Jesus that he is the Christ at Caesarea Philippi and Jesus' answer that the recognition of him as the Christ is a work of God; this recognition is the result not of an ordinary experience but of the impact of the Spiritual Presence. It is the Spirit grasping Peter that enables his spirit to recognize the Spirit in Jesus which makes him the Christ. This recognition is the basis of the Spiritual Community against which the demonic powers are powerless and which Peter and the other disciples represent. Therefore we can say: As the Christ is not the Christ without those who receive him as the Christ, so the Spiritual Community is not Spiritual unless it is founded on the New Being as it has appeared in the Christ.

The story of Pentecost powerfully emphasizes the Spiritual Community's character. The story, of course, combines historical, legendary, and mythological elements, the distinction between which, in the light

of probability, is a task for historical research. But the symbolic meaning of the story in all its elements is of first importance for our purposes. We may distinguish five such elements. The first is the ecstatic character of the creation of Spiritual Community. It confirms what has been said about the Spiritual Presence's character, that is, the unity of ecstasy and structure. The story of Pentecost is an example of this unity. It is ecstasy, with all the characteristics of ecstasy; but it is an ecstasy united with faith, love, unity, and universality, as the story's other elements show. In light of the element of ecstasy in the Pentecost story, we must say that without ecstasy there is no Spiritual Community.

The second element in the story of Pentecost is the creation of a faith which was threatened and almost destroyed by the crucifixion of him who was supposed to be the bearer of the New Being. If we compare the Pentecost story with the Pauline report of the appearances of the resurrected Christ, we find that in both cases an ecstatic experience reassured the disciples and released them from a state of total incertitude. The fugitives who had dispersed in Galilee were not a manifestation of the Spiritual Community. They became its manifestation only after the Spiritual Presence grasped them and reestablished their faith. In light of the certainty which overcomes doubt in the story of Pentecost, we must say that without the certainty of faith there is no Spiritual Community.

The third element in the story of Pentecost is the creation of a love which expresses itself immediately in mutual service, especially toward those who are in need, including strangers who have joined the original group. In the light of the service created by love in the story of Pentecost, we must say that there is no Spiritual Community without self-surrendering love.

The fourth element in the story of Pentecost is the creation of unity. The Spiritual Presence had the effect of uniting different individuals, nationalities, and traditions and gathering them together for the sacramental meal. The disciples' ecstatic speaking with tongues was interpreted as the conquest of the disruption of mankind as symbolized in the story of the Tower of Babel. In light of the unity apparent in the story of Pentecost, we must say that there is no Spiritual Community without the ultimate reunion of all the estranged members of mankind.

The fifth element in the story of Pentecost is the creation of universality, expressed in the missionary drive of those who were grasped

by the Spiritual Presence. It was impossible that they should not give the message of what had happened to them to everybody, because the New Being would not be the New Being were not mankind as a whole and even the universe itself included in it. In light of the element of universality in the story of Pentecost we must say that there is no Spiritual Community without openness to all individuals, groups, and things and the drive to take them into itself.

All these elements which will reappear in our discussion as the marks of the Spiritual Community are derived from the image of Jesus as the Christ and the New Being manifest in him. This is expressed symbolically in the image of him as the head and the Spiritual Community as his body. In a more psychological symbolism, it is expressed in the image of him as the bridegroom and the Spiritual Community as the bride. In a more ethical symbolism, it is expressed in the image of him as the Lord of the Spiritual Community. This imagery points to the fact, to which we have already referred, that the divine Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus as the Christ and that the Christ is the criterion to which every Spiritual claim must submit.

b) The Spiritual Community in its latent and in its manifest stages.— The Spiritual Community is determined by the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, but it is not identical with the Christian churches. The question then arises: What is the Spiritual Community's relation to the manifold religious communities in the history of religion? This question reformulates our discussion of the problem of universal and final revelation and of the Spiritual Presence in the period antecedent to the central manifestation of the New Being. In the present context, however, we are seeking the appearance of the Spiritual Community in the preparatory period and are thereby implying that where there is the impact of the Spiritual Presence and therefore revelation (and salvation) there must also be the Spiritual Community. If, on the other hand, the appearance of the Christ is the central manifestation of the divine Spirit, the Spiritual Community's appearance in the period of preparation must differ from its appearance in the period of reception. I propose to describe this difference as that between the Spiritual Community in its latency and in its manifestation.

The terms "latent" and "manifest" church have been used by me for many years, and they have been both accepted and rejected quite frequently. Sometimes they were confused with the classical distinction

between the invisible and the visible church. But the two distinctions overlap. The qualities invisible and visible must be applied to the church both in its latency and in its manifestation. The distinction between the Spiritual Community and the churches suggested here may be helpful in avoiding possible confusions between latency and invisibility. It is the Spiritual Community that is latent before an encounter with the central revelation and manifest after such an encounter. This "before" and "after" has a double meaning. It points to the world-historical event, the "basic *kairos*," which has established the center of history once for all, and it refers to the continually recurring and derivative *kairoi* in which a religious cultural group has an existential encounter with the central event. "Before" and "after" in connection with the Spiritual Community's latency and manifestation refer directly to the second sense of the words and only indirectly to the first.

The concrete occasion for the distinction between the latent and the manifest church comes with the encounter of groups outside the organized churches who show the power of the New Being in an impressive way. There are youth alliances, friendship groups, educational, artistic, and political movements, and, even more obviously, individuals without any visible relation to each other in whom the Spiritual Presence's impact is felt, although they are indifferent or hostile to all overt expressions of religion. They do not belong to a church, but they are not excluded from the Spiritual Community. It is impossible to deny this if one looks at the manifold instances of profanization and demonization of the Spiritual Presence in those groups-the churches-which claim to be the Spiritual Community. Certainly the churches are not excluded from the Spiritual Community, but neither are their secular opponents. The churches represent the Spiritual Community in a manifest religious self-expression, whereas the others represent the Spiritual Community in secular latency. The term "latent" comprises a negative and a positive element. Latency is the state of being partly actual, partly potential; one cannot attribute latency to that which is merely potential, for example, the reception of Jesus as the Christ by those who have not yet encountered him. In the state of latency, there must be actualized elements and elements not actualized. And this is just what characterizes the latent Spiritual Community. There is the Spiritual Presence's impact in faith and love; but the ultimate criterion of both faith and love, the transcendent union of unambiguous life as it is manifest in the faith and the love

of the Christ, is lacking. Therefore the Spiritual Community in its latency is open to profanization and demonization without an ultimate principle of resistance, whereas the Spiritual Community organized as a church has the principle of resistance in itself and is able to apply it self-critically, as in the movements of prophetism and Reformation.

It was the latency of the Spiritual Community under the veil of Christian humanism which led to the concept of latency, but the concept proved to possess a wider relevance. It could be applied to the whole history of religion (which is in most cases identical with the history of culture).

There is a latent Spiritual Community in the assembly of the people of Israel, in the schools of the prophets, in the community of the temple, in the synagogues in Palestine and the Diaspora, and in the medieval and modern synagogues. There is a latent Spiritual Community in the Islamic devotional communities, in the mosques and theological schools, and in the mystical movements of Islam. There is a latent Spiritual Community in the communities worshiping the great mythological gods, in esoteric priestly groups, in the mystery cults of the later ancient world, and in the half-scientific, half-ritual communities of the Greek philosophical schools. There is a latent Spiritual Community in classical mysticism in Asia and Europe and in the monastic and half-monastic groups to which the mystical religions gave rise. The impact of the Spiritual Presence, and therefore of the Spiritual Community, is in all of these and many others. There are elements of faith in the sense of being grasped by an ultimate concern, and there are elements of love in the sense of a transcendent reunion of the separated. The Spiritual Community, however, is still latent. The ultimate criterion, the faith and love of the Christ, has not yet appeared to these groups-whether they existed before or after the years **1** to 30. As a consequence of their lack of this criterion, such groups are unable to actualize a radical self-negation and self-transformation as it is present as reality and symbol in the Cross of Christ. This means that they are teleologically related to the Spiritual Community in its manifestation; they are unconsciously driven toward the Christ, even though they reject him when he is brought to them through the preaching and actions of the Christian churches. In their opposition to this form of his appearance, they may represent the Spiritual Community better than the churches, at least in some respects. They may become critics of the

churches in the name of the Spiritual Community, and this is true even of such anti-religious and anti-Christian movements as world communism. Not even communism could live if it were devoid of all elements of the Spiritual Community. Even world communism is teleologically related to the Spiritual Community.

It is most important for the practice of the Christian ministry, especially in its missionary activities toward those both within and without the Christian culture, to consider pagans, humanists, and Jews as members of the latent Spiritual Community and not as complete strangers who are invited into the Spiritual Community from outside. This insight serves as a powerful weapon against ecclesiastical and hierarchical arrogance.

c) *The marks of the Spiritual* Community.-Latent or manifest, the Spiritual Community is the community of the New Being. It is created by the divine Spirit as manifest in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. This origin determines its character: it is the community of faith and love. The several qualities inherent in its character demand special consideration for their own sake and because they furnish the criteria for describing and judging the churches, for the churches are both the actualization and the distortion of the Spiritual Community.

As the community of the New Being the Spiritual Community is a community of faith. The term "community of faith" indicates the tension between the faith of the individual member and the faith of the community as a whole. It is of the nature of the Spiritual Community that this tension does not lead to a break (as it does in the churches). The Spiritual Presence by which the individual is grasped in the act of faith transcends individual conditions, beliefs, and expressions of faith. It unites him with the God who can grasp men through all these conditions but who does not restrict himself to any one of them. The Spiritual Community contains an indefinite variety of expressions of faith and does not exclude any of them. It is open in all directions because it is based on the central manifestation of the Spiritual Presence. It is faith, nevertheless, overcoming the infinite gap between the infinite and the finite; it is in every moment fragmentary, a partial anticipation of the transcendent union of unambiguous life. Unambiguous itself, it is the criterion for the faith of the churches, conquering their ambiguities. The Spiritual Community is holy, participating through faith in the holiness of the Divine Life; and it gives holiness to the religious com-

munities, i.e., the churches, of which it is the invisible Spiritual essence.

As the community of the New Being, the Spiritual Community is a community of love. As the Spiritual Community contains the tension between the faith of the individual members, with their indefinite variety of experiences, and that of the community, so it contains the tension between the indefinite variety of love relations and the ***agape*** which unites being with being in the transcendent union of unambiguous life. And as the variety of conditions of faith does not lead to a break with the faith of the community, so the variety of love relations does not prevent ***agape*** from uniting the separated centers in the transcendent union of unambiguous life. Nevertheless, it is multidimensional love, fragmentary in view of the separation of everything from everything else in time and space, but an anticipation of the perfect union in Eternal Life. As such it is the criterion of the love within the churches, unambiguous in its essence, conquering their ambiguities. The Spiritual Community is holy, participating through love in the holiness of the divine life, and it gives holiness to the religious communities-the churches-of which it is the invisible Spiritual essence.

The unity and universality of the Spiritual Community follow from its character as a community of faith and love. Its unity expresses the fact that the tension between the indefinite variety of the conditions of faith does not lead to a break with the faith of the community. The Spiritual Community can stand the diversities of psychological and sociological structures, of historical development, and of preferences as to symbols and devotional and doctrinal forms. This unity is not without tensions, but it is without break. It is fragmentary and anticipatory because of the limits of time and space, but it is unambiguous and, as such, the criterion for the unity of the religious groups, the churches of which the Spiritual Community is the invisible Spiritual essence. This unity is another expression of the Spiritual Community's holiness, which participates in the holiness of the Divine Life.

The universality of the Spiritual Community expresses the fact that the tension between the indefinite variety of love relations and the ***agape*** which unites being with being in the transcendent union of unambiguous life does not lead to a break between them. The Spiritual Community can stand the diversity of the qualities of love. There is no conflict in it between agape and *eros*, between agape and *philia*, between agape and ***libido.*** There are tensions, as there are implicitly in every

dynamic process. The dynamics of all life, even the unambiguous life of the transcendent union, implies tensions. But only in the estrangement of ambiguous life do the tensions become conflicts. Agape, in the Spiritual Community, is not only itself united with the other qualities of love; it also creates unity among them. As a consequence, the immense diversity of beings with regard to sex, age, race, nation, tradition, and character-typological as well as individual-does not prevent their participation in the Spiritual Community. The figurative statement that all men are children of the same father is not incorrect, but it has a hollow sound, because it suggests mere potentiality. The real question is whether, in spite of the existential estrangement of the children of God from God and from each other, participation in a transcendent union is possible. This question is answered in the Spiritual Community and by the working of ***agape*** as a manifestation of the Spirit in it.

As is the case with faith, love, and unity in the Spiritual Community, its quality of universality is also unambiguous, albeit fragmentary and anticipatory. The limits of finitude restrict the actual universality in every moment of time and at every point of space. The Spiritual Community is not the Kingdom of God in ultimate fulfilment. It is actual in the religious communities as their invisible Spiritual essence and the criterion of their ambiguous life. Nevertheless, the Spiritual Community is holy, because it participates through its universality in the holiness of the Divine Life.

d) The Spiritual Community and the unity of religion, culture, and morality.-The transcendent union of unambiguous life in which the Spiritual Community participates includes the unity of the three functions of life under the dimensions of the spirit-religion, culture, and morality. This unity is pre-formed in man's essential nature, disrupted under the conditions of existence, and recreated by the Spiritual Presence in the Spiritual Community as it struggles with the ambiguities of life in religious and secular groups.

There is no religion as a special function in the Spiritual Community. Of the two concepts of religion, the narrower and the broader, the narrower does not apply to the Spiritual Community, for all acts of man's spiritual life are grasped by the Spiritual Presence. In biblical terms: There is no temple in the fulfilled Kingdom of God, for "now at last God has his dwelling among men! He will dwell among them and they

shall be his people, and God himself will be with them." The Spiritual Presence which creates the Spiritual Community does not create a separate entity in terms of which it must be received and expressed; rather, it grasps all reality, every function, every situation. It is the "depth" of all cultural creations and places them in a vertical relation to their ultimate ground and aim. There are no religious symbols in the Spiritual Community because the encountered reality is in its totality symbolic of the Spiritual Presence, and there are no religious acts because every act is an act of self-transcendence. Thus, the essential relation between religion and culture-that "culture is the form of religion and religion the substance of culture"-is realized in the Spiritual Community. Although unambiguous, however, it is not without its dynamics and tensions; therefore, similarly to the other characteristics of the Spiritual Community, it is fragmentary and anticipatory. The biblical vision of the holy city without a temple is the vision of ultimate fulfilment; but as such it is also a description of the holy community in anticipation and fragmentary realization. The temporal process and the limited field of consciousness prevent the universal mutual inherence of cultural creation and religious self-transcendence. The alternating prevalence of one or the other cannot be avoided, but this spatial and temporal disparity does not necessitate mutual exclusion of a qualitative character. Such exclusion occurs in the separation of religion from culture and in the consequent ambiguities of the religious and cultural life. The unambiguous, though fragmentary, union of religion and culture in the Spiritual Community is the criterion of the religious and cultural communities and the hidden power within them which struggles against separation and ambiguity.

Although religion in the narrower sense is lacking in the Spiritual Community, religion in the broader sense is united with morality in an unambiguous way. We have defined morality as the constitution of the person as person in the encounter with the other person. If religion in the narrower sense is separated from morality, both are forced to defend their mutual independence: morality must defend its autonomous character against religious commandments imposed on it from outside, as, for example, Kant did in a monumental way, and religion must defend itself against attempts to explain it as an illusionary support of or a destructive interference with autonomous morals, as Schleiermacher did most impressively. There is no such conflict in the Spiritual Community. Religion, in the sense of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence, presupposes self-establishment of the person in the moral act-the condition of everything spiritual and Spiritual in man. The term "Spiritual Community" itself points to the personal-communal character in which the New Being appears. It could not appear in any other character, and it would destroy itself if it imposed religious commands that were external to the act of moral self-constitution, This possibility is excluded from the Spiritual Community because religion in the narrower sense is excluded from it. On the other hand, the unity of religion and morals expresses itself in the character of morals in the Spiritual Community. Morals in the Spiritual Community are "theonomous" in a twofold sense. If we ask for the source of the unconditional character of the moral imperative, we must give the following answer: that the moral imperative is unconditional because it expresses man's essential being. Affirming what we essentially are and being obedient to the moral imperative are one and the same act. But one could ask: Why should one a&m one's essential being rather than destroy one's self? The answer to this must be that the person becomes aware of his infinite value or, ontologically expressed, of his belonging to the transcendent union of unambiguous life which is the Divine Life; this awareness occurs under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. The act of faith and the act of accepting the moral imperative's unconditional character are one and the same act.

If we ask the question of the moral imperative's motivating power, the answer in light of the Spiritual Community is not the law but the Spiritual Presence, which, in relation to the moral imperative, is grace. The moral act, the act of personal self-constitution in the encounter with other persons, is based on participation in the transcendent union. This participation makes the moral act possible. By its Spiritual impact, the preceding transcendent union creates the actual union of the centered person with itself, the encountered world, and the ground of self and world, It is the quality of "preceding" that characterizes the Spiritual impact as grace: and nothing establishes the moral personality and community but the transcendent union which manifests itself in the Spiritual Community as grace. The self-establishment of a person as person without grace leaves the person to the ambiguities of the law. Morality in the Spiritual Community is determined by grace.

Nevertheless, the unity of religion and morality remains fragmentary, for it has temporal and spatial limits; and it remains anticipatory because it does not embrace the whole field of person-to-person relations.

Even the personality and community under grace, subject to the impact of the Spiritual Presence, is not the fulfilled personality and community. Yet these are the criteria of moral self-establishment in religious and secular persons and groups. The "ethics of the Kingdom of God" is the measure of the ethics in the churches and in society.

The unity of religion with culture and morality implies the unity of culture with morality. This applies first to the content which morality receives from culture. The unconditional character of the moral imperative does not yield the content of the imperative. The ethical content is a product of culture and shares all the relativities of cultural creativity. Its relativity has but one limit, and that is the act of the constitution of the personal self in the person-to-person encounter; and this has already led us to more than a merely abstract acknowledgment-to the multidimensional love which affirms the other one in an act of reunion. In it the moral imperative and the ethical content come together and constitute the theonomous morals of the Spiritual Community. Love is continually subject to change while remaining identical with itself as love. In the Spiritual Community there are no tables of commandments besides the Spiritual Presence, which creates love and which may also create documents of the wisdom of love (as the Decalogue). But these documents are not ethical law books. Love decides at every moment as to their validity and their application to the particular case. In this way morality is both dependent on the dynamics of cultural creativity and independent of it through the love which is created by the Spiritual Presence. The New Being unites morality and culture by participation in the transcendent union of unambiguous life.

Yet this unity, though unambiguous, is fragmentary and anticipatory, owing to the finitude of the individuals and groups who are its moral agents. Every moral decision imposed by the Spirit excludes other possible decisions. This does not mean that love's action is ambiguous but that every act of love is fragmentary, able merely to anticipate an ultimate-that is, an all-embracing-fulfilment. Nevertheless, this unity of morality and culture is the criterion of the moral-cultural situation in all religious and secular communities. It is, at the same time, the hidden Spiritual power within them which seeks to resolve the ambiguities which follow from the existential separation of morality and culture.

As culture gives content to morality, so morality gives seriousness to culture. The lack of seriousness toward cultural creativity was first called "aestheticism" by Kierkegaard. It is the detached attitude toward

cultural creations that are valued merely for an enjoyment untouched by wos toward the creation itself. This attitude should not be confused with the element of play in cultural creation and reception. Play is one of the most characteristic expressions of the freedom of the spirit, and there is a seriousness in free playing not to be surpassed by the seriousness of necessary work. Where there is seriousness, there is the unconscious or conscious force of the unconditional character of the moral imperative. A culture which loses this orientation in its creative work becomes shallow and self-destructive, and a morality which establishes itself in opposition as "withdrawal to seriousness" negates its own seriousness by an empty personal and communal self-constitution, as in the case of a culture-defying moralism. In both cases it is lack of a uniting love which produces the conflict. In the Spiritual Community there is no aestheticist detachment; there is the seriousness of those who seek to experience the ultimate in being and meaning through every cultural form and task. The seriousness of moral self-integration and the richness of cultural self-creation are united in the Spiritual Presence, which answers the self-transcending drive in culture and morality. The conflict between the irresponsible enjoyment of cultural forms and activities and the attitude of moral superiority over culture assumed in the name of seriousness has no place in the Spiritual Community. But the tension out of which such a conflict arises does have its place, for although there is genuine unity of culture and morality in the theonomy of the Spiritual Community, it exists fragmentarily and by anticipation. The limits of human finitude prevent an all-embracing seriousness and an all-embracing cultural eros. Yet even within these limits the unity of moral seriousness and cultural openness is the criterion for the relation of morality to culture in all religious and secular groups. It is the Spiritual power that struggles against the ambiguities which follow the separation of morality and culture.

This description of the Spiritual Community shows it to be both as manifest and hidden as the New Being in all its expressions. It is as manifest and as hidden as the central manifestation of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ; it is as manifest and as hidden as the Spiritual Presence which creates New Being in the history of mankind and, indirectly, in the universe as a whole. This is the reason for the use of the term "Spiritual Community," for every thing Spiritual is manifest in hiddenness. It is open only to faith as the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. As we have said before: Only Spirit discerns Spirit.

III

THE DIVINE SPIRIT AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF LIFE

A. THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF RELIGION

1. The Spiritual Community, the Church, and the Churches

a) The ontological character of the Spiritual Community.-The term "Spiritual Community" has been used to characterize sharply that element in the concept of the church which is called the "body of Christ" by the New Testament and the "church invisible or Spiritual" by the Reformation. In the previous discussion this element has sometimes been called the "invisible essence of the religious communities." Such a statement implies that the Spiritual Community is not a group existing beside other groups but rather a power and a structure inherent and effective in such groups, that is, in religious communities. If they are consciously based on the appearance of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, these groups are called churches. If they have other foundations, they are called synagogues, temple congregations, mystery groups, monastic groups, cult groups, movements. In so far as they are determined by an ultimate concern, the Spiritual Community is effective in its hidden power and structure in all such groups. In the language of the New Testament, the manifestation of the Spiritual Community in the Christian church is described in the following way: The church in New Testament Greek is *ecclesia*, the assembly of those who are called out of all nations by the *apostoloi*, the messengers of the Christ, to the congregation of the *eleutheroi*, those who have become free citizens of the "Kingdom of the Heavens." There is a "church," an "assembly of God" (or the Christ), in every town in which the message has been successful and a Christian *koinonia*, or communion, has come into being. But there is also the over-all unity of these local assemblies in the Church universal, by virtue of which the particular groups become churches (local, provincial, national, or after the split of the Church universal,

denominational). The Church universal, as well as the particular churches included in it, is seen in a double aspect as the "body of Christ," on the one hand-a Spiritual reality-and as a social group of individual Christians on the other. In the first sense, they show all the characteristics which we have attributed to the Spiritual Community in the preceding chapters: in the second sense, all the ambiguities of religion, culture, and morality that were already discussed in connection with the ambiguities of life in general are present.

For the sake of semantic clarification, we have used the term "Spiritual Community" as an equivalent of "the church" (as the body of Christ), avoiding the term "the Church" (with a capital "C") completely. Of course, this term cannot be removed from liturgical language; but systematic theology has the right to use non-biblical and nonecclesiastical terms, if such use serves to free the genuine meanings of the traditional terms from confusing connotations which obscure their meaning. When the reformers distinguished sharply between the invisible and the visible church they did the same thing. They also had to resist dangerous and even demonic distortions of the true meaning of "church" and "churches."

It cannot be denied, however, that a new terminology, though helpful in one respect, may produce new confusions in another. This has certainly been the case in the distinction between the church visible and invisible, and it might happen to the distinction between the Spiritual Community and the churches. In the first case, the confusion is that the "church invisible" is understood as a reality beside the Church visible or, more precisely, beside the visible churches. But in the thought of the reformers, there was no invisible church alongside the historical churches. The invisible church is the Spiritual essence of the visible church; like everything Spiritual, it is hidden, but it determines the nature of the visible church. In the same way the Spiritual Community does not exist as an entity beside the churches, but it is their Spiritual essence, effective in them through its power, its structure, and its fight against their ambiguities.

To the question of the logical-ontological character of the Spiritual Community, one can answer that it is essentiality determining existence and being resisted by existence. Two mistakes must be avoided here. One is the interpretation of the Spiritual Community as an ideal-as against the reality of the churches-that is, as constructed from the posi-

tive elements in the ambiguities of religion and projected onto the screen of transcendence. This image creates the expectation that the actual churches will progress toward an approximation of this ideal picture of the Spiritual Community. But this raises the question: What justifies such an expectation? Or more concretely, Where do the churches get' the power of establishing and actualizing such an ideal? The familiar answer is that they get it from the divine Spirit, working in the church. But this answer leads to the further question as to the way in which the divine Spirit is present. How does the Spirit use the word and the sacrament as media of his creative work? How can faith be created, except by the power of faith; and love, except by the power of love? Essential power must precede actualization. In biblical terms one would say that the church as the Body of Christ, or as the Spiritual Temple, is the New Creation into which the individual Christian and the particular church is taken. This kind of thinking is more strange to our time than it was to most periods in the history of the church, including the Reformation. But it is certainly biblical thinking, and as long as the churches affirm that Jesus is the Christ, the mediator of the New Being, it is theologically necessary.

However, there is another danger to be avoided, and that is a kind of Platonism or mythological literalism which interprets the Spiritual Community as an assembly of so-called Spiritual beings, angelic hierarchies, saints and the saved from all periods and countries, represented on earth by ecclesiastical hierarchies and sacraments. This idea is in the line of Greek Orthodox thinking. Whatever its symbolic truth may be, it is not what we have called the Spiritual Community. The "heavenly assembly of God" is a supranaturalistic counterpart to the earthly assembly of God, the church, but it is not this quality in the churches which makes them churches-it is their invisible, essential Spirituality.

This calls for a category to be used in interpreting reality which is neither realistic nor idealistic nor supranaturalistic but essentialistic-a category pointing to the power of the essential behind and within the existential. This analysis holds true of every life process : everywhere, the essential is one of the determining powers. Its power is not causal but directive. One could call it teleological, but this word has been misused in the sense of a further causality, which certainly must be rejected by both science and philosophy. And yet, it would be possible to say that

the Spiritual Community is the inner *telos* of the churches and that as such it is the source of everything which makes them churches.

This essentialistic interpretation of the Spiritual Community can give to theology a category which is most adequate to interpret the unambiguous life as Eternal Life, for Spiritual life is Eternal Life in anticipation.

b) The paradox of the churches. - The paradox of the churches is the fact that they participate, on the one hand, in the ambiguities of life in general and of the religious life in particular and, on the other hand, in the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community. The first consequence of this is that whenever they are interpreted and judged the churches must be seen under two aspects. The awareness of this necessity has been expressed in the distinction between the church invisible and visible, to which we have already referred. As long as one who uses these terms is aware that he does not speak of two churches but of two aspects of one church in time and space, this terminology is possible and even unavoidable, for it is necessary to emphasize the invisible character of the Spiritual Community, which is the essential power in every actual church. If, however, these terms are so abused as to suggest two distinct churches, the result is either a devaluation of the empirical church here and now or an ignoring of the invisible church as an irrelevant ideal. Both consequences have characterized many phases of Protestantism's history. The first consequence has appeared in certain types of Spirit-movements, the second in liberal Protestantism.

Therefore, it might be useful to speak in an epistemological language of the sociological and the theological aspects of the church (meaning every particular church in time and space). Every church is a sociological reality. As such it is subject to the laws which determine the life of social groups with all their ambiguities. The sociologists of religion are justified in conducting these inquiries in the same way as the sociologists of law, of the arts, and of the sciences. They rightly point to the social stratification within the churches, to the rise and fall of elites, to power struggles and the destructive weapons used in them, to the conflict between freedom and organization, to aristocratic esotericism in contrast to democratic exotericism, and so forth. Seen in this light, the history of the churches is a secular history with all the disintegrating, destructive, and tragic-demonic elements which make historical life as ambiguous as all other life processes. If this aspect is looked at to the exclusion

of the other, one can deal with the churches polemically or apologetically. If the intention is polemical (often born of undiscerning expectations and the disappointments which inevitably ensue), the rather miserable reality of concrete churches is emphasized and this reality is compared with their claim to embody the Spiritual Community. The church at the street corner hides the church Spiritual from view.

If, conversely, the churches as sociological realities are cited for apologetic purposes, they are valued because of their social significance. They are praised as the largest and most effective social agencies dedicated to the enhancement of the good life. People are asked to join the churches, at least for a try, for the sake of psychological security, for example, and to participate in the work of helping others toward the same goal. In light of this view, the history of the churches is told as the history of humanity's progress. Of course, on this basis the churches' critics can point to the reactionary, superstitious, and inhuman impact of the churches on Western civilization, and this they have done with tremendous success. This contrast shows that judging the churches from the point of view of their sociological functions and their social influence, past or present, is utterly inadequate. A church which is nothing more than a benevolent, socially useful group can be replaced by other groups not claiming to be churches; such a church has no justification for its existence.

The other view of the churches is the theological. It does not refuse to recognize the sociological aspect, but it does deny its exclusive validity. The theological view points, within the ambiguities of the social reality of the churches, to the presence of the unambiguous Spiritual Community.

However, a danger, similar to that found with respect to the sociological view, threatens and distorts the theological: exclusiveness. Of course, the theological view cannot be exclusive in the sense that it simply denies the existence of the sociological characteristics of the churches and their ambiguities. But it can deny their significance for the Spiritual nature of the church. This is the official Roman Catholic doctrine, according to which the Roman church is a sacred reality above the sociological ambiguities of past and present. Church history, from this point of view, becomes sacred history, elevated above all other history in spite of the fact that the disintegrating, destructive, and demonic features of life are shown in it as strongly, and often even more strongly, than in secular

history. This makes it impossible to criticize the Roman church in essentials-in doctrine, ethics, hierarchical organization, and so forth. Since the Roman church identifies its historical existence with the Spiritual Community, every attack on it (often even on nonessentials) is felt as an attack on the Spiritual Community and consequently on the Spirit itself. This is one of the main roots both of hierarchical arrogance and, in opposition to it, of anti-ecclesiastical and antihierarchical movements. The Roman church tries to ignore the ambiguities of its life and to submerge the church's sociological character in its theological character, but the relation of the two is paradoxical and cannot be understood either by eliminating the one or by subjecting the one to the other.

The churches' paradoxical character is evident in the way in which the marks of the Spiritual Community are taken as marks of the churches. Each of them can be ascribed to the churches only with the addition of "in spite of." We refer to the predicates of holiness, unity, and universality. (Faith and love will be discussed in connection with the life of the churches and the fight against its ambiguities.)

The churches are holy because of the holiness of their foundation, the New Being, which is present in them. Their holiness cannot be derived from the holiness of their institutions, doctrines, ritual and devotional activities, or ethical principles; all these are among the ambiguities of religion. Nor can the churches' holiness be derived from the holiness of their members; the churches' members are holy in spite of their actual unholiness, in so far as they want to belong to the church and have received what the church has received, i.e., the ground on which they are accepted in spite of their unholiness. The holiness of the churches and of Christians is not a matter of empirical judgment but rather of faith in the working of the New Being within them. One could say that a church is holy because it is a community of those who are justified through faith by grace-and the churches do indeed pronounce this message as "good news" to their members. However, this message is also valid for the churches themselves. The churches living in the ambiguities of religion are, at the same time, holy. They are holy because they stand under the negative and the positive judgments of the Cross.

This is just the point at which the gap between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism seems unbridgeable. The Roman church accepts (at least in principle) critical judgment of each of its members, including the "vicar of Christ," the pope himself, but it does not accept critical

judgment of itself as an institution, of its doctrinal decisions, ritual traditions, moral principles, and hierarchical structure. It judges on the basis of its institutional perfection, but this basis itself is not judged. Protestantism cannot accept the predicate of holiness for its churches, if it is based on any kind of institutional perfection. The holy church is the distorted church, and this means every church in time and space.

If, as under Pope John XXIII through the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic church revives the principle of reformation within itself, the question remains as to how far such a reformation can go. Pope John gave the first answer unmistakably : the doctrinal decisions of councils and popes are the unchangeable basis of the Catholic church. And the doctrinal decisions include statements concerning the hierarchical structure and the ethical system of the church. But there is a second answer, such as that given by Cardinal Bea, to the effect that, although the doctrines themselves are unchangeable, their interpretation must change. Only the future can show to what degree the principle of reformation will become effective within the Roman church through an interpretation under the guidance of the prophetic Spirit.

Nevertheless, the churches are embodiments of the New Being and creations of the Spiritual Presence, and their essential power is the Spiritual Community, which works toward unambiguous life through their ambiguities. Nor is this work without effect. There is regenerative power in the churches, even in their most miserable state. As long as they are churches and related in reception and reaction to the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, the Spiritual Presence works in them, and symptoms of this work can always be seen. This is the case most conspicuously in the movements of prophetic criticism and reformation to which we have already referred. It is generic to the churches' holiness that they have the principle of reformation within themselves: the churches are holy, but they are so in terms of an "in spite of" or as a paradox.

Unity is the second predicate of the churches which expresses the paradox of their nature. The churches are united because of the unity of their foundation, the New Being which is effective in them. But the churches' unity cannot be derived from their actual unity, nor can the predicate of unity be denied because of their present disunity. The predicate is independent of these empirical realities and possibilities. It is identical with the dependence of any actual church on the Spiritual

Community as its essence in power and structure. This is true of every particular local denominational and confessional church which is related to the event of the Christ as its foundation. The unity of the church is real in each of them in spite of the fact that all of them are separated from each other.

This contradicts the Roman Catholic church's claim to represent in its particularity the unity of the church and its'rejection of any other group which claims to be a church. A consequence of this absolutism was that Rome prohibited co-operation of a purely religious kind with other Christian churches. In spite of some relaxation in this attitude, it expresses the Roman understanding of the church's unity, which could only be changed if the Roman church gave 'up its absolute claim and with it its own peculiar character.

Protestantism is aware of the paradoxical character of the predicate of unity. It considers the division of the churches as unavoidable in light of the ambiguities of religion but not as something which contradicts their unity with respect to the churches' foundation-their essential unity, which is paradoxically present in their ambiguous mixture of unity and disunity.

The fight against this ambiguity is waged in the power of the Spiritual Community, to which unambiguous unity belongs. It is manifest in all attempts to reunite the manifest churches and to draw what we have called the "latent churches" into this union. The most conspicuous of these attempts in our period is the work of the World Council of Churches. The ecumenical movement of which it is the organized representative powerfully expresses the awareness of the predicate of unity in many contemporary churches. In practical terms it is able to heal divisions which have become historically obsolete, to replace confessional fanaticism by interconfessional co-operation, to conquer denominational provincialism, and to produce a new vision of the unity of all churches in their foundation. But neither the ecumenical nor any other future movement can conquer the ambiguity of unity and division in the churches' historical existence. Even if it were able to produce the United Churches of the World, and even if all latent churches were converted to this unity, new divisions would appear. The dynamics of life, the tendency to preserve the holy even when it has become obsolete, the ambiguities implied in the sociological existence of the churches, and above all, the prophetic criticism and demand for reformation

would bring about new and, in many cases, Spiritually justified divisions. The unity of the churches, similar to their holiness, has a paradoxical character. It is the divided church which is the united church.

Universality is the third predicate of the churches which expresses the paradox of their nature., The churches are universal because of the universality of their foundation-the New Being which is effective in them. The word "universal" replaces the classic word "catholic" (that which concerns all men), because since the split produced by the Reformation the latter word has generally been reserved for the Roman church or for such strongly sacramental churches as the Greek Orthodox and the Anglican. Although the word must be replaced, the fact yet remains that a church which does not claim catholicity has ceased to be a church.

Every church is universal-both intensively and extensively-because of its nature of actualizing the Spiritual Community. The intensive universality of the church is its power and desire to participate as church in everything created under all dimensions of life. Of course, such participation implies judgment of and fight against the ambiguities of life in the encountered realms of being. The predicate of intensive universality keeps the churches wide open-as wide as life universal. Nothing that is created and, therefore, essentially good is excluded from the life of the churches and their members. This is the meaning of the principle of the ***complexio oppositorum,*** of which the Roman church is rightly proud. There is nothing in nature, nothing in man, and nothing in history which does not have a place in the Spiritual Community and, therefore, in the churches of which the Spiritual Community is the dynamic essence. This is classically expressed in both the medieval cathedrals and the scholastic systems, in which all dimensions of being found their place, and even the demonic, the ugly, and the destructive appeared in a subdued role. The danger of this universality, of course, was that elements of ambiguity entered the life of the church, or, symbolically speaking, that the demonic revolted against its role of subjection to the divine. This danger induced Protestantism to replace the abundance of the ***complexio oppositorum*** by the poverty of sacred emptiness (in this point following Judaism and Islam). In doing so, Protestantism did not reject the principle of universality, because there can be a universality of emptiness as well as a universality of abundance. The predicate of universality is violated only if one of many possibilities is elevated to an absolute position and the other elements are excluded. When this

happens the principle of universality disappears from the churches and is realized in the secular world. The fact that during the Reformation and Counter Reformation the churches largely cut themselves off from the universality of abundance and even of emptiness is partly responsible for the rise of a wide-open secularism in the modern world.The churches had become but segments of life and had lost their participation in life universal. Yet, however positive or negative the churches' attitude toward the predicate of universality, they are essentially universal in spite of their actual poverty in relation to the abundance of the encountered world. They may include music but exclude the visual arts; they may include work but exclude natural vitality; they may include philosophical analysis but exclude metaphysics; they may include particular styles of all cultural creations and exclude other styles. However universal they try to be, the universality of the churches is paradoxically present in their particularity.

All this is said about the intensive universality of the churches; but it is also valid of their extensive universality-that is, the validity of the church's foundation for all nations, social groups, races, tribes, and cultures. As the New Testament shows, this extensive universality is an immediate implication of the acceptance of Jesus as the bringer of the New Being. The tremendous emphasis which Paul places on this point is caused by his own experience as a Diaspora Jew who unites in himself Jewish, Greek, and Roman elements, as well as the syncretism of the Hellenistic period, and who brings all this into the church in himself and his congregation. The analogous situation in our time, stemming from national, racial, and cultural problems, forces contemporary theology to emphasize the universality of the churches as strongly as did Paul.

But there never is actual universality in the churches. The predicate of universality cannot be derived from the actual situation. In light of the historically conditioned particularity-even of the world churches and their councils-universality is paradoxical. Greek Orthodoxy identifies the universal Spiritual Community with the reception of the Christian message by Byzantine culture. Rome identifies the universal Spiritual Community with the church, ruled by the canonic law and its guardian, the pope. Protestantism shows its particularity by trying to subject foreign religions and cultures to contemporary Western civilization in the name of the universal Spiritual Community. And in many cases racial, social, and national particularities prevent the churches

from actualizing the predicate of universality. Quantitative or extensive universality, like qualitative or intensive, is a paradoxical predicate of the churches. As was the case with respect to holiness and unity, we must also say of the churches' universality that it is present in their particularity. And it is certainly not without effect: since the earliest period, all churches have tried to overcome the ambiguity of universality, both intensively and extensively (often the two are identical).

It is one of the most regrettable traits of Protestant theology in the last hundred years that it has been conquered by a positivistic trend, of which Schleiermacher and Ritschl are examples. Positivism in theology is the resignation of the predicate of universality. That which is merely "positive," for example, a particular Christian church, cannot be considered universal. This is only possible if universality is conceived of as paradoxically present in the particular.

The ordinary layman who hears or confesses the words of the Apostles' Creed about the holiness, unity, and universality of the church often understands the paradox of the churches without the concept of the Spiritual Community. He is aware of the paradoxical meaning of those words as applied to the churches from his knowledge of his own. Usually he is even realistic enough to reject the idea that one day in the future these predicates will lose their paradoxical character and become empirically true. He knows the churches and their members (including himself) sufficiently to dismiss such utopian expectations. Nevertheless he is grasped by the power of the words in which the unambiguous side of the Church, the Spiritual Community, is expressed.

2. The Life of the Churches and the Struggle against the Ambiguities of Religion

a) Faith and love in the life of the churches

(1) THE SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCHES AS COMMUNITIES OF FAITH.—The Spiritual Community is the community of faith and love, participating in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. The participation is fragmentary because of the finitude of life, and it is not without tensions because of the polarity of individualization and participation, which is never absent from any finite being. The Spiritual Community as the dynamic essence of the churches makes them existing communities of faith and love in which the ambiguities of religion are not eliminated but are conquered in principle. The phrase "in principle" does not mean *in abstracto* but means (as do the Latin and Greek words *principium* and *arche*) the power of beginning, which remains the controlling power in a whole process. In this sense the Spiritual Presence, the New Being, and the Spiritual Community are principles (*archai*). The ambiguities of the religious life are conquered in principle in the churches' life; their self-destructive force is broken. They are not completely eliminated-they may even be present in demonic strength-but as Paul says in Romans, chapter 8, and other places: The appearance of the New Being overcomes the ultimate power of the demonic "structures of destruction." The ambiguities of religion in the churches are conquered by unambiguous life in so far as they embody the New Being. But this "in so far" warns us against identifying the churches with the unambiguous life of the transcendent union. Where the church is, there is a point at which the ambiguities of religion are recognized and rejected but not removed.

This is first of all true of the act in which the Spiritual Presence is received and the New Being actualized, the act of faith. Faith becomes religion in the churches-ambiguous, disintegrating, destructive, tragic, and demonic. But at the same time, there is a power of resistance against the manifold distortions of faith-the divine Spirit and its embodiment, the Spiritual Community. If we call the churches or any particular church a community of faith, we say that, according to its intention, it is founded on the New Being in Jesus as the Christ or that its dynamic essence is the Spiritual Community.

In discussing the Spiritual Community we indicated that there is a tension between the faith of those who are grasped by the Spiritual Presence and the faith of the community which consists of such individuals but is more than each of them and more than their totality. In the Spiritual Community this tension does not result in a break. In the churches a break is presupposed and leads to the ambiguities of religion, but it does so in such a way that these ambiguities are resisted and in principle overcome by the participation of the community of the church in the Spiritual Community. When we speak of the faith of the churches or of a particular church, what do we mean? Three aspects of the question must be considered. First, when in the early church individuals decided to enter the church and in doing so risked everything, including their lives, it was not too difficult to speak of the church as a community of faith. But as soon as many entered the church more as a matter of a

religious shelter than as an existential decision, and later, when within a whole civilization everyone, including infants, belonged to the church, its characterization as a community of faith became questionable. The active faith, the *fides qua creditur,* could not be presupposed in most members. What was left was the creedal foundation of the church, the *fides quae creditur.* How are these two related? Whatever the answer, numerous ambiguities of the religious life reappeared, and the concept of faith itself became so ambiguous that there are good (though not sufficient) reasons for not using it at all.

The second difficulty in the concept of the community of faith is rooted in the history of the *fides quae creditur,* the creeds. This history is a typically ambiguous mixture between Spiritual creativity and the social forces which determine history. The social forces here under consideration are ignorance, fanaticism, hierarchical arrogance, and political intrigue. If the churches require that all their faithful members accept the formulas which came into existence in this way, they impose on them a burden which no one who is aware of the situation can honestly carry. It is a demonic and therefore destructive act for the community of faith to be interpreted as unconditional subjection to the doctrinal statements of faith as they have developed in the rather ambiguous history of the churches.

The third difficulty in the concept is the fact that a secular world has established itself which fosters a critical or sceptical or indifferent attitude toward the creedal statements-even among serious members of the churches; What does "community of faith" mean if the community, as well as the personalities of the individual members, is disrupted by criticism and doubt ?

These questions show how powerful the ambiguities of religion are in the churches and how difficult the resistance of faith is.

There is one answer which underlies all parts of the present system and which is the basic content of the Christian faith, and that is that Jesus is the Christ, the bringer of the New Being. There are many possible ways of expressing this assertion, but in a church there is no way of avoiding it. Every church is based upon it. In this sense one can say that a church is a community of those who affirm that Jesus is the Christ. The very name "Christian" implies this. For the individual, this means a decision--not as to whether he, personally, can accept the assertion that Jesus is the Christ, *but* the decision as to whether he wishes to belong or

not to belong to a community which asserts that Jesus is the Christ. If he decides against this, he has left the church, even if, for social or political reasons, he does not formalize his denial. Many formal members in all the churches more or less consciously do not want to belong to the church. The church can tolerate them, because it is not based on individual decisions but on the Spiritual Presence and its media.

In the opposite situation, there are some who unconsciously or consciously want to belong to the church, to such an extent that they cannot imagine not belonging to it, and who are in a state of such doubt about the basic assertion that Jesus is the Christ and its implications that they are on the verge of separating themselves from the church, at least inwardly. In our time, this is the predicament of many people, perhaps even the majority, though in various degrees. They belong to the church, but they doubt whether they belong. For them it must be said that the criterion of one's belonging to a church and through it to the Spiritual Community is the serious desire, conscious or unconscious, to participate in the life of a group which is based on the New Being as it has appeared in Jesus as the Christ. Such an interpretation can help people whose consciences are troubled by misgivings about the whole set of symbols to which they subject themselves in thought, devotion, and action. They can be assured that they fully belong to the church, and through it to the Spiritual Community, and can confidently live in it and work for it.

This solution is valid for all members of the church, including ministers and other representatives, but in the latter case problems of wisdom and tact arise, as in every organized group. It is obvious that one who denies, even tacitly, the basis and the aim of a function he is supposed to exercise must either separate himself from it or be forced out.

The above questions about the community of faith lead to another more difficult problem, especially difficult in light of the Protestant principle. The question is how the community of faith-which a church is supposed to be-is related to its creedal and doctrinal expressions in preaching and teaching and other utterances, especially those made by representatives of the church. This question must be answered in concrete decisions of the concrete church-ideally by the church universal, actually by the manifold centers between it and the local church. The creedal statements result from these decisions. Because it identifies itself with the Spiritual Community, the Roman church considers its creedal decisions unconditionally valid and regards every deviation from

them as an heretical separation from the Spiritual Church. This produces a legally circumscribed reaction of the church against those considered to be heretics-formerly against all such members, today only against representatives of the church. The Protestant doctrine of the ambiguity of religion even in the churches makes such a reaction impossible; nevertheless, even Protestant churches must formulate their own creedal foundation and defend it against attacks from the side of its own representatives. However, a church which is conscious of its own ambiguities must acknowledge that its judgment, whether in pronouncing a creedal statement or in applying it to concrete cases, is itself ambiguous. The church cannot avoid fighting for the community of faith (as in the cases of the Nazi apostasy, the Communist heresy, relapses into Roman Catholic heteronomy, or rejection of the church's foundation in the New Being in the Christ), but in doing so the church may fall into disintegrating, destructive, or even demonic errors. This risk is inherent in the life of any church which puts itself not above but beneath the Cross of the Christ, i.e., in every church in which the prophetic-protestant principle has not been engulfed in hierarchical or doctrinal absolutism.

The question as to whether the affirmation of the church as the community of faith entails the affirmation of the concept of heresy remains. This question is burdened with connotations which the concept of heresy has acquired in the church's development. Originally used for deviations from officially accepted doctrine, the word came to signify, with the establishment of the canonic law, a breach of doctrinal law of the church, and with the acceptance of the canonic law as a part of the state law, it became the most serious criminal offense. The persecution of heretics has obliterated the original justified meaning of the word "heresy" for our conscious, and even more for our unconscious, reactions. It cannot be used in a serious discussion, and I am now convinced that we should not try to save the word, although we cannot avoid the problem to which it points.

The following may be said about the problem itself. The rejection of the foundation of a church, that is, of the Spiritual Community and its manifestation in the Christ, is not a heresy but a separation from the community in which the problem of heresy exists. The problem of heresy arises when the unavoidable attempt is made to formulate the implications of the basic Christian assertion conceptually. From the point of

view of the Protestant principle and the acknowledgment of the ambiguities of religion and in light of the always present latency of the Spiritual Community, one can solve the problem in the following way: the Protestant principle of the infinite distance between the divine and the human undercuts the absolute claim of any doctrinal expression of the New Being. Certainly, a church's decision to base its preaching and teaching on a particular doctrinal tradition or formulation is necessary; but if the decision is accompanied by the claim that it is the only possible one, the Protestant principle is violated. It belongs to the essence of the community of faith in Protestantism that a Protestant church can receive into its thinking and acting every expression of thought and life created by the Spiritual Presence anywhere in the history of mankind. The Roman church was more aware of this situation in its earlier than in its later development, but only since the Counter Reformation has it closed its doors against any doctrinal reappraisal of the past. The prophetic freedom for essential self-criticism was lost. Protestantism, born of the struggle for such freedom, lost it in the period of theological orthodoxy and has recovered it again and again. Yet, with this freedom and in spite of its endless denominational cleavages, Protestantism has remained a community of faith. It is aware, and should always remain aware, of the two realities in which it participates-the Spiritual Community, which is its dynamic essence, and its existence within the ambiguities of religion. Awareness of these two poles of Protestantism underlies the present attempt to develop a theological system.

(2) THE SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCHES AS COMMUNITIES OF LOVE.—At the same time that they are a community of faith the churches are also a community of love, but this must be understood within the ambiguities of religion and the Spirit's struggle with these ambiguities. In his anti-Donatist writings Augustine decides that faith is possible outside the church, for example, in schismatic groups, but that love as agape is restricted to the community of the church. In saying this he presupposes an intellectualistic concept of faith (for example, acceptance of the formula of baptism) which separates faith from love. But if faith is the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence, the two cannot be separated. Yet Augustine is right in considering the church as a community of love. We have discussed the nature of love fully, especially in its quality as agape, in connection with the Spiritual

Community's character. Now we must describe its workings within and against the ambiguities of religion.

As the community of love, the church actualizes the Spiritual Community, which is its dynamic essence. In analyzing the act of the person's moral constitution as person, we found that this can happen only in the ego-thou encounter with the other person and that this encounter can become concrete only in terms of agape, the reuniting affirmation of the other one in terms of the eternal meaning of his being. The presupposition in the church is that every member has such a relation to every other member and that this relation becomes actual in spatial and temporal nearness (the "neighbor" of the New Testament). It expresses itself in mutual acceptance in spite of the separations which take place because the church is a sociologically determined group. This refers to political, social, economic, educational, national, racial, and above all, personal differences, preferences, sympathies, and antipathies. In some churches, such as the first church in Jerusalem and many sectarian groups, the concept "community of love" has led to an "ecstatic communism," a resignation of all differences, especially economic ones. But such an attitude fails to note the distinction between the theological and the sociological character of the church and fails to understand the nature of the latter and therefore of the ambiguities of every community of love. Often it is the ideological imposition of love which produces the most intensive forms of hostility. Like everything else in the nature of the churches, the community of love has the character of "in spite of"; love in the churches manifests the love of the Spiritual Community, but it does so under the condition of the ambiguities of life. A claim for political, social, and economic equality cannot be derived directly from the character of a church as a community. But it does follow from the church's character as a community of love that those forms of inequality which make an actual community of love and even of faith impossible-except for special heroic cases-must be attacked and transformed. This refers to political, social, and economic inequalities and forms of suppression and exploitation which destroy the potentialities for humanity in the individual and for justice in the group. The church's prophetic word must be heard against such forms of inhumanity and injustice, but first of all the church must transform the given social structure within itself. (See "The relating functions of the churches," pp. 212-16.) At the same time it must help the victims of a distorted

social structure and of such forces as sickness and natural catastrophe both to experience the community of love and to attain the material goods which sustain their potentialities as men. This is that part of agape which is called charity and which is as necessary as it is ambiguous. It is ambiguous because it may substitute merely material contributions for the obligation toward human beings as human beings and because it can be used as a means for maintaining the social conditions which make charity necessary, even a thoroughly unjust social order. In contrast, true agape tries to create the conditions which make love possible in the other one. (It is not by chance that this has been declared the principle of psychotherapeutic healing, for example, by Erich Fromm.)

Every act of love implies judgment against that which negates love. The church as the community of love continuously exercises this judgment by its very existence. It exercises it against those outside as well as inside its community, and it must exercise it consciously and actively in both directions, although in doing so it becomes involved in the ambiguities of judging-authority and power. Since the church, in contrast to other groups in society, judges in the name of the Spiritual Community, its judging is in danger of becoming more radical, more fanatical, more destructive and demonic. On the other hand, and for this reason, there is present in the church the Spirit, which judges the church's judging and struggles against its distortions.

In relation to its own members, the church's judging occurs through the media of the Spiritual Presence, through the functions of .the church, and finally through the discipline which in some churches, notably the Calvinistic ones, is considered as a medium of the Spiritual Presence, similar to the Word and the sacrament. Protestantism in general was hesitant about discipline because of its hierarchical and monastic abuses. Protestantism's main objection was to the practice and theory of excommunication. Under the Protestant principle, excommunication is impossible because no religious group has the right to put itself between God and man, either to unite man with God or to cut him off from God. The simple prayer of the excommunicated one may have more Spiritual power and more healing effect than any of the ecclesiastically approved sacraments from which he is excluded. Protestant discipline can consist only of counseling and, in the case of representatives of the church, exclusion from office. The decisive feature of the judging of love is that it has the one purpose of re-establishing the com-

munion of love-not a cutting off, but a reuniting. Even a temporary cutting off makes a wound which can probably never be healed, Such removal may also take the form of social ostracism by the church community. This happens in Protestant churches and can be worse than excommunication in its destructive consequences, for it is an offense against the Spiritual Community and the church. An accommodation of the representatives of a church to social groups which exercise a predominant influence in it is equally, and in the long run more, dangerous. This is especially a problem of the minister, more so in the Protestant churches than in the Catholic church. The Protestant doctrine of the general priesthood of all believers deprives the minister of the taboo which protects the priest in the Roman church, and the significance of the laymen is correspondingly increased. This makes a prophetic judgment of the congregations, including their most powerful sociological groups, so difficult as to be almost impossible. The result is often the sociologically determined, class church so conspicuous in American Protestantism. In the name of a tactful and cautious approach (which in itself is desirable), the judging function of the community of love is suppressed. This situation probably hurts the church more than an open attack on its principles launched by deviating and erring members.

All this refers to the judging function of the community of love toward its members. The same criteria, of course, are valid, not only for the church's official representatives but also for members who have a priestly function in limited groups in the name of the community of love, for example, parents toward children and one parent to the other as parent, friends toward friends, leaders of voluntary groups to the members of their groups, teachers to their classes, and so on. The community of love must be actualized in affirmation, judgment, and reunion in all these cases, thus expressing the Spiritual Community. And in the power of the Spiritual Presence the church must fight against the ambiguities of the threefold manifestation of love through Spirit-determined individuals and movements. Each of the three manifestations is a creation of the Spiritual Presence, and in each of them the great "in spite of" of the New Being is effective; but it is most manifest in the third-the "reunion in spite of," the message and act of forgiveness. Like the judging element of love, the forgiving element is present in all the church's functions, in so far as they are dependent on the Spiritual Community. But the ambiguities of religion resist the dynamics of the Spirit in the act of forgiveness, too. Forgiveness can be a mechanical act, or mere permissiveness or the humilitation of him who is forgiven. Reunion in love is possible in none of these cases, because the paradox in forgiveness is disregarded.

The question of the relation of the particular 'church as a community of love to other communites outside of it is full of problems. Perhaps at no point are the ambiguities of religion more difficult to conquer than here. The first problem concerns individual members of all groups outside a church. The general answer to the question-What does love demand if they appear in the realm of the church?- is that they must be accepted as participants in the Spiritual Community in its latency and therefore as possible members of the particular church. But then the elements of love which we have called "judgment" and "reunion" pose the question: Under what conditions is their complete or partial acceptance as members possible? This is a profoundly problematic question. Does it mean conversion and, if so, to what? To Christianity, to one of its confessions or denominations, to the faith of the particular church? Our doctrine of the Spiritual Community in its latency suggests an answer: If someone desires to participate in the community of love in a particular church, then he may become a full member by accepting the creed and the order of that church; or he may remain in a particular church and become a fully accepted guest in another church; or he may remain in the latency of the Spiritual Community as a Jew, Mohammedan, humanist, mystic, and so on, who wants to be received into the community of love because he is aware of his own essential belonging to the Spiritual Community. In the last case, he would also be a guest or, more precisely, a visitor and friend. Such situations are frequent today. What is decisive, at least in the Protestant sphere, is the desire to participate in a group whose foundation is the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ; this desire takes the place of creedal statement and, in spite of the absence of conversion, opens the door into the community of love without reservation on the side of the church.

Another problem concerning the relation of the community of love to those outside is that of the relation of one particular church to another-local, national, denominational. Antagonism among churches, even to the extreme of fanatical persecution of one church by another, has social and political causes which are among the ambiguities of the

churches in their sociological aspect. But there are other reasons derived from the Spiritual Presence's fight against profanization and demonization of the New Being. There is a profound anxiety in every church with a definite creed and order of life that the other one who asks to be taken into the community of love may distort this community by elements of profanization and demonization. In this situation fanaticism, as always, is a result of inner insecurity, and persecution, as always, is produced by anxiety. The suspicion and hate which appear in the relations between the communities of love are a consequence of the same fear which produced the witch and heresy trials. It is a genuine fear of the demonic and therefore cannot be overcome by an ideal of tolerance which is based on indifference or on an abstract minimization of differences. It is vulnerable only to the Spiritual Presence, which affirms and judges every expression of the New Being in the one community of love as well as in the others. In all of them, whether springing from latency or the manifest appearance of the Spiritual Community, there is creative Spiritual Presence, and in all of them profane and demonic possibilities are reality. Therefore, one church can recognize the community of love with another in the Spiritual Community as the dynamic essence of both by which the particularities of each are affirmed and judged. These considerations substantiate what was said earlier about the paradoxical character of the unity of the church.

b) The functions of the churches, their ambiguities, and the Spiritual Community

(1) THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCHES AND THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE.-Having discussed in the previous sections the essential character of the churches in their relation to the Spiritual Community, we must now turn to their expression as living entities in a number of functions. Each of these functions is an immediate and necessary consequence of the nature of a church. They must be at work where there is a living church, even if periodically they are more hidden than manifest. They are never lacking, although the forms they take differ greatly from each other. One can distinguish the following three groups of church functions: the functions of constitution, related to the foundation of the churches in the Spiritual Community; the functions of expansion, related to the universal claim of the Spiritual Community; the functions of construction, related to the actualization of the Spiritual potentialities of the churches.

At this point a more general question arises-the question of the sense in which a doctrine of the churches and their functions is a subject matter of systematic theology and the sense in which it is a subject matter **of** practical theology. Of course, the first answer is that the boundary is not sharp. Nevertheless, one can distinguish between the theological principles governing the functions of the churches as churches and the practical tools and methods most adequate for their exercise. The task of systematic theology is to analyze the first; the task of practical theology is to suggest the second. (Of course, this distinction does not imply a division in the thinking of the systematic and the practical theologian; both think about both sets of problems, but each is committed to one of them in his work.) The following analyses of a systematic character will often overlap with descriptions of a practical character, as has already happened in the previous chapters.

The first statement to be made about the logical principles governing the churches' functions as churches is that they all participate in the paradox of the churches. They are all performed in the name of the Spiritual Community; yet they are also performed by sociological groups and their representatives. They are involved in the ambiguities of life—above all, of religious life-and their aim is to conquer these ambiguities through the power of the Spiritual Presence.

One can distinguish three polarities of principles which correspond to the three groups of functions. The functions of constitution stand under the polarity of tradition and reformation, the functions of expansion under the polarity of verity and adaptation, the functions of construction under the polarity of form-transcendence and form-affirmation. The ambiguities fought by the Spiritual Presence are also indicated in these polarities. The danger of tradition is demonic ***hubris;*** the danger of reformation is emptying criticism. The danger of verity is demonic absolutism; the danger of adaptation is emptying relativization. The danger of form-transcendence is demonic repression; the danger of form-affirmation is formalistic emptiness. In connection with a description of the respective functions, concrete examples of these polarities and of the dangers implied in them will be discussed; at this point only a few general remarks about each are necessary.

The principle of tradition in the churches is not a mere recognition of the sociological fact that the cultural forms of every new generation grow out of those produced by the preceding generations. This, of course, is

also valid for the churches. But beyond this the principle of tradition in the church stems from the fact that the nature of the churches and the character of their life are determined by their function in the New Being as it has appeared in Jesus as the Christ and that the tradition is the link between this foundation and every new generation. This is not necessarily the case with national groups or cultural movements, whose beginnings may be rather irrelevant for their development. But the Spiritual Community is effective through every function of the church, and, therefore, all generations are ideally present-not only the generations who experienced the central manifestation, but also those who expected it. In this sense tradition is not particular, although it includes all particular traditions; it expresses the unity of historical mankind, of which the appearance of the Christ is the center.

The Greek Orthodox church considers itself as the church of the living tradition in contrast to the legally defined and papally determined tradition of the Roman church. The criticism which the Reformation leveled against many elements of both traditions, but especially the Roman, has made the concept itself suspect for Protestant feeling. Yet tradition is an element in the life of all churches. Even the Protestant criticism was possible only with the help of particular elements in the Roman Catholic tradition; the Bible, Augustine, the German mystics, the humanistic underground, and so on. It is a general characteristic of prophetic criticism of a religious tradition that it does not come from outside but from the center of the tradition itself, fighting its distortions in the name of its true meaning. There is no reformation without tradition.

The word "reformation" has two connotations: it points to a unique event in church history, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century; and it points to a permanent principle, active in all periods, which is implied in the Spirit's fight against the ambiguities of religion. The historical Reformation occurred because the Roman church had successfully suppressed this principle at a moment when the prophetic Spirit called for a reformation of the church in "head and members." Obviously, there is no objective criterion for a movement of reformation; not even the Bible is such a criterion, since the Bible must be interpreted. There is, instead, the risk which is rooted in the awareness of the Spiritual freedom, and it is the prophetic Spirit which creates the courage for such a risk. Prostentantism takes this risk-even if it

may mean the disintegration of particular churches. It takes the risk in the certainty that the Spiritual Community, the dynamic essence of a church, cannot be destroyed.

The polarity of tradition and reformation leads to a struggle of the Spiritual Presence with the ambiguities of religion. The principle of reformation is the corrective against the demonic suppression of the freedom of the Spirit by a tradition which is vested with absolute validity, in practice or by law; and since all churches have a tradition, this demonic temptation is actual and successful in all of them. Its success is caused by the taboo-producing anxiety about any deviation from that which is holy and has been proven to have saving power. The anticipation that, under the principle of reformation, the churches will fall into a profanizing criticism is implied in this anxiety. Schleiermacher's often quoted words, "The reformation goes on," are certainly true; but they raise the anxious question : What is the limit beyond which critical disintegration begins? This question gives the guardians of an absolutized tradition their power to suppress the desire for reform and to coerce the consciences of those who know better but do not have the courage to risk a new road. The two principles are united in the Spiritual Community. They are in tension but not in conflict. To the degree in which the dynamics of the Spiritual Community is effective in a church, the conflict is transformed into a living tension.

The second polarity of principles is essentially related to the functions of expansion in the life of the churches. It is the polarity of verity and adaptation. The problem is as old as the words of Paul in which he refers to his being a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks while rejecting everyone who, against the truth of his message, tries to retransform the New Being (the "New Creation," as he calls it) into the old being of the Jewish law or of Greek wisdom. The existential conflict between verity and adaptation, as well as the fight of the Spiritual Presence to overcome it, is classically expressed in his sentences.

In the early church small groups demanded the subjection of the churches to the Jewish law, and the large majority, including most of the great theologians, demanded adaptation to the forms of thought which had been developed by classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophy. At the same time the masses accommodated themselves, under the permissive supervision of the church authorities, to the polytheistic trends in religion, whether in the veneration of images (icons) or in the inva-

sion of the devotional life by a host of saints, especially the Holy Virgin. Without these adaptations the missionary work of the early church would have been impossible; but in the process of adaptation the content of the Christian message was in continual danger of being surrendered for the sake of accommodation. This danger of forsaking the pole of verity for the pole of adaptation was so real that most of the great struggles in the first millennium of the Christian churches can be seen in light of this conflict.

In the Middle Ages the adaptation of the Germanic-Romanic tribes to the feudal order was both a missionary and an educational necessity and was accompanied by a continual surrender of verity to accommodation. The struggle between emperor and pope must be understood partly as the reaction of the church against the feudal identification of the social with religious hierarchies; and the reaction of the personal piety of the late Middle Ages, including the Reformation, can be understood as resistance against the transformation of the church into the all-embracing feudal authority itself. Of course, none of these movements for verity as against accommodation escaped the necessity of adaptation themselves. In spite of the break between Luther and Erasmus, the humanist spirit entered Protestantism through Melanchthon, Zwingli, and in part, Calvin. In the following centuries the struggle between verity and adaptation continued with undiminished force and it is one of the most actual problems even today. These struggles, of course, are not restricted to missionary expansion toward foreign religions and cultures but refer even more immediately to expansion in the civilizations shaped by the Christian tradition. Both the change in the general cultural climate since the sixteenth century and the necessity of inducting new generations into the churches raise the inescapable problem that is involved in the polarity of verity and adaptation.

The danger of the pronouncement of verity without adaptation, as indicated above, is a demonic absolutism which throws the truth like stones at the heads of people, not caring whether they can accept it or not. It is what may be called the demonic offense the churches often give while claiming that they give the necessary divine offense. Without adaptation to the categories of understanding in those toward whom the expanding functions of the church are directed, the church not only does not expand but even loses what it has, because its members also live within the given civilization and can receive the verity of the

message of the New Being only within the categories of that civilization.

If, on the other hand, the adaptation becomes an unlimited accommodation as in many periods of the history of the churches, the message's verity is lost, and a relativism takes hold of the church which leads to secularism, first merely empty and without ecstasy, but later open to a demonically distorted ecstasy. Missionary accommodation which surrenders the principle of verity does not conquer the demonic powers, whether they are religious or profane.

The third polarity of principles, related to the functions of construction, is that of form-transcendence and form-affirmation. The functions of construction use the different spheres of cultural creation in order to express the Spiritual Community in the life of the churches. This refers to *theoria* and *praxis* and, within them, to the aesthetic and the cognitive, the personal and the communal, spheres of life under the dimension of spirit. From all of them the churches take material, i.e., styles, methods, norms, and relations, but in a way which both affirms and transcends the cultural forms. If the churches engage in aesthetic or cognitive, personal or communal, construction, they do it as churches only if the relation of the Spiritual Presence is manifest in their works, and this means if there is an ecstatic, form-transcending quality in them. The churches do not act as churches when they act as a political party or a law court, as a school or a philosophical movement, as patrons of artistic production or of psychotherapeutic healing. The church shows its presence as church only if the Spirit breaks into the finite forms and drives them beyond themselves. It is this form-transcending, Spiritual quality that characterizes the functions of construction in the church: the functions of aesthetic self-expression, of cognitive self-interpretation, of personal self-realization, of social and political self-organization. It is not the subject matter as such which makes them functions of the church but their form-transcending, ecstatic character.

At the same time, the principle of form-affirmation must be observed. In every function of the church the essential form of the cultural realm must be used without a violation of its structural demands. This is implied in the earlier discussion of structure and ecstasy. In spite of the form-transcending character of religious art aesthetic rules must be obeyed; in spite of the form-transcending character of religious knowledge the cognitive rules must not be broken. The same is valid with respect to personal and social ethics, politics, and education. Some im-

portant problems arising out of this situation will be discussed later; at this point we must again refer to the two dangers between which the functions of construction in the life of the churches move. If the principle of form-transcendence is effective in separation from the principle of form-affirmation, the churches become demonic-repressive. They are driven to repress in everyone and every group that conscience of form which demands honest submission to the structural necessities of cultural creation. For example, they violate artistic integrity in the name of a sacred (or politically expedient) style; or they undercut the scientific honesty which leads to radical questions about nature, man, and history; or they destroy personal humanity in the name of a demonically distorted fanatical faith, and so forth.

At the other pole, there is the danger of profanization of the Spiritual creations and the emptiness which invites demonic invasions. A form which is too rigid to be transcended becomes by degrees more and more meaningless-though not wrong. It is first felt as a protection from transcendent interference, then as autonomous creativity, then as the embodiment of formal correctness, and last as empty formalism.

Where the Spiritual Presence is powerful in the churches the two principles, form-transcendence and form-affirmation, are united.

(2) THE CONSTITUTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCHES.—Systematic theology has to deal with the functions of the church because they are part of its nature and add special elements to its characterization. If the functions of the church are of its very nature, they must always be present where there is a church; however, they can appear in different degrees of conscious care, intensity, and adequacy. Their exercise may be suppressed from outside, or they may coalesce with other functions, but they are always present as an element in the church's nature, pushing toward actualization.

However, they are not always organizationally present; functions and institutions are not necessarily interdependent. The institutions are dependent on the functions they serve, but the functions may exist even where no institutions serve them, and this is often the case. Most institutional developments have a spontaneous beginning. The nature of the church requires that a particular function make itself felt in Spiritual experiences and consequent actions, which finally lead to an institutional form. If an institution becomes obsolete, other ways of exercising the same function may grow up spontaneously and take

shape in a new institutional form. This agrees with what we have said before about the freedom of the Spirit; it liberates the church from any kind of ritual legalism, in the power of the Spiritual Community. No institution, not even a priesthood or ministry, special sacraments or devotional services, follow necessarily from the nature of the church, but the functions for the sake of which these institutions have come into being do follow from it. They never are completely missing.

The first group of functions has been called the function of constitution. Since every church is dependent on the New Being as it is manifest in the Christ and real in the Spiritual Community, the constitutive function of a church is that of ***receiving.*** This applies to a church as a whole as well as to every individual member. If a church demands receptiveness of its members but itself as church refuses to receive, it becomes either a static hierarchical system, which claims to have received once and for all with no need ever to receive again, or it becomes a religious group with private experiences which make the transition into secularism. The function of reception includes the simultaneous function of mediation through the media of the Spiritual Presence, Word, and sacrament. He who receives mediates, and, on the other hand, he has received only because the process of mediation is going on continuously. In practice mediation and reception are the same : the church is priest and prophet to itself. He who preaches preaches to himself as listener, and he who listens is a potential preacher. The identity of reception and mediation excludes the possibility of the establishment of a hierarchical group which mediates while all the others merely receive.

The act of mediation occurs partly in communal services, partly in encounters between the priest who mediates and the laity who respond. But this division is never complete; whoever mediates must himself respond, and whoever responds mediates to his mediator. The "counselor," as the agent of the function of "taking care of souls" (*Seelsorge*) is in present terminology called, should never be subject only; he should never make of his counselee an object to be handled correctly and perhaps helped by an adequate treatment. If this happens, as it very often does in pastoral as well as in medical counseling, an ambiguity of religion has invaded the Spiritual function of mediation. But if the mediation is determined by the Spiritual Presence, the counselor subjects himself to the judgments and demands that he tries to communicate. He recognizes the truth that he is basically in the same predicament as the counselee.

And this may give him the possibility of finding the word of healing for him. He who is grasped by the Spirit can speak to one who needs his help in such a way that the Spirit can get hold of the other one through him, and thus help becomes possible. For Spirit can heal only what is open to Spirit.

The relation of pastoral counseling to psychotherapeutic help will be discussed later. Where there is reception and mediation, there is also response. The response is the **affirmation** of that which is received-the confession of faith-and the turning to the source from which it is received, i.e., worship. The term "confession of faith" has been misinterpreted by being identified with the acceptance of **creedal** statements and their repetition in ritual acts, but the function of responding and accepting accompanies all other functions of the church. It can be expressed in prose and in poetry, in symbols and in hymns. It can also be concentrated in **creedal** formulations and then elaborated by theological conceptualization. A church is not quite consistent when it avoids a statement of faith in terms of a creed and at the same time is unable to avoid expressing the content of its creed in every one of its liturgical and practical acts.

The other side of the function of response is worship; in it the church turns to the ultimate ground of its being, the source of the Spiritual Presence and the creator of the Spiritual Community, to God who is Spirit. Whenever He is reached in communal or personal experiences, Spiritual Presence has grasped those who experience Him. For only Spirit can experience Spirit, as only Spirit can discern Spirit.

Worship as the responding elevation of the church to the ultimate ground of its being includes adoration, prayer, and contemplation.

The adoration of a church, vocal in praise and thanksgiving, is the ecstatic acknowledgment of the divine holiness and the infinite distance of Him who at the same time is present in the Spiritual Presence. This acknowledgment is not a theoretical assertion but rather a paradoxical participation of the finite and estranged in the infinite to which it belongs. When a church praises the majesty of God for the sake of his glory, two elements are united: the complete contrast between the creaturely smallness of man and the infinite greatness of the creator, and the elevation into the sphere of the divine glory, so that the praise of His glory is at the same time a fragmentary participation in it. The unity of these elements is paradoxical and cannot be disrupted without

producing a demonic image of God, on the one hand, and of miserable man, without genuine dignity, on the other. Such distortion of the meaning of adoration leads to the ambiguities of religion and is resisted by the Spiritual Presence, which, as Presence, includes the participation of him who adores in Him who is adored. Adoration in this sense is not the humiliation of man, but it would lose its meaning if it intended anything but the praise of God. Adoration performed for the sake of man's self-glorification is self-defeating. It never reaches God.

The second element in worship is prayer. The basic interpretation of prayer has been given in the section on God's directing **creativity.**[1] The central idea there was that every serious prayer produces something new in terms of creaturely freedom which is taken into consideration in the whole of God's directing creativity, as is every act of man's centered self. This newness, created by the prayer of supplication, is the Spiritual act of elevating the content of one's wishes and hopes into the Spiritual Presence. A prayer in which this happens is "heard," even if subsequent events contradict the manifest content of the prayer. The same is true of prayers of intercession which not only produce a new relation to those for whom the prayer is made but also introduce a change in the relation to the ultimate of the subjects and objects of intercession. It is therefore false to limit prayer to the prayer of thanks. This suggestion of the Ritschlian school is rooted in a profound anxiety about the magic distortion of prayer and its superstitious consequences for popular piety, but this anxiety is, systematically speaking, unfounded, although highly justified in practice. Thanksgiving to God is an expression of adoration and praise but not a formal acknowledgment which prejudices God to bestow further benefits upon those who are grateful. However, it would create a completely unrealistic relation to God if prayers of supplication were prohibited.' In that case the expression of man's needs to God and the accusation of God by man for not answering (as in the Book of Job) and all the wrestling of the human spirit with the divine Spirit would be excluded from prayer. Certainly these comments are not the last word in the life of prayer, but the "last word" would be shallow and profanized, as innumerable prayers are, were the paradox of prayer to be forgotten by the churches and their members. Paul expresses the paradox of prayer classically when he speaks about the impossibility of the right prayer and about the divine

[1] *Systematic Theology*, I, 267.

Spirit's representing those who pray before God without an "objectifying" language (Romans 8:26). It is the Spirit which speaks to the Spirit, as it is the Spirit which discerns and experiences the Spirit. In all these cases the subject-object scheme of "talking to somebody" is transcended: He who speaks through us is he who is spoken to.

Spiritual prayer in this sense (and not a profanized conversation **with** another being called God) leads to the third element in the function of response-contemplation. Contemplation is the stepchild in Protestant worship. Only lately has the liturgical silence been introduced into some Protestant churches, and of course, there is no contemplation without silence. Contemplation means participation in that which transcends the subject-object scheme, with its objectifying (and subjectifying) words, and therefore the ambiguity of language as well (including the voiceless language of speaking to oneself). The Protestant churches' neglect of contemplation is rooted in their personal-centered interpretation of the Spiritual Presence. But Spirit transcends personality, if personality is identified with consciousness and moral self-integration. Spirit is ecstatic, and so are contemplation, prayer, and worship in general. The response to the impact of the Spirit must itself be Spiritual, and that means transcending in ecstasy the subject-object scheme of ordinary experience. This is most obvious in the act of contemplation, and one may demand that every serious prayer lead into an element of contemplation, because in contemplation the paradox of prayer is manifest, &identity and non-identity of him who prays and Him who is prayed to : God as Spirit.

The divine Spirit's presence in the experience of contemplation contradicts the idea we often find in medieval mysticism that contemplation must be reached by degrees, as in the movement from meditation to contemplation, and that it itself may be a bridge to mystical union. This gradualistic thinking belongs to the ambiguities of religion because it faces God as a besieged fortress to be surrendered to those who climb its walls. According to the Protestant principle, God's surrender is the beginning; it is an act of his freedom by which he overcomes the estrangement between Himself and man in the one, unconditional, and complete act of forgiving grace. All the degrees of appropriation of grace are secondary, as growth is secondary to birth. Contemplation in the Protestant realm is not a degree but a quality, that is, a quality of a prayer

which is aware that the prayer is directed to Him who creates the right prayer in us.

(3) **THE EXPANDING FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCHES.**—The universality of the Spiritual Community demands the function of expansion of the churches. Since the universality of the Spiritual Community is implied in the confession of Jesus as the Christ, every church must participate in functions of expansion. The first function of expansion, historically and systematically, is missions. It is as old as the story of Jesus' sending the disciples to the towns of Israel, and it is as successful and unsuccessful as this first mission was. The majority of human beings is still-after two thousand years of missionary activity-non-Christian. Yet, there is no place on earth which is not somehow touched by Christian culture.

In spite of the fragmentary (and often ambiguous) character of the effects of missions, the function of expansion goes on during every moment in the church's existence. Whenever active members of the church encounter those outside the church, they are missionaries of the church, voluntarily or involuntarily. Their very being is missionary. The purpose of missions as an institutionalized function of the church is not to save individuals from eternal condemnation-as it was in some pietistic missions; nor is the purpose cross-fertilization of religions and cultures. The purpose of missions is rather the actualization of the Spiritual Community within concrete churches all over the world. One of the ambiguities of religion which endangers missions is the attempt of a religion to impose its own cultural forms upon another culture in the name of the New Being in the Christ. This necessarily leads to reactions which can destroy the whole effect of the expanding functions of the Christian churches. But it is hard for any church to separate the Christian message from the particular culture within which it is pronounced. In a sense it is impossible, because there is no abstract Christian message. It is always embodied in a particular culture. Even the most self-critical attempt of, for example, the Swiss or American missions to strip themselves of their cultural traditions would be a failure. Yet, if the Spiritual power is present in them, they would speak of that which concerns us ultimately through the traditional cultural categories. It is not a matter of formal analysis but of paradoxical transparence. Where there is Spiritual Presence, a missionary from any background can communicate the Spiritual Presence. (The world-historical meaning

of missions will be discussed in the fifth part of the system, "History and the Kingdom of God.")

The second function of expansion is based on the desire of the churches to continue their life from generation to generation-the function of education. The problem of religious education has become one of the major issues in the contemporary churches. The many problems of the techniques of religious education do not concern us here, but the question of the meaning of the religious function of education has great importance for systematic theology. First of all, it must be emphasized that the educational function of the Christian church started the moment the first family was received in it, for this event put before the church the task of receiving the new generation into its communion. This task is a consequence of the self-interpretation of a church as the community'of the New Being or the actualization of the Spiritual Community. The doubts of parents about the Christian education of their children reflect in part the difficulties of the educational process, in part the doubts of the parents themselves about the assertion that Jesus is the Christ. With respect to the first problem, educational theory can overcome psychological errors and lack of judgment. With respect to the second problem, only the Spiritual Presence can give the courage to affirm the Christian assertion and to communicate it to the new generation.

The educational function of the church does not consist in information about the history and the doctrinal self-expressions of the church. A confirmation-instruction which does merely that misses its purposes, although it may communicate useful knowledge. Neither does the educational function of the church consist in the awakening of a subjective piety, which may be called conversion but which usually disappears with its emotional causation. A religious education which tries to do this is not in line with the educational function of the church. The church's task is to introduce each new generation into the reality of the Spiritual Community, into its faith and into its love. This happens through participation in degrees of maturity, and it happens through interpretation in degrees of understanding. There is no understanding of a church's life without participation; but without understanding the participation becomes mechanical and compulsory.

The last of the functions of expansion is the evangelistic. It is directed toward the churches' estranged or indifferent members. It is missions toward the non-Christians within a Christian culture. Its two activities, which overlap but are distinguishable, are practical apologetics and evangelistic preaching. If the result of either is the desire for personal counseling, the function of mediation replaces that of expansion.

Practical apologetics is the practical application of the apologetic element in every theology. In the,introductory part of the whole system we indicated that the type of theological thinking presented in this system is more apologetic than kerygmatic. As such it intends to give the theoretical foundation of practical apologetics. First of all, one must emphasize that practical apologetics is a continuous element in all expressions of the life of the church. The church, by reason of its paradoxical nature, is continually being asked questions about its nature which it must answer, and that is what apologetics means : the art of answering. Certainly, the most effective answer is the reality of the New Being in the Spiritual Community and in the life of the churches as far as they are determined by it. It is the silent witness of the community of faith and love which convinces the questioner who may be silenced but not convinced by even the most incontrovertible arguments. Nethertheless, arguments are needed, because they may serve to break through the intellectual walls of skepticism as well as of dogmatism with which the churches' critics protect themselves against the attacks of the Spiritual Presence. And since these walls are constantly being built in all of us and since they have separated masses of people on all levels of education from the churches, apologetics must be cultivated by the churches; otherwise they will not grow but will diminish in extension and increasingly become a small, ineffective section within a dynamic civilization. The psychological and sociological conditions of successful practical apologetics are dependent on many factors, to be valuated by practical theology, but the laying of the conceptual foundations on which practical apologetics is built is the task of systematic theology. Systematic theology must also stress its own limits as theoretical apologetics as well as the limits of even the most skillful apologetic practice. The acknowledgment of its own limits is itself an element in the apologetic function.

Evangelism by preaching, like apologetics, is directed toward people who have belonged or still belong to the realm of Christian civilization but who have ceased to be active members of the church or who have become indifferent or hostile toward it. Evangelism by preaching is more of a charismatic function than is apologetics; it is dependent on

the emergence of people in the churches who are able to speak to the groups just characterized, in the name and power of the Spiritual Community but not in the way the churches do it, and who for this very reason have an impact on the listeners which ordinary preaching lacks. It would be unfair to say that this impact is "merely" psychological and predominantly emotional. The Spiritual Presence can use any psychological condition and every combination of factors to grasp the personal self, and it is an advantage of the metaphor "dimension" that it bridges the gap between the psychological and Spiritual (as well as the spiritual). However, it is not unfair, but true to the facts, to point out the dangers of evangelism as a religious phenomenon with the ambiguities of religion. The danger of evangelism against which the Spirit fights is the confusion of the subjective impact of evangelistic preaching with the Spiritual impact which transcends the contrast of subjectivity and objectivity. The criterion here is the creative character of the Spiritual Presence, that is, the creation of the New Being, which does not excite the subjectivity of the listener but transforms it. Mere excitement cannot create participation in the Spiritual Community even if it produces the different elements of conversion according to the traditional pattern. Repentance, faith, sanctity, and so on, are not what these words are taken to mean, and therefore their effect is only momentary and transitory. However, it would be wrong to reject evangelism, or even an individual evangelist, ***in toto*** because of these ambiguities. There must be evangelism, but it should not confuse excitement with ecstasy.

(4) THE CONSTRUCTING FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCHES

(a) The aesthetic function in the church.-Those functions of the church are constructing functions in which it builds its life by using and transcending the functions of man's life under the dimension of the spirit. The church can never be without the functions of construction and, therefore, cannot forego the use of cultural creations in all basic directions. Those who indulge in contrasts of the divine Spirit with the human spirit in terms of exclusiveness cannot avoid contradicting themselves: in the very act of expressing this rejection of any contact between cultural creativity and Spiritual creativity, they use the whole apparatus of man's cognitive mind, even if they do it by quoting biblical passages, for the words used in the Bible are creations of man's cultural development. One can reject culture only by using it as the tool of such rejection. This is the inconsistency of what in recent discussions has been called "diastasis," i.e., the radical separation of the religious from the cultural sphere.

The churches are constructive in all those directions of man's cultural life which we have distinguished in the sections on the cultural self-creation of life. They are constructive in the realm of ***theoria,*** the aesthetic and the cognitive functions, and they are constructive in the realm of ***praxis,*** the personal and the communal functions. Later we shall discuss these functions in their immediate relation to the Spiritual Community; but at this point we must consider the problem of their part in the constructing functions of the churches. One question is central in all of them: How is the autonomous cultural form which makes them what they are related to their function as material for the self-construction of the churches? Does their functioning in the service of the ecclesiastical edifice distort the purity of their autonomous form? Must expressiveness, truth, humanity, and justice be bent in order to be built into the life of the churches?And if this demonic element in the ambiguities of religion is rejected, how can the human spirit be prevented from replacing the impact of the Spiritual Presence by self-creative acts of its own? How can the life of the churches be prevented from falling under the sway of the profane element in the ambiguities of religion? Instead of a general answer, we shall try to answer by dealing directly with each of the functions of construction and their particular problems.

The aesthetic realm is used by the church for the sake of the religious arts. In them the church expresses the meaning of its life in artistic symbols. The content of the artistic symbols (poetic, musical, visual) is the religious symbols given by the original revelatory experiences and by the traditions based on them. The fact that artistic symbols try to express in ever changing styles the given religious symbols produces the phenomenon of "double symbolization," an example of which is the symbol of "the Christ crucified" expressed in the artistic symbols of the Nordic Renaissance painter Matthias Grünewald—one of the rare pictures which is both Protestant in spirit ***and*** at the same time great art. We point to it as an example of double symbolization, but it is also an example of something else, i.e., the power of artistic expression to help transform what it expresses. The "Crucifixion" by Grünewald not only expresses the experience of the pre-Reformation groups to which he belonged, but has helped to spread the spirit of the Reformation and to

create an image of the Christ radically opposite to that of Eastern mosaics, in which as an infant in Mary's lap he is already the ruler of the universe. It is understandable that such a picture as that of Grünewald would be censured by the authorities of the Eastern church, the church of the resurrection and not of the crucifixion. The churches knew that aesthetic expressiveness is more than a beautifying addition to devotional life. They knew that expression gives life to what is expressed—it gives power to stabilize and power to transform-and therefore they tried to influence and control those who produced religious art. This was carried through most strictly by the Eastern churches, but it is also practiced in the Roman church, especially in music, and even in the Protestant churches, particularly in hymnic poetry. Expression *does* something to what it expresses: this is the significance of religious art as a constructing function of the churches.

The problem implied in this situation is the possible conflict between the justified request of the churches that the religious art they accept express what they confess and the justified demands of the artists that they be permitted to use the styles to which their artistic conscience drives them. These two demands can be understood as two principles which control religious art, the principle of consecration and the principle of honesty. The first one is the power of expressing the holy in the concreteness of a special religous tradition (including its possibilities of reformation). The principle of consecration in this sense is an application of the larger principle of form-transcendence (as discussed before) to the sphere of religious art. It includes the use of religious symbols which characterize the particular religious tradition (for example, the Christ picture or the passion story) and stylistic qualities which distinguish the works of religious art from the artistic expression of the non-religious encounters with reality. The Spiritual Presence makes itself felt in the architectural space, the liturgical music and language, the pictorial and sculptural representations, the solemn character of the gestures of all participants, and so on. It is the task of aesthetic theory in co-operation with psychology to analyze the stylistic character of consecration. Whatever the general artistic style of a period may be, there are always some qualities which distinguish the sacred from the secular use of the style.

There is, however, a limit to the demands made on the artists in the name of the principle of consecration, and that limit is the demands

of the principle of honesty. This principle is the application of the general principle of form-affirmation, as discussed before, to religious art. It is especially important in a period in which new artistic styles appear and the cultural consciousness is split in the fight between contradictory self-expressions. The principle of honesty is severely endangered in such situations, which have occurred frequently in' the history of Western civilization. Consecrated forms of artistic expression claim absolute validity because they have impregnated the memory of ecstatic-devotional experiences, and they are defended against new stylistic developments in the name of the Spiritual Presence. Such claims drive artists into a deep moral conflict and church members into decisions which are religiously painful. Both feel, at least in some unconscious deeps, that the old stylistic forms, however consecrated they may be, no longer fulfil the function of expressiveness. They cease to express what happens in the religious encounter of those who are grasped by the Spiritual Presence in their concrete situation. But the new stylistic forms have not yet found qualities of consecration. In such a situation the demand of honesty on the artists may force them to refrain from trying to express the traditional symbols at all or, if they do try it, to acknowledge failure. On the other hand, the demand of honesty on those who receive the works of art is that they confess their uneasiness with the older stylistic forms, even if they are not yet able to estimate the new ones-perhaps just because there are not yet convincing forms with the quality of consecration. But both artists and non-artists are under the strict demand implied in the principle of honesty-not to admit imitations of styles which once had great consecrative possibilities but which have lost their religious expressiveness for an actual situation. The most famous-or infamous-example is the pseudo-Gothic imitation in church architecture.

Still another problem besetting the relation of the two principles of religious art must be mentioned: artistic styles may appear which by their very nature exclude consecrated forms and therefore have to be excluded from the sphere of religious art. One thinks of some types of naturalism or of the contemporary non-objective style. By their very nature both are excluded from the use of many traditional religious symbols: the non-objective style, because it excludes the organic figure and the human face; and naturalism, because in describing its objects it tries to exclude the self-transcendence of life. One could say that only

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styles which can express the ecstatic character of the Spiritual Presence lend themselves to religious art, and this would mean that some expressionistic element has to be present in a style in order to make it a tool for religious art. This is certainly correct, but it does not exclude any particular style, because in each of them elements are present which are expressionistic, pointing to the self-transcendence of life. The idealistic styles can become vehicles of religious ecstasy because none of them completely excludes the expressionistic element. But history shows that those styles in which the expressionistic quality is predominant lend themselves most readily to an artistic expression of the Spiritual Presence. They are best able to express the ecstatic quality of the Spirit. This is the reason why, in periods in which these styles were lost, great religious art did not appear. Most of the last considerations are derived from an interpretation of the visual arts, but with certain qualifications, they are valid also for the other arts.

If we look at the history of Protestantism, we find that it has continued and often surpassed the achievement of the early and medieval churches with respect to religious music and hymnical poetry but that it has fallen very short of their creative power in all the visual arts, including those in which hearing and seeing are equally important, as in religious dance and in religious play. This is related to the turn in the later Middle Ages from the emphasis on the eye to the emphasis on the ear. With the reduction of the sacraments in number and importance and the strengthening of the active participation of the congregation in the church services, music and poetry gained in importance, and the iconoclastic movements in early Protestantism and evangelical radicalism went so far as to condemn the use of the visual arts in the churches altogether. The background of this rejection of the arts of the eye is the fear-and even horror--of a relapse into idolatry. From early biblical times up to the present day, a stream of iconoclastic fear and passion runs through the Western and Islamic world, and there can be no doubt that the arts of the eye are more open to idolatrous demonization than the arts of the ear. But the difference is relative, and the very nature of the Spirit stands against the exclusion of the eye from the experience of its presence. According to the multidimensional unity of life, the dimension of spirit includes all other dimensions--everything visible in the whole of the universe. The spirit reaches into the physical and biological realm by the very fact that its basis is the dimension of self-

awareness. Therefore, it cannot be expressed in spoken words only. It has a visible side, as is manifest in the face of man, which expresses bodily structure and personal spirit. This experience of our daily life is the premonition of the sacramental unity of matter and Spirit. One should remember that it was a mystic (Ötinger) who formulated all this when he said that "corporality (becoming body) is the end of the ways of God." The lack of the arts of the eye in the context of Protestant life is, though historically understandable, systematically untenable and practically regrettable.

When we pointed to the historical fact that the styles with a predominantly expressionistic element lend themselves best to religious art, we raised the question of the circumstances under which such a style can appear. The negative answer was completely clear: Religion cannot force any style upon the autonomous development of the arts. This would contradict the principle of artistic honesty. A new style appears in the course of the self-creation of life under the dimension of spirit. A style is created by the autonomous act of the individual artist and, at the same time, by historical destiny. But religion can influence historical destiny and autonomous creativity indirectly, and it does so whenever the impact of the Spiritual Presence on a culture creates cultural theonomy.

(b) ***The cognitive function in the church.The*** cognitive realm appears in the churches as theology. In it the churches interpret their symbols and relate them to the general categories of knowledge. The subject matter of theology, like that of the religious arts, is the symbols given by the original revelatory experiences and by the traditions based on them. Yet, whereas the arts express the religious symbols in artistic symbols, theology expresses them in concepts which are determined by the criteria of rationality. In this way the doctrine and legally established dogmas of the churches arise and give impulse to further theological conceptualization.

The first thing to be said about the theological function of the churches is that, like the aesthetic function, it is never lacking. The statement that Jesus is the Christ contains in some way the whole theological system, as the telling of a parable of Jesus contains all artistic potentialities of Christianity.

It is not necessary at this point to deal with theology as such. That has been done in the introductory part of the system. But in light of

the previous sections of this part of the system, a few remarks may be desirable: like all functions of the church, theology stands under the principles of form-transcendence and form-affirmation. In the aesthetic realm these principles appear as consecration and honesty. In an analogous way, one can speak, concerning the cognitive function, of the meditative and the discursive elements in theology. The meditative act penetrates the substance of the religious symbols; the discursive act analyzes and describes the form in which the substance can be grasped. In the meditative act (which can, in some moments, become contemplation) the cognitive subject and its object, the mystery of the holy, are united. Without such union the theological endeavor remains an analysis of structures without substance; on the other hand, meditation (including contemplative moments) without analysis of its contents and without their constructive synthesis cannot produce a theology. This is the limitation of "mystical theology." It can become theology only to the degree that it exercises the discursive function of cognition.

The meditative element in theological work is directed toward the concrete symbols originating in the revelatory experience from which they have arisen. Since theology is a function of the church, the church is justified in presenting to the theologian the concrete objects of its meditation and contemplation and in rejecting a theology in which these symbols are rejected or have lost their meaning. On the other hand, the discursive element of cognition is infinitely open in all directions and cannot be bound to a particular set of symbols. This situation seems to exclude theology altogether, and the history of the church shows a continuous series of antitheological movements, supported from both sides-by those who reject theology because its discursive element seems to destroy the concrete substance of the church embodied in its symbols, and by those who reject it because the meditative element seems to restrict the discourse to preconceived objects and solutions. If these assumptions were justified, no theology would be possible. But, certainly, theology is real and must have ways of overcoming the alternative of meditation and discourse.

The question is whether there are forms of the conceptual encounter with reality in which the meditative element is predominant and effective without suppressing the discursive strictness of thought. Is there an analogy to the relation of consecration and honesty in the relation of meditation and discourse? The answer is affirmative, because discursive thought does not exclude a theological sector within itself if the theological sector does not claim control over the other sectors. But one could ask whether there are not forms of discursive thinking which would make the theological sector not only relatively but absolutely impossible. Materialism, for example, has been called such a form of discursive thought. It has been asserted that a'materialist cannot be a theologian. But such a view is rather superficial: first of all, materialism is not a position which is dependent merely on discourse; it is also dependent on meditation and has a theological element within itself. This is true of all philosophical positions; they are not only scientific hypotheses but also have a meditative element hidden under their philosophical arguments. This means that theology is always possible on the basis of any philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, there are differences in the conceptual material it uses. If the meditative element is strong in a philosophy, it can be compared with the artistic styles in which the expressionistic element is strong. Of such philosophies, we say today that they are existentialist or have important existentialist elements within their structures. The term "existentialist" in this connection designates philosophies in which the question of human existence in time and space and of man's predicament in unity with the predicament of everything existing is asked and answered in symbols or their conceptual transformation. In this sense, strong existentialist elements are present in Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, the Stoics, and Neoplatonists. Such philosophers as Anaxagoras, Democritus, Aristotle, and the Epicureans are predominantly essentialist, dealing more with the structure of reality than with the predicament of existing. In the same way one can distinguish in modern times such men as Cusanus, Pico, Bruno, Boehme, Pascal, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Heidegger as predominantly existentialist and Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Locke, Hume, Kant, and Hegel as predominantly essentialist. These enumerations show that it is always a matter of emphasis and not of exclusiveness.

The division of "styles" of thought is analogous to the division of artistic styles. In both cases we have on one side the idealistic-naturalistic polarity, on the other side the expressionistic or existentialistic emphasis. In view of the ecstatic character of the Spiritual Presence, the churches can use for their own cognitive self-expression the systems of thought in which the existentialist emphasis is strong (note, for example, the

significance of Heraclitus, Plato, the Stoics, and Plotinus in the early church and the necessity for Aquinas to introduce heterogenous existentialist elements into Aristotle). But as in the case of artistic styles, the churches cannot force a style of thought upon the philosophers. It is a matter of autonomous creativity and historical destiny whether or not the existentialist element which is present in all philosophy breaks into the open. However, the church does not need to wait for such an event. It cannot work without the essentialist descriptions of reality, and it is able to discover the existentialist presuppositions behind them and to use them in acceptance and rejection, in naturalism as well as in idealism; theology need be afraid of neither of them.

The latter considerations, like the corresponding ones in the section on religious art, are transitions to the "theology of culture," which we will discuss later.

(c) ***The communal functions in the church.***—The problem of all constructing functions of the church is the relation of their autonomous cultural form to their function as material for the life of the churches. We have carried this through with respect to the aesthetic and cognitive functions of ***theoria.*** We must now discuss it with respect to the functions of ***praxis: the*** interdependent growth of community and personality. We must ask the question: Does their functioning in the service of the churches distort their autonomous forms? In relation to ***theoria*** this involved the question whether expressiveness and truth can preserve their honesty and their discursive strictness if they are used for consecration and meditation. In relation to ***praxis*** it raises the question whether community can maintain justice and whether personality can maintain humanity if they are used for the self-construction of the churches. Concretely, the problem is whether justice can be preserved if it is used for the realization of communal holiness and whether humanity can be preserved if it is used for the realization of personal saintliness. If the constructive functions of the church, in the power of the Spiritual Presence, conquer the ambiguities of religion (though only fragmentarily), they must be able to create a communal holiness which is united with justice and a personal saintliness which is united with humanity.

The communal holiness in the churches is an expression of the Holy Community, which is their dynamic essence. The churches express, and at the same time distort, communal holiness, and the Spiritual Presence

fights against the ambiguities following from this situation. Communal holiness (an abbreviation for the attempt to actualize the Holy Community **in** a historical group) contradicts the principle of justice whenever a church commits or permits injustice in the name of holiness. Within Christian civilization this usually does not happen in the same way as it happened in many pagan religions, where, for instance, the sacramental superiority of the king or high priest gave him a position in which the principle of justice was largely suspended. The wrath of the Old Testament prophets was directed against this attitude. But even within Christianity the problem is actual, for every system of religious hierarchies is conducive to social injustice. Even if there are no formal hierarchies there are degrees of importance in the church, and the higher degress are socially and economically dependent on and interrelated to the higher degrees in the social group. This is one of the reasons why in most cases the churches have supported the "powers that be," including their injustices against the lower classes. (Another reason is the conservative trend which we have described as "tradition against reformation.") The alliance of the ecclesiastical hierarchies with the feudal hierarchies of medieval society is an example of this "injustice of holiness"; the dependence of the parish minister on representatives of the economically and socially influential classes in his parish is another example. One could say that such holiness is not holiness at all, but this is an oversimplification, because the concept of holiness cannot be reduced to that of justice. Unjust representatives of the church may still represent the religious self-transcendence to which the churches, by their very existence, point; but, certainly, this is a distorted representation which leads finally to a repudiation of the churches, not only by those who **suffer** under their injustice, but also by those who suffer because they see holiness (which they do not deny) and injustice united.

The description of the ambiguities of communal life, as given above, yielded four ambiguities: first, the ambiguity of inclusiveness; second, the ambiguity of equality; third, the ambiguity of leadership; fourth, the ambiguity of the legal form. The question now is: In what sense are they overcome in the community which claims participation in the Holy Community and derived holiness for itself? The ambiguity of inclusiveness is overcome in so far as the church claims to be all-inclusive beyond any social, racial, or national limitations. This claim is unconditional, but its fulfilment is conditioned and a continuous

symptom of man's estrangement from his true being (note, for example, the racial and social problems within the churches). Then there is a special form of the ambiguity of inclusiveness in the churches, and that is the exclusion of those who confess another faith. The reason for it is obvious: every church considers itself a community of faith under a set of symbols, and it excludes competing symbols. Without this exclusion it could not exist. But this exclusion makes it guilty of idolatrous adherence to its own historically conditioned symbols. Therefore, whenever the Spiritual Presence makes itself felt, the self-criticism of the churches in the name of their own symbols starts. This is possible because in every authentic religious symbol there is an element that judges the symbol and those who use it. The symbol is not simply rejected but criticized, and by this criticism it is changed. In criticizing its own symbols the church expresses its dependence on the Spiritual Community, its fragmentary character, and the continuous threat of falling into the ambiguities of religion which it is supposed to fight.

The element of equality which belongs to justice is acknowledged by the churches as the equality of everyone before God. This transcendent equality does not entail the demand for social and political equality. The only attempts to actualize social and political equality do not originate in Christianity (except in some radical sects) but in ancient and modern Stoicism. Yet the equality before God should create a desire for the equality of those who approach God, i.e., for equality in the life of the church. It is important to know that as early as the New Testament, specifically in the letter of James, the problem of equality in the devotional services was discussed and the preservation of social inequality in the church services was denounced. One of the worst consequences of the neglect of the principle of equality within the churches is the treatment of "public sinners," not only in the Middle Ages but also today. The churches rarely followed the attitude of Jesus toward the "publicans and the whores." They were and are ashamed of the way in which Jesus acted in acknowledging the equality of all men under sin (which they confess) and therefore the equality of all men under forgiveness (which they confess). The establishment of the principle of inequality between socially condemned sinners and socially acknowledged righteous ones is one of the most conspicuous and most anti-Christian denials of the principle of equality. In opposition to this attitude of many groups and individuals in the churches, the fact that

secular psychology of the unconscious has rediscovered the reality of the demonic in everyone must be interpreted as an impact of the Spiritual Presence. In doing so it has, at least negatively, re-established the principle of equality as an element of justice. If the churches do not feel the call to conversion in this development, they will become obsolete, and the divine Spirit will work in and through seemingly atheistic and anti-Christian movements.

The ambiguity of leadership is closely connected with the ambiguities of inclusiveness and of equality, for it is the leading groups that exclude and produce inequality, even in the relation to God. Leadership and its ambiguities belong to the life of every historical group. The history of tyranny (which embraces the largest part of the history of mankind) is not a history of bad historical accidents but rather of one of the great and inescapable ambiguities of life, from which religion is not exempt. Religious leadership has the same profane and demonic possibilities as every other leadership. The continuous attack of the prophets and apostles on the religious leaders of their time did not injure the church but saved it. And so it is today. The fact that the Roman church does not acknowledge the ambiguity of its own papal leadership saves it from the obvious ambiguities of leadership but gives it a demonic quality. The Protestant weakness of continuous self-criticism is its greatness and a symptom of the Spiritual impact upon it.

The ambiguity of the legal form is as unavoidable as the ambiguity of leadership, equality, and inclusiveness. Nothing in human history has reality without a legal form, as nothing in nature has reality without a natural form, but the legal form of the churches is not a matter of an unconditional command. The Spirit does not give constitutional rules, but it guides the churches toward a Spiritual use of sociologically adequate offices and institutions. It fights against the ambiguities of power and prestige which are effective in the daily life of the smallest village congregation as well as in the encounter of the large denominations. No church office, not even those which existed in the apostolic churches, is a result of a direct command by the divine Spirit. But the church is, and its functions are, because they belong to its nature. The institution and offices serving the church in these functions are matters of sociological adequacy, practical expediency, and human wisdom. However, it is right to ask the question whether differences in constitution are not of indirect Spiritual significance since interpretations of the relation

of God and man are involved in the form of leadership (monarchic, aristocratic, democratic). This would make the problems of constitution indirectly theological, and it would explain the struggles and divisions of the churches about constitutional forms. Considering the problem of constitution both theologically and sociologically, one can first point to the ultimate theological principles implied in the differences of constitutions, for example, the Protestant principle of the "fallibility" of all religious institutions and the consequent protest against the infallible place in history, the ***cathedra papalis,*** or the Protestant principle of the "priesthood of all believers" and the consequent protest against a priesthood which is separated.from the laymen and which represents a sacred degree in a divine-human hierarchical structure. Such principles are matters of ultimate concern. The essential functions of the church, and therefore certain organizational provisions for their execution, are not of ultimate but of necessary concern. But which methods shall be preferred is a question of expediency under the criterion of the ultimate theological principles.

The ambiguities connected with the legal organization of the churches have produced a widespread resentment against "organized religion." Of course, the term itself formulates a prejudice, for it is not religion that is organized but a community that is centered around a set of religious symbols and traditions, and some organization in such a community is sociologically inescapable. Sectarian groups in their first, revolutionary stage have tried to escape any given organization and to live in anarchy. But the sociological necessities would not let them out of their grip; almost immediately after their separation, they started to build up new legal forms, which often became stricter and more oppressive than those of the large churches. And in some important cases such groups themselves became large churches with all their constitutional problems.

The aversion to organized religion goes even farther: it wants to eliminate the communal element from religion. But this is self-deception. Since man can become person only in the person-to-person encounter and since the language of religion-even if it is silent language-is dependent on the community, "subjective religiosity" is a reflex of the communal tradition, and it evaporates if it is not continuously nourished by life in the community of faith and love. There is no such thing as "private religion"; but there is the personal response to the religious

community, and this personal response may have creative, revolutionary, and even destructive impact on the community. The prophet goes into the desert in order to return; and the hermit lives from what he has taken from the tradition of the community, and often a new desert community develops, as in the early period of Christian monasticism.

The confrontation of private and organized religion would be mere foolishness if there were not a deeper, though poorly expressed, motive behind it. i.e., the religious criticism of every form of religion, whether it is public or private. It is right to feel that religion in the narrower sense is an expression of man's estrangement from his essential unity with God. Taken in this sense, it is only another way of speaking of the profound ambiguity of religion, and it must be understood as a complaint that the eschatological reunion has not yet arrived. This complaint is made in the hearts of religious individuals as well as in the communities' self-expressions. But this is something more embracing and more significant than the criticism of organized religion.

(d) The personal functions in the church.-We have referred to hermits and monks as people who try to escape the ambiguities which are implied in the sociological character of every religious community. This, of course, is possible only within the limits drawn by the fact that they participate in, or themselves produce, a religious community with sociological characteristics. At any rate, their retreat is possible within these limits, and it serves the powerful symbolic function of pointing to the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community. Through their serving of this function, they participate in a significant way in the constructive function of the churches. But the desire to avoid the ambiguities of the religious communities is not the only reason for their retreat. The problem of the personal life under the impact of the Spiritual Presence was and is basic for them.

The ambiguities of the personal life are ambiguities in the actualization of humanity as the inner aim of the person. They appear both in the person's relation to himself and in his relation to others. The ambiguity of determination, which we have mentioned, is involved in both cases: the ambiguity of self-determination and the ambiguity of the determination of others.

The first question to be asked is, How is the ideal of saintliness related to the ideal of humanity? We asked before, Does the holiness of the community destroy its justice? And we must now ask: Does the saintli-

ness of the personality within this community destroy the person's humanity? How are they related under the impact of the Spiritual Presence? The problem raised in this question is the problem of asceticism and humanity. Saintliness has often been identified with, and has always been made partly dependent on, asceticism. Beyond asceticism, it is the transparency of the divine ground of being in a person which makes him a saint. But such transparency (which, according to the Roman doctrine, expresses itself in his ability to work miracles) is dependent on the negation of many human potentialities and, therefore, is in tension with the ideal of humanity. The basic question is whether this tension necessarily becomes a conflict. The answer is dependent on the distinction of different types of asceticism. Behind the Roman Catholic ideal of monastic asceticism lies the metaphysical-mystical concept of matter's resistance against form-a resistance from which all the negativities of existence and ambiguities of life are derived. One resigns from the material in order to reach the Spiritual; this is the way the Spirit is liberated from bondage to matter. The asceticism which is derived from this religiously founded metaphysics is an "ontological" one. It implies that those who exercise it are religiously higher in the divine-human hierarchy than those who live in the materially conditioned reality of the "world." From the point of view of our basic question, we must say that there is conflict, an irreconcilable conflict, between this kind of asceticism and the ***telos*** of humanity; we must add that this kind of asceticism presupposes an implicit denial of the doctrine of creation. Therefore Protestantism has rejected asceticism 'and, in spite of its struggle with the humanists, has paved the way for the ***telos*** of humanity. According to the Protestant principle, there is no Spirituality which is based on the negation of matter, because God as creator is equally near the material and the Spiritual. Matter belongs to the good creation, and its humanist affirmation does not contradict Spirituality.

But there is another form of asceticism which has developed in the Jewish and Protestant spheres, and this is the asceticism of self-discipline. We find it in Paul and Calvin. It has strong moral connotations rather than ontological ones. It presupposes the fallen state of reality and the will to resist the temptation coming from many things which in themselves are not bad. In principle this is adequate to the human situation, and no humanity is possible without elements of this kind of asceticism.

But the impact of the traditional type of asceticism was so strong that the ***telos*** of humanity was again threatened by the ideal of Puritan repression. The radical restriction of sex and the restraint from many other potentialities of created goodness brought this kind of disciplinary asceticism close to the ontological asceticism of the Roman church, and since it often concentrated with rigor on trespasses 'against its petty restrictions it became both pharisaic and ludicrous. The very word "saintly" (implying no drinking, dancing, and so on) became first moralistically empty and then ridiculous. It is, at least partially, the merit of the psychotherapeutic movement since Freud that it helped the churches get rid of this distorted image of saintliness.

There is an ideal of asceticism under the impact of the Spiritual Presence which is completely united with the ***telos*** of humanity: the ascetic discipline without which no creative work is possible, the discipline required by the ***eros*** to the object. The combination of the words ***eros*** and "discipline" shows that the ***telos*** of humanity includes the idea of saintliness, for the asceticism here demanded is the conquest of a subjective self-affirmation which prevents participation in the object. "Humanity" in all its implications, as well as "saintliness" in the sense of being open to the Spiritual Presence, includes the asceticism which makes the union of subject and object possible.

In our description of the ambiguity of personal actualization, it was shown to be the separation of subject and object which produces ambiguities. The question is: How is personal self-determination possible if the determining self needs determination as much as the determined self? There is neither saintliness nor humanity without the solution of this problem. The solution is that the determining subject is determined by that which transcends subject and object, the Spiritual Presence. Its impact on the subject which is existentially separated from its object is called "grace." The word has many meanings, some of which will be discussed later, but in all its meanings, the preceding activity of the Spiritual Presence is identical. "Grace" means that the Spiritual Presence cannot be produced but is given. The ambiguity of self-determination is overcome by grace, and there is no other way of overcoming it and of escaping the despair of the conflict between the command of self-determination and the impossibility of determining oneself in the direction of what one essentially is.

In the relation of person to person, the functions of education and

guidance help to reach the *telos* of humanity. We have seen the ambiguity of these functions in the separation of subject and object which they presuppose. The educational and guiding activities of the churches cannot escape the problem, but they can fight against the ambiguities in the power of the Spiritual Presence. Whereas in the person's dealing with himself it is the Spiritual Presence as grace which makes self-determination possible, in the dealing with the other one the Spirit, as the creator of participation, makes other-determination possible. Only the Spirit can transcend the split between the subject and the object in education and guidance, because only through participation in that which grasps both from the vertical dimension is the difference overcome between him who, as educator and guide, gives and him who receives. In the grasp of the Spiritual Presence the subject in education and guidance has himself become object, and the object of education and guidance has himself become subject. Both, as bearers of the Spirit, are subject and object. In the actual processes of education and guidance, this means that he who is nearer to the *telos* of humanity is continuously aware of the fact that he is still infinitely removed from it and that therefore the attitude of superiority and the will to control the other one (for his good) is replaced by the acknowledgment that the educator or the guide is in the same predicament as the one he tries to help. And it means that he who is aware of his infinite distance from the *telos* of humanity nevertheless participates in it by the Spirit's grasping him out of the vertical dimension. The Spirit does not let the subject in any human relation remain mere subject and the object mere object; the Spirit is present wherever the conquest of the subject-object split in man's existence occurs.

(5) THE RELATING FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCHES.—The churches, in paradoxical unity with their Spiritual essence, are sociological realities, showing all the ambiguities of the social self-creation of life. Therefore they have continuous encounters with other sociological groups, acting upon them and receiving from them. Systematic theology cannot deal with the practical problems following from these relations, but it must try to formulate the ways and principles by which the churches as churches relate themselves to other social groups.

There are three ways in which this happens: the way of silent interpenetration, the way of critical judgment, and the way of political establishment. The first can be described as the continuous radiation of

the Spiritual essence of the churches into all groups of the society in which they live. Their very existence changes the whole of social existence. One could call it the pouring of priestly substance into the social structure of which the churches are a part. In view of the rapid secularization of life in the last centuries, one is inclined to overlook this influence, but if in imagination one removes the churches, the empty space left in all realms of man's personal and communal life shows the significance of their silent influence. Even if the educational possibilities of the churches are officially limited, their very existence has an educational impact on the. culture of a period, whether it is directly, by communicating Spiritual reality, or indirectly, by provoking a protest against what they represent.

Moreover, the influence is mutual; the churches receive the silent influx of the developing and changing cultural forms of the society, consciously or unconsciously. The most obvious of these influences is felt in the continuous transformation of the ways of understanding and expressing experiences in a living culture. The churches silently give Spiritual substance to the society in which they live, and the churches silently receive Spiritual forms from the same society. This mutual exchange, silently exercised at every moment, is the first relating function of the church.

The second is the way of critical judgment, exercised mutually by the church and the other social groups. This relation between churches and society is most manifest in the modern period of Western history, but it has existed in all periods, even under the theocratic systems of the Eastern and Western churches. The early church's criticism of the imperial Roman society was directed against its pagan ways of life and thought, and it finally transformed the pagan society into a Christian one. If the silent penetration of a society by the Spiritual Presence can be called "priestly," the open attack on this society in the name of the Spiritual Presence can be called "prophetic." Its success may be rather limited, but the fact that the society is put under judgment and must react positively or negatively to the judgment is in itself a success. A society which rejects or persecutes the bearers of the prophetic criticism against itself does not remain the same as it was before. It may be weakened or it may be hardened in its demonic and profane traits; in either case it is transformed. Therefore the churches should not only fight for the preservation and strengthening of their priestly influence

(for example, in the realm of education), but they should encourage prophetic criticism of the negativities in their society up to the point of martyrdom and in spite of their awareness that the result of a prophetic criticism of society is not the Spiritual Community but, perhaps, a state of society which approaches theonomy-the relatedness of all cultural forms to the ultimate.

But again the relation is mutual. There is, on the part of society, a criticism directed toward the churches, a criticism which is as justified as the churches' prophetic criticism of society. It is the criticism of "holy injustice" and "saintly inhumanity" within the churches and in their relation to the society in which they live. The world-historical significance of this criticism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is obvious. Its first consequence was to produce an almost unbridgeable gap between the churches and large groups of society, in particular the labor movements; but beyond this it had the effect of inducing the Christian churches to revise their interpretations of justice and humanity. It was a kind of reverse prophetism, an unconsciously prophetic criticism directed toward the churches from outside, just as a reverse priestly impact occurred in the effect of the changing cultural forms on the churches, an unconsciously priestly influence directed toward the churches from outside. This mutual criticism exercised and received by the churches is their second relating function.

The third is the way of political establishment. While the priestly and the prohetic ways remain within the religious sphere, the third way seems to fall completely outside this sphere. But religious symbolism has always added the royal to the priestly and the prophetic religious functions. Christology attributes the royal office to the Christ. Every church has a political function, from the local up to the international level. One task of the church leaders on all levels is to influence the leaders of the other social groups in such a way that the right of the church to exercise its priestly and prophetic function is acknowledged by them. There are many ways in which this can be done, dependent on the constitutional structure of the society and the legal position of the churches within it; but in any case, if the churches act politically, they must do it in the name of the Spiritual Community, i.e., Spiritually. This excludes the use of means which contradict its character as Spiritual Community, such as the use of military force, intoxicating propaganda, and diplomatic ruses, the arousing of religious fanaticism, and

so on. The more sharply a church rejects such methods, the more power it will ultimately exercise, for its real power lies in its being a creation of the Spiritual Presence. The fact that the Roman church has disregarded these principles has contributed to the scepticism in Protestantism with regard to the royal function of the church. But such scepticism is not justified. The Protestant churches cannot escape their political responsibility, and they have always exercised it, though with uneasy conscience, having forgotten that there is a royal function of the Christ. Certainly, as the royal function belongs to the Christ Crucified, so the royal function must be exercised by the church under the Cross, the humble church.

In doing so, it acknowledges that there is also a justified political impact on the churches from the side of society. One need only think of the influence of the late ancient and medieval forms of society on the structure of the churches. Political establishment is the result of a deal between different political forces inside and outside the larger groups. Even the churches are subject to the law of political compromise. They must be ready not only to direct but also to be directed. There is only one limit in the political establishment of the churches: the character of the church as expression of the Spiritual Community must remain manifest. This is first endangered if the symbol of the royal office of the Christ, and through him of the church, is understood as a theocratic-political system of totalitarian control over all realms of life. On the other hand, if the church is forced to assume the role of an obedient servant of the state, as if it were another department or agency, this means the end of its royal office altogether and a humiliation of the church which is not the humility of the Crucified but the weakness of the disciples who fled the Cross.

If we turn now to the principles under which the churches as actualizations of the Spiritual Community relate themselves to other social groups, we find a polarity between the principle of belonging to them according to the ambiguities of life and the principle of opposing them according to the fight against the ambiguities of life. Each of these principles has far-reaching consequences. The first implies that the relation of the churches to other groups has the character of mutuality, as we have seen with respect to the three ways in which the churches are related to them. The reason for this mutuality is the equality of predicament. This principle is the antidemonic criterion of the holiness

of the churches, because it prevents the arrogance of finite holiness, which is the basic temptation of all churches. If they interpret their paradoxical holiness as absolute holiness, they fall into a demonic *hubris*, and their priestly, prophetic, and royal functions toward the "world" become tools of a pseudo-Spiritual will to power. It was the experience of the demonization of the Roman church in the later Middle Ages which produced the protest of both the Reformation and Renaissance. These protests liberated Christianity in large sections from bondage to the demonically distorted power of the church by making the people aware of the ambiguities of actual religion.

But in achieving this they also frequently brought about, not only in the secular world but also in the sphere of Protestantism, the loss of the other side of the relation, the opposition of the churches to the other social groups. The danger in this respect was obvious from the beginning of the two great movements. Both propagated a nationalism of which culture as well as religion became victims. The church's opposition to nationalistic ideology, with its unjust claims and untrue assertions, became weaker with every decade of modern history. The church's prophetic voice was silenced by nationalistic fanaticism. Its priestly function was distorted by the introduction of national sacraments and rites into education at all levels, especially the lowest ones. Its royal function was not taken seriously and was made impotent either by the subjection of the churches to the national states or by the liberal ideal of separation of church and state, which pushed the churches into a narrow corner of the social fabric. The power of opposition. was lost in all these cases, and when the church loses its radical otherness, it loses itself and becomes a benevolent social club. Such phrases as "the church against the world" point to the one principle which essentially determines the relation of the churches to society as a whole and which should determine it actually. Yet if such phrases are used without being balanced by other phrases, such as "the church within the world," they have an arrogant ring and miss the ambiguity of the religious life.

It is part and parcel of this ambiguity that the world which is opposed by the church is not simply not-church but has in itself elements of the Spiritual Community in its latency which work toward a theonomous culture.

3. The Individual in the Church and the Spiritual Presence

a) The entering of the individual into a church and the experience of conversion.-The Spiritual Community is the Community of Spiritual personalities, i.e., of personalities who are grasped by the Spiritual Presence and who are unambiguously, though fragmentarily, determined by it. In this sense the Spiritual Community is the community of saints. The state of saintliness is the state of transparency toward the divine ground of being; it is the state of being determined by faith and love. He who participates in the Spiritual Community is united with God in faith and love. He is a creation of the divine Spirit. All this must be said paradoxically of every member of a church, because as an active (not only a legal) member of the church he is essentially and dynamically a member of the Spiritual Community. As the Spiritual Community is the dynamic essence of the churches, so is the Spiritual personality the dynamic essence of every active member of a church. It is immensely significant for the individual member of a church to realize that his dynamic essence as a member of the church is the Spiritual personality, who is a part of the Spiritual Community and whom God sees as such, He is a saint in spite of his lack of saintliness.

It is obvious that on the basis of these considerations everyone who belongs actively to a church is a "priest" by the fact of his belonging to the Spiritual Community, and he is able to exercise all the functions of a priest, although, for the sake of order and adequacy to the situation, special individuals may be called to a regular and trained performance of priestly activities. But their functioning as experts does not give them a higher status than is given by participation in the Spiritual Community.

The question as to which precedes "ontologically," the church or the individual member, has led to the separation of two types of churches, those emphasizing the predominance of the church over the individual and those emphasizing the predominance of the individual over the church. In the first case the individual enters a church which always precedes him; he enters it consciously or unconsciously (as an infant), but the presence of the New Being in a community precedes everything he is and knows. This is the theological justification of infant baptism. It rightly points to the fact that there is no moment in the life of a person when the state of Spiritual maturity can be fixed with certainty,

The faith which constitutes the Spiritual Community is a reality which precedes the ever becoming, ever changing, ever disappearing, and ever reappearing acts of personal faith. According to the multidimensional unity of life in man, the earliest beginnings of a human being in the mother's womb are, in terms of potentiality, directly connected with the latest stages of maturity. Actual personal faith cannot be determined at any age of a person's life, and it is a temptation to dishonesty if, for example, the quasi-sacramental act of "confirmation" in the fourteenth year of a child is considered a matter of free decision for the Spiritual Community. The reactions of many children shortly after their solemn and emotionally strained declaration of commitment show the psychologically unhealthy and theologically unjustifiable character of this act.

The situation is quite different if the precedence of the individual member over against the church is emphasized. In this case the decision of individuals to form a covenant is the act which creates a church. The presupposition, of course, is that such a decision is determined by the Spiritual Presence, which implies that the individuals who form a covenant do it as members of the Spiritual Community. This assumption diminishes and almost removes the contrast between the "objective" and the "subjective" type of church. In order to be able to create a church one must already be grasped by the Spiritual Presence and thus be a member of the Spiritual Community. Conversely, the bearers of the "objective" church (into which the baptized infant enters) are in their dynamic essence Spiritual personalities. The concept of the Spiritual Community overcomes the duality of the "objective" and the "subjective" interpretation of the church.

The actual situation of the individual in the churches of voluntary decision confirms the diminished significance of the distinction. From the second generation on, they are drawn by the atmosphere of family and society into the church whose actual presence precedes their voluntary decisions as much as it does in the opposite type.

The important question is: How does an individual participate in a church in such a way that, through it, he participates in the Spiritual Community as a Spiritual personality? The answer, already given, was a negative one: There is no moment in the life of a person which could be singled out as the beginning (or the end) of such a participation. This refers not only to the person who is born and reared in the atmosphere of a church-affiliated family, community, and society in general but also to the one who has experienced only secular ways of life and then joins a church in seriousness. Neither can determine the moment in which he essentially became a member of the Spiritual Community, although the moment in which he openly became a member of a church can be exactly stated. This assertion seems to contradict the concept of conversion, which plays such a role in both Testaments, in church history, and in the life of innumerable individuals in the Christian world and beyond it in all living religions. In this concept the event of conversion marks the moment in which a person enters the Spiritual Community.

But conversion is not necessarily a momentary event; it is in most cases a long process which has been going on unconsciously long before it breaks into consciousness, giving the impression of a sudden, unexpected, and overwhelming crisis. There are New Testament stories, such as that of Paul's conversion, which provided the pattern for this understanding of conversion, and there is an abundance of other such stories, many of them genuine and powerful, some of them sentimentally distorted for the sake of giving an example. It is unquestionable that such experiences are numerous and show most conspicuously the ecstatic character of the Spiritual Presence, but they do not-as pietism thinks-constitute the essence of conversion. The true nature of conversion is well expressed in the words denoting it in different languages. The word *shûbh* in Hebrew points to a turning around on one's way, especially in the social and political spheres. It points to a turning away from injustice toward justice, from inhumanity to humanity, from idols to God. The Greek word *metanoia* implies the same idea but in relation to the mind, which changes from one direction to another, from the temporal to the eternal, from oneself to God. The Latin word *conversio* (in German *Be-kehrung*) unites the spatial image with the intellectual content. These words and the images they provoke suggest two elements: the negation of a preceding direction of thought and action and the affirmation of the opposite direction. That which is negated is the bondage to existential estrangement and that which is affirmed is the New Being, created by the Spiritual Presence. The rejection of the negative with the whole of one's being is called repentance—a concept which must be freed from emotional distortion. The acceptance of the affirmative with the whole of one's being is called faith-a concept which must be freed from intellectual distor-

tion. The impact of the Spiritual Presence which is called conversion is effective in all the dimensions of human life because of the multidimensional unity of man. It is organic as well as psychological; it occurs under the predominance of the spirit and has a historical dimension. Nevertheless, the image of turning around in one's way produces the impression of something momentary and sudden, and, in spite of all pietistic misuse of it, the element of suddenness should not be excluded from a description of conversion. It is a decision, and the very word decision points to the momentary act of cutting off other possibilities. Yet, entering into the Spiritual Community is always prepared for by and always preserves elements of the past. It is a process that becomes manifest in an ecstatic moment. Without such preparation conversion would be an emotional outburst without consequences, soon swallowed by the old being instead of constituting the New Being.

Conversion can have the character of a transition from the latent stage of the Spiritual Community to its manifest stage. This is the real structure of conversion; it implies that repentance is not completely new and that neither is faith. For the Spiritual Presence creates both, even in the stage of the latency of the Spiritual Community. There is no absolute conversion, but there is relative conversion before and after the central event of somebody's "repenting" and "believing," of somebody's being grasped by the Spiritual Presence in a fertile moment, a *kairos*.

This has much bearing on the churches' evangelistic activity, the function of which is not that of converting people in an absolute sense but rather of converting them in the relative sense of transferring them from a latent to a manifest participation in the Spiritual Community. This means that the evangelist does not address "lost souls," men without God, but people in the stage of latency, to transform them into people who have experienced manifestation. And it should be remembered that experiences analogous to conversion have been described by Greek philosophers as experiences in which their eyes were opened. The conversion to philosophical truth is a subject discussed in all periods of history. This is an expression of the fact that the Spiritual Community is related to culture and morality as much as to religion and that where Spiritual Presence is at work a moment of radical change in the attitude to the ultimate is necessary.

b) The individual within the church and the experience of the New Being

(1) *THE* EXPERIENCE OF THE NEW BEING AS CREATION (REGENERATION).—He who enters a church, seen not as one sociological group among others but as that group whose dynamic essence is the Spiritual Community, and who is himself grasped by the Spiritual Presence is, in his dynamic essence, Spiritual personality. But in his actual being he is a member of a church who is subjected to the ambiguities of the religious life, though under the paradoxical impact of unambiguous life. This situation has been described in different ways according to the different points of view from which it has been considered. It seems to be adequate-and in line with the classical tradition-to call it the experience of the New Being and to distinguish several elements in it which-again in accordance with the classical tradition-can be described as the experience of the New Being as creating (regeneration), the experience of the New Being as paradox (justification), and the experience of the New Being as process (sanctification).

It may be asked whether it is correct to describe the ways of participating in the New Being as "experiences," since this word seems to introduce a questionable subjective element. However, it is the subject, that is, the Spiritual personality as a member of the church, of whom we speak here. The objective side of regeneration, justification, and sanctification has been discussed in the section entitled "The New Being in Jesus as the Christ as the Power of Salvation" (Part III, Sec. II E). "Experience" here simply means the awareness of something that happens to somebody, namely, the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. It has been asked whether this can ever become an object of experience and whether it must not remain an object of faith, in the sense of the sentences: "I believe that I believe," or "I have faith in the Spiritual Presence in me but I do not experience my faith, my love, my Spirituality." But even if I only believe that I believe, there must be a reason for such belief, and this reason must be some kind of participation in what I believe and therefore a kind of certainty which prevents an infinite regression of the type represented by the statement "I believe that I believe that I believe, and so on." However paradoxical one's theological statements may be, one cannot escape the necessity of naming a Spiritual foundation for these statements. This consideration jus-

tifies the use of the term "experience" for the awareness of the Spiritual Presence.

In biblical and theological literature, the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence is called "new birth" or "regeneration." The term "new birth" (like the Pauline term "New Creation") is a biblical precedent to the more abstract concept of New Being. Both point to the same reality, the event in which the divine Spirit takes hold of a personal life through the creation of faith.

The use of the word "experience," however, does not imply that he who is grasped by the Spiritual Presence can verify his experience through empirical observation. Though born anew, men are not yet new beings but have entered a new reality which can make them into new beings. Participating in the New Being does not automatically guarantee that one is new.

For this reason the theologians of the Reformation and their successors prefer to begin the description of man's participation in the New Being by emphasizing its paradoxical character, thus putting justification in the first place instead of regeneration. Their main concern was and is to avoid the impression that man's state of being born anew is the cause of his being accepted by God. In this they were certainly right, as they liberated estranged man from the anxiety of the questions: Am I really reborn? And if I am not, must not God reject me? Such questioning destroys the meaning of the "good news," which is that, although unacceptable, I am accepted. But then the question arises: How can I accept that I am accepted? What is the source of such faith? The only possible answer is: God himself as Spiritual Presence. Every other answer would degrade faith into a belief, an intellectual act produced by will and emotion. Such belief, however, is nothing but the acceptance of the doctrine of "justification by grace through faith"; it is not the acceptance that I am accepted, and it is not the faith meant in the word "justification." That faith is the creation of the Spirit; and it was a complete distortion of the message of justification when the doctrine appeared that the gift of the divine Spirit follows faith in divine forgiveness. For Luther there would be no greater, and in a sense no other, gift of the Spirit than the certainty of being accepted by God, the faith in God's justifying the sinner. But if this is affirmed, the participation in the New Being, the creation of the Spirit, is the first element in the

state of the individual in the church in so far as it is the actualization of the Spiritual Community.

If this is accepted the question is often asked: If the Spiritual Presence must grasp me and create faith in me, what can I do in order to reach such faith? I cannot force the Spirit upon myself; so what can I do but wait without acting? Sometimes this question is asked without seriousness, in an attitude of dialectical aggression, and does not really require an answer. No answer can be given to him who asks in this way, because every answer would tell him something he should do or be; it would contradict the faith for which he asks. If, however, the question-What can I do in order to experience the New Being?-is asked with existential seriousness, the answer is implied in the question, for existential seriousness is evidence of the impact of the Spiritual Presence upon an individual. He who is ultimately concerned about his state of estrangement and about the possibility of reunion with the ground and aim of his being is already in the grip of the Spiritual Presence. In this situation the question, What shall I do to receive the divine Spirit? is meaningless because the real answer is already given and any further answer would distort it.

In practical terms this means that the merely polemical question concerning the way to reunion of the estranged cannot be answered and must be exposed in its lack of seriousness. Thus he who asks with ultimate concern should be told that the fact of his ultimate concern implies the answer and therefore that he is under the impact of the Spiritual Presence and accepted in his state of estrangement. Finally, those who oscillate in their question between seriousness and the lack of it should be brought to an awareness of this situation-an awareness they can suppress and drop the question altogether or affirm and, in so doing, realize its seriousness.

(2) **THE EXPERIENCE OF THE NEW BEING AS PARADOX (JUSTIFICATION).**—In discussing the relation of regeneration to justification we have already begun the discussion of the central doctrine of the Reformation, the article by which Protestantism stands or falls, the principle of justification by grace through faith. I call it not only a doctrine and an article among others but also a principle, because it is the first and basic expression of the Protestant principle itself. It is only for unavoidable reasons of expediency a particular doctrine and should,

at the same time, be regarded as the principle which permeates every single assertion of the theological system. It should be regarded as the Protestant principle that, in relation to God, God alone can act and that no human claim, especially no religious claim, no intellectual or moral or devotional "work," can reunite us with him. It was my intention and it is my hope that this aim has been reached even if it has led to many quite "unorthodox" formulations in all parts of the system. The question that has always been before us is: Do other formulations impose an intellectual "good work" on the believer, for example, a repression of doubt or a sacrifice of the cognitive conscience, which caused the final formulation? In this sense the doctrine of justification is the universa1 principle of Protestant theology, but it is also a particular article in a particular section of the theological system.

The doctrine of justification puts before us several semantic problems. In the struggle with Rome about the *sola fide,* the doctrine became "justification by faith"-and not by "works." This, however, has led to a devastating confusion. Faith, in this phrase, has been understood as the cause of God's justifying act, which means that the moral and ritual works of Catholic teaching are replaced by the intellectual work of accepting a doctrine. Not faith but grace is the cause of justification, because God alone is the cause. Faith is the receiving act, and this act is itself a gift of grace. Therefore one should dispense completely with the phrase "justification by faith" and replace it by the formula "justification by grace through faith." It should be a serious concern in the teaching and preaching of every minister that this profound distortion of the "good news"' of the Christian message be remedied.

Another piece of semantic advice for teaching and preaching can be given in connection with the Pauline term "justification" itself. Paul used it in his discussion of the legalistic perversion of his message of the New Creation in the appearance of the Christ. The propagandists of this perversion, Christians who could not separate themselves from the commands of the Jewish law, spoke in terms of just, justice, justification (*tsedaqah* in Hebrew, *dikiosyne* in Greek). Paul himself had been educated in this terminology, which he could not abandon in the discussion with former members of the synagogue. Since it is a biblical term, it cannot be rejected in the Christian churches either, but it should be replaced in the practice of teaching and preaching by the term "acceptance," in the sense that we are accepted by God although being

unacceptable according to the criteria of the law (our essential being put against us) and that we are asked to accept this acceptance. Such terminology is itself acceptable by people for whom the Old and New Testament phrasing has lost all meaning, although there is a most serious existential meaning for them in the reality to which this phrasing points.

A third semantic question appears if one uses the term "forgiveness of sins" to express the paradoxical character of the experience of the New Being; It is a religious-symbolic expression taken from such 'human relations as that between the debtor and the one to whom he is in debt, the child and the father, the servant and the master, or the accused and the judge. As in every symbol, the analogy is limited. One limitation is that the relation between God and man does not have the character of a finite relationship between finite and estranged beings but is infinite and universal and unconditional in meaning and that divine forgiveness does not, as does every human forgiveness, require that he who forgives shall himself be forgiven. The second limitation of the analogy lies in the plural form of sin. Men forgive particular sins, for example, offenses against themselves or the trespass of concrete commands and laws. In relation to God, it is not the particular sin as such that is forgiven but the act of separation from God and the resistance to reunion with him. It is sin which is forgiven in the forgiving of a particular sin. The symbol of forgiveness of sins has proved dangerous because it has concentrated the mind on particular sins and their moral quality rather than on the estrangement from God and its religious quality. Nevertheless, the plural "sins" can stand for the singular "Sin" and point to the situation of man before God, and a particular trespass can even be experienced as a manifestation of Sin, the power of estrangement from our true being. It is one of the steps taken by Paul, as a theologian, beyond the symbolic language of Jesus, that he interpreted the acceptance of the divine forgiveness by the concept of justification by grace through faith. In doing so he answered the questions raised by the symbol of forgiveness, the questions of the relation of forgiveness to justice and of the basis for the certainty that one is forgiven. These questions are answered objectively in christological terms, an answer which underlies the doctrine of atonement, i.e., the doctrine of God's participation in man's existential estrangement and victory over it. Yet at the present point we seek the subjective answer to the questions:

How can man accept that he is accepted; how can he reconcile his feeling of guilt and his desire for punishment with the prayer of forgiveness; and what gives him the certainty that he is forgiven?

The answer lies in the unconditional character of the divine act in which God declares him who is unjust to be just. The paradox ***simul justus, simul peccator*** points to this unconditional divine declaration. If God accepted him who is half-sinner and half-just, his judgment would be conditioned by man's half-goodness. But there is nothing God rejects as strongly as half-goodness and every human claim based on it. The impact of this message, mediated by the Spiritual Presence, turns the eyes of man away from the bad and the good in himself to the infinite divine goodness, which is beyond good and bad and which gives itself without conditions and ambiguities. The moral demand for justice and the fearful desire for punishment are valid in the realm of the ambiguity of goodness. They express the human situation in itself. But within the New Being they are overcome by a justice which makes him who is unjust just, by acceptance. This transcendent justice does not negate but fulfils the ambiguous human justice. It fulfils also the truth in the demand for punishment by destroying what must be destroyed if reuniting love is to reach its aim. And, according to the profound psychology of Paul and Luther, this is not the evil in one's being as such but the ***hubris*** of trying to conquer it and to reach reunion with God by one's own good will. Such ***hubris*** avoids the pain of surrender to God's sole activity in our reunion with him, a pain which infinitely surpasses the pain of moral toil and ascetic self-torture. This surrender of one's own goodness occurs in him who accepts the divine acceptance of himself, the unacceptable. The courage to surrender one's own goodness to God is the central element in the courage of faith. In it the paradox of the New Being is experienced, the ambiguity of good and evil is conquered, unambiguous life has taken hold of man through the impact of the Spiritual Presence.

All this is manifest through the picture of Jesus the Crucified. God's acceptance of the unacceptable, God's participation in man's estrangement, and his victory over the ambiguity of good and evil appear in a unique, definite, and transforming way in him. It appears in him, but it is not caused by him. The cause is God and God alone.

The paradox of the New Being, the principle of justification by grace through faith, lies at the center of the experiences of Paul, Augustine,

and Luther, but it is differently colored in each of them. In Paul the emphasis lies on the conquest of the law in the new eon which has been brought by the Christ. This message of justification has a cosmic frame in which individuals may or may not participate. In Augustine grace has the character of a substance, infused into men, which creates love and establishes the last period of history in which the Christ rules through the church. It is God and God alone who does this. The fate of man is dependent on predestination. The forgiveness of sins is a presupposition of the infusion of love, but it is not an expression of the continuous relation to God. Therefore the individual becomes dependent on his relation to the church. In Luther justification is the individual person's experience of both the divine wrath against his sin and the divine forgiveness which leads to a person-to-person relation with God without the cosmic and ecclesiastical framework of Paul or Augustine. This is the limitation in Luther's thought which has led both to an intellectual orthodoxy and to an emotional pietism. The subjective element was not counterbalanced in him. But his "psychology of acceptance" is the profoundest one in church history and confirmed by the best insights of contemporary "psychology of depth."

There is one question which was neither asked nor answered by Paul or Luther, although an awareness of it was shown by John and Augustine: How is the faith through which justification comes to us related to the situation of radical doubt? Radical doubt is existential doubt concerning the meaning of life itself; it may include not only the rejection of everything religious in the narrow sense of the word but also the ultimate concern which constitutes religion in the larger sense. If a person in this predicament hears the message of God's accepting the unacceptable, it cannot concern him because the term "God" and the problem of being accepted or rejected by God has no meaning for him. Paul's question, How do I become liberated from the law? and Luther's question, **How** do I find a merciful God? are replaced in our period by the question, How do I **find** meaning in a meaningless world? The question of John about the manifestation of truth and his assertion that the Christ ***is*** the truth, as well as the statements of Augustine concerning the truth that appears in the very nature of doubt, are nearer to our present situation than the questions and answers of Paul and Luther. But our answer must be derived from the special situation which we encounter, though on the basis of the message of the New Being.

The first part of every answer to this problem must be negative: God as the truth and the source of meaning cannot be reached by intellectual work, as he cannot be reached by moral work. The question, What can I do to overcome radical doubt and the feeling of meaninglessness? cannot be answered, because every answer would justify the question, which implies that something can be done. But the paradox of the New Being is just that nothing can be done by man who is in the situation in which he asks the question. One can only say, while rejecting the form of the question, that the seriousness of despair in which the question is asked is itself the answer. This is in the line of Augustine's argument, that in the situation of doubt the truth from which one feels separated is present in so far as in every doubt the formal affirmation of truth as truth is presupposed. But the analogous affirmation of meaning within meaninglessness is also related to the paradox of justification. It is the problem of the justification, not of the sinner, but of him who doubts, which has led to this solution. Since in the predicament of doubt and meaninglessness God as the source of the justifying act has disappeared, the only thing left (in which God reappears without being recognized) is the ultimate honesty of doubt and the unconditional seriousness of the despair about meaning. This is the way in which the experience of the New Being as paradox can be applied to the cognitive function. It is the way in which the people of our time can be told that they are accepted with respect to the ultimate meaning of their lives, although unacceptable in view of the doubt and meaninglessness which has taken hold of them. In the seriousness of their existential despair, God is present to them. To accept this paradoxical acceptance is the courage of their faith.

(3) THE EXPERIENCE OF THE NEW BEING AS PROCESS (SANCTIFICATION)

(a) ***Contrasting types in the description of the*** process.-The impact of the Spiritual Presence on the individual results in a life process based on the experience of regeneration, qualified by the experience of justification, and developing as the experience of sanctification. The character of the experience of sanctification cannot be derived from the word itself. Originally, justification and sanctification pointed to the same reality, i.e., the conquest of the ambiguities of the personal life. But slowly, especially under the influence of Paul, the term "justification" received the connotation of the paradoxical acceptance of him who is unaccepmble, while "sanctification" received the connotation of actual transformation. In this sense it is synonymous with life process under the impact of the Spirit. It has always been an important theological task to describe the character of this process, and different descriptions were often expressions of different ways of life which, at the same time, received confirmation from the theological emphasis.

If we compare the attitudes of Lutheran, Calvinist, and Evangelical-Radical theology toward the character of the Christian life, differences appear which had and have consequences for religion and culture in all Protestant countries. Although all Protestants rejected the "law" as preached and administered by the Roman church, important differences arose when the Protestant churches tried to formulate their own doctrines of the law. Luther and Calvin agreed about two functions of the law, the function of directing the life of the political group by preventing or punishing transgressions and the function of showing man what he essentially is and therefore ought to be and the extent to which his actual state contradicts the image of his true being. By showing his essence, the law reveals man's estranged existence-and drives him to the quest for a reunion with what essentially belongs to him and from which he is estranged. This is the common position of Luther and Calvin. But Calvin spoke of a third function of the law, namely, the function of guiding the Christian who is grasped by the divine Spirit but who is not yet free from the power of the negative in knowledge and action. Luther rejected this solution, asserting that the Spirit itself leads to decisions in which the ambiguity of life is conquered. The Spirit, by liberating a person from the letter of the law, gives both insight into the concrete situation and the power to act in this situation according to the call of agape. Calvin's solution is more realistic, more able to support an ethical theory and a disciplined life of sanctification. Luther's solution is more ecstatic, unable to support a "Protestant ethics" but full of creative possibilities in the personal life. The churches born from the Evangelical Radicalism of the Reformation period accepted from Calvinism the doctrine of the third use of the law and the discipline as a tool in the process of sanctification. But in contrast to Calvin, they have lost the understanding of the paradoxical character of the churches and of the life of the individuals in them. They practically deny the lasting significance of the great "in spite of" in the process of sanctification. In

this point they return to ascetic Catholic traditions: perfection can be attained in this life in those individuals and groups who are selected as bearers of the divine Spirit.

The consequences for the understanding of the Christian life based on these different attitudes toward the law are far-reaching. In Calvinism sanctification proceeds in a slowly upward-turning line; both faith and love are progressively actualized. The power of the divine Spirit in the individual increases. Perfection is approached, though never reached. The original Evangelical Radicals rejected this restriction and reaffirmed the concept of the perfect ones but in such a way that the paradoxical character of Christian perfection becomes invisible. Actual perfection is demanded and deemed to be possible. In the selected group the holiness of the whole and the saintliness of the individuals are actual, in contrast to the "world," which includes the large churches. Obviously, the situation became rather problematic when the holiness sects themselves became large churches. Then, although the ideal of the unparadoxical holiness of every member of the group could not be sustained, the perfectionist ideal remained in force and produced the identification of the Christian message of salvation with moral perfection in the individual members. Calvinism, with its perfectionist elements (though not perfectionism), has produced a type of Protestant ethics in which progressive sanctification is the aim of life. It had a tremendous effect in shaping powerful, self-controlled personalities. Desirous of observing within themselves symptoms of their election, they produced these symptoms by what has been called "inner-worldly asceticism," i.e., by work, self-control, and repression of vitality, especially in relation to sex. These perfectionistic tendencies were strengthened when the perfectionism of the Evangelicals merged with the perfectionist elements of Calvinism.

In Lutheranism the emphasis on the paradoxical element in the experience of the New Being was so predominant that sanctification could not be interpreted in terms of a line moving upward toward perfection. It was seen instead as an up-and-down of ecstasy and anxiety, of being grasped by agape and being thrown back into estrangement and ambiguity. This oscillation between up and down was experienced radically by Luther himself, in the change between moments of courage and joy and moments of demonic attacks, as he interpreted his states of doubt and profound despair. The consequence of the absence in Lutheranism of the Calvinistic and Evangelistic valuation of discipline was that the ideal of progressive sanctification was taken less seriously and replaced by a great emphasis on the paradoxical character of the Christian life. In the period of orthodoxy, this led Lutheranism to that disintegration of morality and practical religion against which the Pietistic movement arose. But Luther's experience of demonic attacks led also to a deep understanding of the demonic elements in life in general and in the religious life in particular. The second period of romanticism, in which the existentialist movement of the twentieth century was prepared, could hardly have sprung from Calvinist-Evangelical soil, whereas it was genuine in a culture permeated by Lutheran traditions. (An analogy can be observed in Russian literature and philosophy arising from the basis of Greek Orthodox traditions.)

(b) ***Four principles determining the New Being as*** process.-The exclusiveness of the different types of interpreting the process of sanctification is diminishing under the impact of secular criticism which questions the significance of all of them. Therefore we must ask whether we can find criteria for a future doctrine of life under the Spiritual Presence. One may give the following principles: first, increasing awareness; second, increasing freedom; third, increasing relatedness; fourth, increasing transcendence. How these principles will unite in a new type of life under the Spiritual Presence cannot be described before it happens, but elements of such a life can be seen in individuals and groups who anticipated what may possibly lie in the future.The principles themselves unite religious as well as secular traditions and can, in their totality, create an indefinite but distinguishable image of the "Christian life."

The principle of awareness is related to contemporary depth psychology, but it is as old as religion itself and is sharply expressed in the New Testament. It is the principle according to which man in the process of sanctification becomes increasingly aware of his actual situation and of the forces struggling around him and his humanity but also becomes aware of the answers to the questions implied in this situation. Sanctification includes awareness of the demonic as well as of the divine. Such awareness, which increases in the process of sanctification, does not lead to the Stoic "wise man," who is superior to the ambiguities of life because he has conquered his passions and desires, but rather to an awareness of these ambiguities in himself, as in everyone, and-to. the power of affirming life and its vital dynamics in spite of its ambiguities. Such

awareness includes sensitivity toward the demands of one's own growth, toward the hidden hopes and disappointments within others, toward the voiceless voice of a concrete situation, toward the grades of authenticity in the life of the spirit in others and oneself. All this is not a matter of cultural education or sophistication but of growth under the impact of the Spiritual power and it is therefore noticeable in every human being who is open to this impact. The aristocracy of the spirit and the aristocracy of the Spirit are not identical, although they overlap in part.

The second principle of the process of sanctification is the principle of increasing freedom. The emphasis on it is especially conspicuous in Paul's and Luther's descriptions of life in the Spirit. In contemporary literature the oracles of Nietzsche and the existentialist struggle for the freedom of man's personal self from slavery to the objects he has produced are most important. Here also depth psychology contributes by its claim to liberate men from particular compulsions which are impediments to growth in Spiritual freedom. Growth in Spiritual freedom is first of all growth in freedom from the law. This follows immediately from the interpretation of the law as man's essential being confronting him in the state of estrangement. The more one is reunited with his true being under the impact of the Spirit, the more one is free from the commandments of the law. This process is most difficult, and maturity in it is very rare. The fact that reunion is fragmentary implies that freedom from the law is always fragmentary. In so far as we are estranged, prohibitions and commandments appear and produce an uneasy conscience. In so far as we are reunited, we actualize what we essentially are in freedom, without command. Freedom from the law in the process of sanctification is the increasing freedom from the commanding form of the law. But it is also freedom from its particular content. Specific laws, expressing the experience and wisdom of the past, are not only helpful, they are also oppressive, because they cannot meet the ever concrete, ever new, ever unique situation. Freedom from the law is the power to judge the given situation in the light of the Spiritual Presence and to decide upon adequate action, which is often in seeming contradiction to the law. This is what is meant when the spirit of the law is contrasted with its letter (Paul) or when the Spirit-determined self is empowered to write a new and better law than Moses (Luther) or-in a secularized form-when the bearer of freedom revaluates all values (Nietzsche) or when the existing subject resolves

the impasse of existence by resoluteness (Heidegger). The mature freedom to give new laws or to apply the old ones in a new way is an aim of the process of sanctification. The danger that such freedom may turn out to be wilfulness is overcome wherever the reuniting power of the Spiritual Presence is effective. Wilfulness is a symptom of estrangement and a surrender to enslaving conditions and compulsions. Mature freedom from the law implies the power of resisting the forces which try to destroy such freedom from inside the personal self and from its social surroundings; and, of course, the enslaving powers from outside can succeed only because there are inside trends toward servitude. Resistance against both may include ascetic decisions and readiness for martyrdom, but the significance of these actions lies in the demand upon them to help preserve freedom in the concrete situation and not in their providing a higher degree of sanctity itself. They are tools under special conditions but are not themselves aims in the process of sanctification.

The third principle is that of increasing relatedness. It balances, so to speak, the principle of increasing freedom which, through the necessity of resisting enslaving influences, may isolate the maturing person. Both freedom and relatedness, as well as awareness and self-transcendence, are rooted in the Spiritual creations of faith and love. They are present whenever the Spiritual Presence is manifest. They are the conditions of participation in regeneration and acceptance of justification, and they determine the process of sanctification. But the way in which they do so is characterized by the four principles which qualify the New Being as process. For example, the principle of increasing freedom cannot be imagined without the courage to risk a wrong decision on the basis of faith, and the principle of increasing relatedness cannot be imagined without the reuniting power of *agape* to overcome ***self-seclusion*** fragmentarily. But in both cases the principles of sanctification make the basic manifestation of the Spiritual Presence concrete for the progress toward maturity.

Relatedness implies the awareness of the other one and the freedom to relate to him by overcoming self-seclusion within oneself and within the other one. There are innumerable barriers to this process as may be learned from the large body of literature (with analogies in the visual arts) in which the self-seclusion of the individual from others is described. The analyses of introversion and hostility given in these

works are interdependent with the psychotherapeutic analyses of the same structures. And the biblical accounts of relatedness within the Spiritual Community presuppose the same unrelatedness in the pagan world out of which its members came, an unrelatedness still ambiguously present in actual congregations.

The New Being as process drives toward a mature relatedness. The divine Spirit has rightly been described as the power of breaking through the walls of self-seclusion. There is no way of overcoming self-seclusion lastingly other than the impact of the power which elevates the individual person above himself ecstatically and enables him to find the other person-if the other person is also ready to be elevated above himself. All other relations are transitory and ambiguous. They certainly exist and fill the daily life, but they are symptoms of estrangement as much as of reunion. All human relations have this character. Alone, they cannot conquer loneliness, self-seclusion, and hostility. Only a relation which is inherent in all other relations, and which can even exist without them, is able to do so. Sanctification, or the process toward Spiritual maturity, conquers loneliness by providing for solitude and communion in interdependence. A decisive symptom of Spiritual maturity is the power to sustain solitude. Sanctification conquers introversion by turning the personal center not outward, in extroversion, but toward the dimension of its depth and its height. Relatedness needs the vertical dimension in order to actualize itself in the horizontal dimension.

This is also true of self-relatedness. The state of loneliness, introversion, and hostility is just as contrary to self-relatedness as it is to relatedness to others. The species of terms having self as the first syllable is dangerously ambiguous. The term "self-centeredness" can be used to describe the greatness of man as a fully centered self or an ethically negative attitude of bondage to one's self; the terms "self-love" and "self-hate" are difficult to understand because it is impossible to separate the self as subject of love or hate from the self as object. But there is no real love or real hate without such separation. The same ambiguity damages the term "self-relatedness." Nevertheless we must use such terms, conscious of the fact that they are used analogically and not properly.

In the analogical sense, one can speak of the process of sanctification as creating a mature self-relatedness in which self-acceptance conquers both self-elevation and self-contempt in a process of reunion with one's

self. Such a reunion is created by transcending both the self as subject, which tries to impose itself in terms of self-control and selfdiscipline on the self as object, and the self as object, which resists such imposition in terms of self-pity and flight from one's self. A mature self-relatedness is the state of reconciliation between the self as subject and the self as object and the spontaneous affirmation of one's essential being beyond subject and object. As the process of sanctification approaches a more mature self-relatedness, the individual is more spontaneous, more self-affirming, without self-elevation or self-humiliation.

The "search for identity" is the search for what has here been called "self-relatedness." Properly understood, this search is not the desire to preserve an accidental state of the existential self, the self in estrangement but rather the drive toward a self which transcends every contingent state of its development and which remains unaltered in its essence through such changes. The process of sanctification runs toward a state in which the "search for identity" reaches its goal, which is the identity of the essential self shining through the contingencies of the existing self.

The fourth principle determining the process of sanctification is the principle of self-transcendence. The aim of maturity under the impact of the Spiritual Presence comprises awareness, freedom, and relatedness, but in each case we have found that the aim cannot be reached without an act of self-transcendence. This implies that sanctification is not possible without a continuous transcendence of oneself in the direction of the ultimate--in other words, without participation in the holy.

This participation is usually described as the devotional life under the Spiritual Presence. This description is justified if the term "devotion" is understood in such a way that the holy embraces both itself and the secular. If it is used exclusively in the ordinary sense of the devotional life-a life centered in prayer as a particular act-it does not exhaust the possibilities of self-transcendence. In the mature life, determined by the Spiritual Presence, participation in the devotional life of the congregation may be restricted or refused, prayer may be subordinated to meditation, religion in the narrower sense of the word may be denied in the name of religion in the larger sense of the word; but all this does not contradict the principle of self-transcendence. It may even happen that an increased experience of transcendence leads to an increase in criticism of religion as a special function. But in spite of these qualifying

statements, "self-transcendence" is identical with the attitude of devotion toward that which is ultimate.

In discussion of the devotional life the distinction is often made between organized or formalized and private devotion. This distinction has a very limited significance. He who prays in solitude prays in the words of the religious tradition which has given him the language, and he who contemplates without words also participates in a long tradition which is represented by religious men inside and outside the churches. The distinction is meaningful only in so far as it affirms that there is no law which requires participation in the religious services in the name of the Spiritual Presence. Luther reacted violently against such a law, but at the same time he created a liturgy for Protestant services and one can say in general that withdrawal from communal devotion is dangerous because it easily produces a vacuum in which the devotional life disappears altogether.

The self-transcendence which belongs to the principles of sanctification is actual in every act in which the impact of the Spiritual Presence is experienced. This can be in prayer or meditation in total privacy, in the exchange of Spiritual experiences with others, in communications on a secular basis, in the experience of creative works of man's spirit, in the midst of labor or rest, in private counseling, in church services. It is like the breathing-in of another air, an elevation above average existence. It is the most important thing in the process of Spiritual maturity. Perhaps one can say that with increasing maturity in the process of sanctification the transcendence becomes more definite and its expressions more indefinite. Participation in communal devotion may decrease and the religious symbols connected with it may become less important, while the state of being ultimately concerned may become more manifest and the devotion to the ground and aim of our being more intensive.

This element in the reality of the New Being as process has caused the so-called resurgence of religion in the decades following the Second World War. People have felt that the experience of transcendence is necessary for a life in which a New Being becomes actual. The awareness of such a demand is widespread, the freedom from prejudice against religion as the mediator of transcendence increasing. In the present situation what one wants is concrete symbols of self-transcendence.

In light of the four principles which determine the New Being as process we can say: The Christian life never reaches the state of perfection-it always remains an up-and-down course-but in spite of its mutable character it contains a movement toward maturity, however fragmentary the mature state may be. It is manifest in the religious as well as the secular life, and it transcends both of them in the power of the Spiritual Presence.

(c) ***Images of perfection.***—The differences in the description of the Christian life lead to differences in the description of the ideal goal of sanctification, the ***sanctus,*** the saint. In the New Testament the term "saint," ***hagios,*** designates all members of the congregation, including those who, in terms of what saintliness means today, were certainly not saints. The term "saint" has the same paradoxical implication, when applied to the individual Christian, as the term "holiness" has when applied to the church. Both are holy because of the holiness of their function, the New Being in the Christ. This paradoxical meaning of saintliness was lost when the early church attributed a special saintliness to the ascetics and the martyrs. In comparison with them the ordinary members of the church ceased to be saints, and a double standard of judging saintliness was introduced. Nevertheless, the idea was not that the saint represented moral superiority over the others; his saintliness was his transparency to the divine. This transparency expressed itself not only in his words and his personal excellence but also-and decisively so-in his power over nature and man. A saint, according to this doctrine, is one who has performed some miracles. Miracles prove the superiority of the saint over nature, not in a moral, but in a Spiritual sense. Saintliness is transmoral in essence. Nevertheless, Protestantism has rejected the concept of the saint altogether. There are no Protestant saints or, more precisely, no saints under the criterion of the Protestant principle. One can distinguish three reasons for this rejection. First, it seems unavoidable that the distinction between those who are called saints and the other Christians establishes a state of perfection which contradicts the paradox of justification, according to which it is the sinner who is justified. Saints are justified sinners; in this they are equal to anyone. Second, the Reformation protest was directed against a situation in which the saints had become objects of a cult. One cannot deny that this was the case in the Roman church, in spite of the theological precautions the church had taken to prevent it. The church could not

succeed because it gave in too readily to the superstitions connected with it and because it was successful in crushing the iconoclastic movements which tried to reduce the danger by removing the visible representations of the saints. Finally, Protestantism could not accept the Roman idea of the saint because it was connected with a dualistic valuation of asceticism. Protestantism does not recognize saints, but it does recognize sanctification, and it can accept representations of the impact of the Spiritual Presence on man. These representative persons are no more saints than any member of the Spiritual Community, however fragmentary his participation may be, but they represent the others as symbols of sanctification. They are examples of the embodiment of the Spirit in bearers of a personal self and as such are of tremendous importance for the life of the churches. But they are also, in every moment of their lives, both estranged and reunited, and it may be that in their inner selves not only the divine but also the demonic forces are extraordinarily strong-as medieval art expressively shows. Protestantism can find representatives of the power of the New Being in the religious as well as in the secular realm, not as a particular grade of sanctity, but as representatives and symbols of that in which all participate who are grasped by the Spirit.

The image of perfection is patterned after the creations of the Spirit, faith and love, and after the four principles determining the process of sanctification-increasing awareness, increasing freedom, increasing relatedness, increasing transcendence.

There are two realms of problems connected with the foundation of perfection on faith and love which need some further discussion. The first is the question of doubt in relation to the increase in faith; the second is the question of the relation of the *eros*-quality of love to the increase in its agape-quality. Both questions, which have been partly discussed in earlier contexts, appear at this point in connection with the New Being as process and the fourfold form of its increase toward maturity.

The first question is: What does doubt mean within the process of sanctification? Does the state of perfection include the removal of doubt ? In Roman Catholicism such a question can only mean whether the Catholic believer in the state of perfection, for example, as a saint, can doubt the system of doctrines, or any part of it, laid down by the authority of the church without losing the state of perfection. The answer is

obviously no, because whenever sanctification has been attained the authority of the church is, according to Roman teaching, unconditionally accepted. This answer is of course imposed by the identification of the Spiritual Community with a church and must, consequently, be rejected in the name of the Protestant principle.

In practice both orthodox Protestantism and pietism agree fundamentally with the Catholic answer—in spite of the Protestant principle. The intellectualistic distortion of faith into acceptance of the literal authority of the Bible (which in practice means the authority of the ecclesiastical creeds) leads orthodoxy to an idea of perfection in which doubt is banned while sin is considered unavoidable. Against this assertion, one could point to the fact that there is a doubt that is an unavoidable implication of sin, both being expressions of the state of estrangement. But the problem is not that of doubt as a consequence of sin; the problem is that of doubt as an element of faith. And just this must be asserted from the point of view of the Protestant principle. The infinite distance between God and man is never bridged; it is identical with man's finitude. Therefore creative courage is an element of faith even in the state of perfection, and where there is courage, there is risk and the doubt implied in risk. Faith would not be faith but mystical union were it deprived of the element of doubt within it.

Pietism, in contrast to orthodoxy, is aware of the fact that subjection to doctrinal laws cannot overcome doubt. Therefore it seeks for the conquest of doubt in experiences which are anticipations of the mystical union with God. The feeling of regeneration, of a reunion with God, of a resting in the saving power of the New Being, drives doubt away. In contrast to orthodoxy, pietism represents the principle of immediacy. Immediacy gives certainty, a certainty which obedience to a doctrinal authority cannot give, But one must ask: Does the religious experience of a man in an advanced stage of sanctification remove the possibility of doubt? Again we must answer no. Doubt is unavoidable as long as there is separation of subject and object, and even the most immediate and intimate feeling of union with the divine, as in the bride-mysticism describing the union of the Christ and the soul, cannot bridge the infinite distance between the finite self and the infinite by which it is grasped. In the oscillations of feeling, this distance is perceived and often throws him who is advanced in sanctification into a profounder doubt than people with less intensity in their religious experience. The

question asked here is not a psychological one; it does not refer to the psychological possibility but to the theological necessity of doubt in the faith of the pietist. The psychological possibility is always present; the theological necessity may or may not appear in reality. But theology must state the necessity of doubt which follows from man's finitude under the conditions of existential estrangement.

The second question is that of the relation of the *eros*-quality of love to its increase in agape-quality. We touched on this problem when we rejected the higher religious quality of asceticism in describing the image of the saint and the Protestant image of a personality who represents conspicuously the impact of the Spiritual power in him. The problem has been confused by the gap which has been established between *eros* and *agape—eros* embracing *libido, philia,* and *eros* in the Platonic sense, and *agape* designating the New Testament concept of love. Although the establishment of this contrast has been criticized from several sides, its effect is still very strong, partly because it drew attention to a fundamental problem of life under the impact of the divine Spirit. At the same time the psychoanalytic movement in all its branches has destroyed the ideologies of Christian and humanist moralism. It has shown how deeply even the most sublime functions of the spirit are rooted in the vital trends of human nature. Further, the doctrine of the multidimensional unity of life in man requires the rejection of any attempt to suppress vitality for the sake of the spirit and its functions. An increase in awareness, freedom, relatedness, and transcendence does not imply a decrease in vital self-expression; on the contrary, spirit and life in the other dimensions are interdependent. This does not mean that all of them must always be actualized, for this would contradict man's finitude. And often a non-ascetic, yet equally strict, discipline supported by creative *eros* and wisdom is required. But directing one's life toward an integration of as many elements as possible is not identical with an acceptance of repressive practices as they are used in Roman asceticism as well as in Protestant moralism. The uncovering of the distorting consequences of such repression has been shown most convincingly by analytic psychotherapy and its application to the normal human being. This is one of its great services to theology. If the theologian tries to describe the New Being as process, he cannot afford to neglect analytic psychology's insights into the psychodynamics of repression.

Theology should not take the consequences of these insights too lightly; they are, indeed, most serious in their effect on the image of perfection. It is not sufficient, and almost a caricature, if pastoral preaching and counseling recommend the "innocent pleasures of life," thus opening the way to the wrong assumption that some pleasures are in themselves innocent and others guilty instead of encouraging a recognition of the ambiguity of creativity and destruction in every pleasure as well as in everything that is called serious. No pleasure is harmless, and seeking for harmless pleasures leads to a shallow valuation of the power of the vital dynamics in human nature. This condescension toward the vital life of man together with a kind of permissiveness toward childish pleasures is worse than genuine asceticism; it leads to continuous explosions of the repressed and only superficially admitted forces in the totality of man's being. And such explosions are personally and socially destructive. He who admits the vital dynamics in man as a necessary element in all his self-expressions (his passions or his *eros*) must know that he has accepted life in its divine-demonic ambiguity and that it is the triumph of the Spiritual Presence to draw these depths of human nature into its sphere, instead of replacing them with the help of suppression by the niceties of "harmless" pleasures. There is no nicety in the images of perfection in the saints of the Catholic church or in representatives of the new piety of the Reformation. He who tries to avoid the demonic side of the holy also misses its divine side and gains but a deceptive security between them. The image of perfection is the man who, on the battlefield between the divine and the demonic, prevails against the demonic, though fragmentarily and in anticipation. This is the experience in which the image of perfection under the impact of the Spiritual Presence transcends the humanistic ideal of perfection. It is not a negative attitude to human potentialities that produces the contrast but the awareness of the undecided struggle between the divine and the demonic in every man, which in humanism is replaced by the ideal of harmonious self-actualization. And it is the quest for the Spiritual Presence and the New Being as the conquest of the demonic that is lacking in the humanistic image of man and against which humanism rebels.

In Protestant orthodoxy the highest point reached in the process of sanctification is the *unio mystica* (mystical union). This idea, which was easily accepted by pietism, was radically rejected-as was all mysti-

cism-by the personalistic theology of the Ritschlian school. There is, certainly, much mysticism in the image of perfection in the saints of the Roman church. But Protestantism-as the Ritschlian theologians contended-must get rid of these elements which contradict both the aim of sanctification, the personal relation to God, and the way to this aim, the faith which rejects any ascetic preparation for mystical experiences together with these experiences themselves.

The question which arises from the extended discussions about faith and mysticism in Protestant theology is that of the compatibility and, even more, the interdependence of the two. They are compatible only if the one is an element of the other; two attitudes toward the ultimate could not exist beside each other if the one were not given with the other. This is the case in spite of all antimystical tendencies in Protestantism; there is no faith (but only belief) without the Spirit's grasping the personal center of him who is in the state of faith, and this is a mystical experience, an experience of the presence of the infinite in the finite. As an ecstatic experience, faith is mystical, although it does not produce mysticism as a religious type. But it does include the mystical as a category, that is, the experience of the Spiritual Presence. Every experience of the divine is mystical because it transcends the cleavage between subject and object, and wherever this happens, the mystical as category is given. The same is true from the other side. There is faith in mystical experience. This follows from the fact that both faith and mystical experience are states of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. But the mystical experience is not identical with faith. In faith the elements of courage and risk are actual, whereas in the mystical experience these elements, which presuppose the cleavage between subject and object, are left behind. The question is not whether faith and mysticism contradict each other; they do not. The real question is whether the transcending of the split of subject and object is a possibility in man's existential situation. The answer is that it is a reality in every encounter with the divine ground of being but within the limits of human finitude and estrangement-fragmentary, anticipatory and threatened by the ambiguities of religion. However, this is no reason to exclude the mystical experience from the Protestant interpretation of sanctification. Mysticism as a quality of every religious experience is universally valid. Mysticism as a type of religion stands under the same qualifications and

ambiguities as the opposite type, which is often called-wrongly-the type of faith. The fact that Protestantism did not understand its relation to mysticism has produced tendencies which reject Christianity altogether for Eastern mysticism, for example, of the Zen Buddhist type. The alliance of psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism in some members of the upper classes of Western society (those within the Protestant tradition) is a symptom of dissatisfaction with a Protestantism in which the mystical element is lost.

If the question is raised as to how such a Protestant mysticism can be described, I would refer to what was said about prayer transforming itself into contemplation, and I would refer to the sacred silence which has entered most Protestant liturgies and to the emphasis on the liturgical over against preaching and teaching. Only that is impossible in the spirit of Protestantism which attempts to produce a mysticism through ascetic or other means, which ignores human guilt and divine acceptance, i.e., which ignores the principles of the New Being as justification.

4. The Conquest of Religion by the Spiritual Presence and the Protestant Principle

In so far as the Spiritual Presence is effective in the churches and their individual members, it conquers religion as a particular function of the human spirit. When contemporary theology rejects the name "religion" for Christianity, it is in the line of New Testament thought. The coming of the Christ is not the foundation of a new religion but the transformation of the old state of things. Consequently, the church is not a religious community but the anticipatory representation of a new reality, the New Being as community. In the same way, the individual member of the church is not a religious personality but the anticipatory representation of a new reality, the New Being as personality. Everything said heretofore about the churches and the life of their members points in the direction of a conquest of religion. Conquest of religion does not mean secularization but rather the closing of the gap between the religious and the secular by removing both through the Spiritual Presence. This is the meaning of faith as the state of being grasped by that which concerns us ultimately and not as a set of beliefs, even if the object of belief is a divine being. This is the meaning of love as reunion of the

separated in all dimensions, including that of the spirit, and not as an act of negation of all dimensions for the sake of a transcendence without dimensions.

In so far as religion is conquered by the Spiritual Presence, profanization and demonization are conquered. The inner-religious profanization of religion, its transformation into a sacred mechanism of hierarchical structure, doctrine, and ritual, is resisted by the participation of church members in the Spiritual Community, which is the dynamic essence of the churches and of which the churches are both the existential representation and the existential distortion. The freedom of the Spirit breaks through mechanizing profanization-as it did in the creative moments of the Reformation. In doing so it also resists the secular form of profanization, for the secular as secular lives from the protest against the profanization of religion within itself. If this protest becomes meaningless, the functions of morality and culture are opened again for the ultimate, the aim of the self-transcendence of life.

Demonization is also conquered in so far as religion is conquered by the Spiritual Presence. We have distinguished between the demonic that is hidden-the affirmation of a greatness which leads to the tragic conflict with the "great itself"-and the openly demonic-the affirmation of a finite as infinite in the name of the holy. Both the tragic and the demonic are conquered in principle by the Spiritual Presence. Christianity has always claimed that neither the death of the Christ nor the suffering of Christians is tragic, because neither is rooted in the affirmation of its greatness but in the participation in the predicament of estranged man to which each belongs and does not belong. If Christianity teaches that the Christ and the martyrs suffered "innocently," this means that their suffering is not based on the tragic guilt of self-affirmed greatness but on their willingness to participate in the tragic consequences of human estrangement.

Self-affirmed greatness in the realm of the holy is demonic. This is true of the claim of a church to represent in its structure the Spiritual Community unambiguously. The consequent will to unlimited power over all things holy and secular is in itself the judgment against a church which makes this claim. The same is true of individuals who, as adherents of a group making such a claim, become self-assured, fanatical, and destructive of life in others and the meaning of life within themselves. But in so far as the divine Spirit conquers religion, it prevents the claim to absoluteness by both the churches and their members. Where the divine Spirit is effective, the claim of a church to represent God to the exclusion of all other churches is rejected. The freedom of the Spirit resists it. And when the divine Spirit is effective, a church member's claim to an exclusive possession of the truth is undercut by the witness of the divine Spirit to his fragmentary as well as ambiguous participation in the truth. The Spiritual Presence excludes fanaticism, because in the presence of God no man can boast about his grasp of God. No one can grasp that by which he is grasped-the Spiritual Presence.

In other connections I have called this truth the "Protestant principle." It is here that the Protestant principle has its place in the theological system. The Protestant principle is an expression of the conquest of religion by the Spiritual Presence and consequently an expression of the victory over the ambiguities of religion, its profanization, and its demonization. It is Protestant, because it protests against the tragic-demonic self-elevation of religion and liberates religion from itself for the other functions of the human spirit, at the same time liberating these functions from their self-seclusion against the manifestations of the ultimate. The Protestant principle (which is a manifestation of the prophetic Spirit) is not restricted to the churches of the Reformation or to any other church; it transcends every particular church, being an expression of the Spiritual Community. It has been betrayed by every church, including the churches of the Reformation, but it is also effective in every church as the power which prevents profanization and demonization from destroying the Christian churches completely. It alone is not enough; it needs the "Catholic substance," the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence; but it is the criterion of the demonization (and profanization) of such embodiment. It is the expression of the victory of the Spirit over religion.

B. THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF CULTURE

1. Religion and Culture in the Light of the Spiritual Presence

The relation of the Spiritual Presence to religion has two aspects, because both the profoundest ambiguity of life and the power of conquering the ambiguities of life are manifest in religion. This in itself is the basic ambiguity of religion and the root of all its other ambiguities.

The relation between religion and culture, their essential unity and their existential separation, has been discussed. At this point the question arises as to how this relation appears in the light of the Spiritual Presence and its basic creation, the Spiritual Community, the community of faith and love. The first thing to be emphasized is that the relation is not identical with the relation of the churches to the culture in which they live. Since the churches themselves are distortions as well as representations of the Spiritual Community, their relation to culture is itself culture and not the answer to the questions implied in culture. All relations of the churches to culture, as described in the section on the functions of the churches, in particular the function of relatedness, require a dual consideration, based on the dual relation of the churches to the Spiritual Community. In so far as the Spiritual Community is the dynamic essence of the churches, their existence is a medium through which the Spiritual Presence works toward the self-transcendence of culture. In so far as the churches represent the Spiritual Community in the ambiguous way of religion, their influence on the culture is itself ambiguous. This situation stands against all theocratic attempts to subject the culture to a church in the name of the Spiritual Community, and it also stands against all profanizing attempts to keep the churches in seclusion from the general cultural life. The impact of the Spiritual Presence on the functions of cultural creativity is impossible without an inner-historical representation of the Spiritual Community in a church. But the Spiritual impact can be experienced preliminarily in groups, movements, and personal experiences which have been characterized as the latent working of the Spiritual Presence. "Preliminarily" in our context means in preparation for the full manifestation of the Spiritual Community in a church, or it can mean in consequence of such a full manifestation if the church has lost its power of mediating but the effects of its previous power are latently present in a culture and keep the self-transcendence of the cultural creativity alive. This implies that the divine Spirit is not bound to the media it has created, the churches (and their media, word and sacrament), but that the free impact of the divine Spirit on a culture prepares for a religious community or is received because such a community has prepared human beings for the reception of the Spiritual impact.

On this basis one can establish some principles concerning the relation between religion and culture. The first principle is found in the

freedom of the Spirit, according to which the problem of religion and culture is not identical with the problem of the relation between the churches and culture. One could call it "the principle of the consecration of the secular." This, of course, does not mean that the secular as such is Spiritual, but it does mean that it is open to the impact of the Spirit even without the mediation of a church. The practical consequences of this "emancipation of the secular," which was implied in the words and acts of Jesus and was rediscovered by the Reformation, are far-reaching. They are in definitive conflict with those public statements by writers, public speakers, and ministers that, in order to overcome the often destructive ambiguities of culture, "religion" must be strengthened. Such declarations are especially offensive when they introduce religion, not for its own sake, but for the sake of saving an empty or decaying culture and, by doing so, saving a particular nation. Even if the offensiveness of using the ultimate as a tool for something non-ultimate is avoided, the mistake remains of thinking that the divine Spirit is bound to religion in order to exercise its impact on culture. This "mistake" is actually the demonic identification of churches with the Spiritual Community and an attempt to limit the freedom of the Spirit by the absolute claim of a religious group. The principle of the "consecration of the secular" applies as well to movements, groups, and individuals who are not only on the secular pole of the ambiguities of religion but who are openly hostile to the churches and beyond this to religion itself in all its forms, including Christianity. The Spirit can and often has become manifest in such groups, for example, in the form of awakening the social conscience or in giving to man a deeper self-understanding or in breaking the bondage to ecclesiastically sustained superstitions. In this way the Spiritual Presence has used antireligious media to transform not only a secular culture but also the churches. Protestantism, in the self-critical power of the Protestant principle, is able to acknowledge the freedom of the Spirit from the churches, even the Protestant churches.

The second principle determining the relation between religion and culture is the principle of "convergence of the holy and the secular." This converging trend is the explanation of the fact, already referred to, that the latent effect of the Spiritual Presence comes from and drives toward a manifestation of it in a historical community, a church. The secular stands under the rule of all life, which we have called its self-

transcending function, transcending itself in the vertical line. The secular is, as we have seen, the result of a resistance against the actualization of vertical self-transcendence. This resistance is in itself ambiguous. It prevents the finite from being swallowed by the infinite. It makes the actualization of its potentialities possible. And, above all, it creates opposition to claims on the part of the churches that they represent the transcendent directly and exclusively. In this sense the secular is the necessary corrective of the holy. Yet, it itself drives toward the holy. It cannot resist indefinitely the function of self-transcendence, which is present in every life, however secularized, for the resistance against it produces the emptiness and meaninglessness which characterizes the finite when cut off from the infinite. It produces the exhaustible, self-rejecting life which is driven to the question of an inexhaustible life above itself and so into self-transcendence. The secular is driven toward union with the holy, a union which actually is a reunion because the holy and the secular belong to each other.

For neither can the holy exist without the secular. If, in the name of the ultimate concern, it tries to isolate itself, it either falls into self-contradictions or becomes empty in a way opposite to the secular. The self-contradiction of the attempt of the holy to dispense with the secular is that every such attempt must make use of culture in all its secular forms, from language to cognition and expression and from the technical act to personal and communal self-creativity. The simplest proposition in which the holy tries to isolate itself from the secular is secular in form. But if the holy wants to avoid this problem, it must become silent and empty of all finite contents, thus ceasing to be a genuine possibility of a finite being. The holy tends to fill the "world," the realm of the secular, with holiness. It tries to take the secular into the life of ultimate concern. But this claim of the Spiritual Presence is resisted by the claim of the secular to stand by itself. So we have claim and counterclaim. But actually there is a convergent movement of the one toward the other; the principle of the convergence of the holy and the secular is always effective.

These two principles are rooted in a third, that of the "essential belongingness of religion and culture to each other." I have expressed this principle frequently in the statement that religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion. We have pointed to it in the discussion of the essential relation of morality, culture, and religion.

At this point we must only restate that religion cannot express itself even in a meaningful silence without culture, from which it takes all forms of meaningful expression. And we must restate that culture loses its depth and inexhaustibility without the ultimacy of the ultimate.

With these principles in mind we now turn to an analysis of the humanist idea, its ambiguities, and the question of its relation to the Spiritual Presence.

2. Humanism and the Idea of Theonomy

In the discussion of the humanist aim of the self-creation of life, we asked the question, Into what, for example, does the educational guidance toward this aim actually guide? The development of all human potentialities, the principle of humanism, does not indicate in what direction they shall be developed. This is clear in the very term "education," which means a "leading out," i.e., out of the state of crudeness, but which does not indicate into what one shall be led. We indicated that "initiation" into the mystery of being could be this aim. This, of course, presupposes a community in which the mystery of life, particularly expressed, is the determining principle of its life. There the idea of humanism is transcended without being denied. The example of education and the necessity of transcending humanism in it brings us to a more embracing consideration, namely, the question: What happens to culture as a whole under the impact of the Spiritual Presence? The answer I want to give is summed up in the term "theonomy." One could also speak of the Spirituality of culture, but this would give the impression-certainly not intended-that culture should be dissolved into religion. The term "self-transcendence of culture" would be more adequate, but since this is a general function of life, which under the dimension of spirit appears as religion, another term for the self-transcendence of culture (and another for the self-transcendence of morality) is desirable. On the basis of my Religious Socialist experience and theory, I keep the term "theonomy." It has been explained before, and it will appear again in the last part of the system. At this point the word is used for the state of culture under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. The *nomos* (law) effective in it is the directedness of the self-creation of life under the dimension of the Spirit toward the ultimate in being and meaning. It is certainly unfortunate that the term "theonomy" can indicate the subjection of a culture to divine laws, imposed

from outside and mediated by a church. But this disadvantage is smaller than those connected with the other terms, and it is balanced by the possibility of using the word "heteronomy" for a situation in which a law from outside, a strange law (*heteros nomos*) is imposed and destroys the autonomy of cultural creativity, its autos *nomos*, its inner law. Out of the relation of theonomy to heteronomy, it becomes obvious that the idea of a theonomous culture does not imply any imposition from outside. Theonomous culture is Spirit-determined and Spirit-directed culture, and Spirit fulfils spirit instead of breaking it. The idea of theonomy is not antihumanistic, but it turns the humanistic indefiniteness about the "where-to" into a direction which transcends every particular human aim.

Theonomy can characterize a whole culture and give a key to the interpretation of history. Theonomous elements can come in conflict with a rising heteronomy, for example, of ecclesiastical or political provenience, and the autonomous elements in it can be defeated and temporarily suppressed (as in the late Middle Ages). They can come in conflict with a victorious autonomy, for example, of rationalistic or nationalistic provenience, and can be pushed into the underground of a culture (as in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). Or they may be able to effect a balance between heteronomous and autonomous trends (as in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries). But theonomy can never be completely victorious, as it can never be completely defeated. Its victory is always fragmentary because of the existential estrangement underlying human history, and its defeat is always limited by the fact that human nature is essentially theonomous.

It is difficult to give general characteristics of a theonomous culture apart from its particular functions, but one may point to the following qualities of theonomy which are derived from its very nature. First of all, the style, the over-all form, of theonomous works of cultural creation expresses the ultimacy of meaning even in the most limited vehicles of meaning-a painted flower, a family habit, a technical tool, a form of social intercourse, the vision of a historical figure, an epistemological theory, a political document, and so on. None of these things is unconsecrated in a theonomous situation; they are perhaps not consecrated by a church, but they are certainly consecrated in the way they are experienced even without external consecration.

In trying to characterize theonomy, one should be aware of the fact

that the image of theonomy one develops is never independent of a concrete historical situation which is seen as a symbol of a theonomous culture. Much of the enthusiasm of the romantics for the Middle Ages was rooted in this transformation of the past into a symbol of theonomy. The romantics, of course, went wrong the moment in which they understood a theonomous situation not symbolically but empirically. Then began their historically untenable and almost ridiculous glorification of some periods of the past. But if the past is taken as the model of a future theonomy, it is taken symbolically and not empirically. The first quality of a theonomous culture is that it communicates the experience of holiness, of something ultimate in being and meaning, in all its creations.

The second quality is the affirmation of the autonomous forms of the creative process. Theonomy would be destroyed the moment in which a valid logical conclusion was rejected in the name of the ultimate to which theonomy points, and the same is true in all other activities of cultural creativity. There is no theonomy where a valid demand of justice is rejected in the name of the holy, or where a valid act of personal self-determination is prevented by a sacred tradition, or where a new style of artistic creation is suppressed in the name of assumedly eternal forms of expressiveness. Theonomy is distorted into heteronomy in all these examples; the element of autonomy in it is removed-the freedom which characterizes the human spirit as well as the divine Spirit is repressed. And then it may happen that autonomy breaks through the suppressive forces of heteronomy and discards not only heteronomy but also theonomy.

This situation leads to the third characteristic of theonomy, i.e., its permanent struggle against both an independent heteronomy and an independent autonomy. Theonomy is prior to both; they are elements within it. But theonomy, at the same time, is posterior to both; they tend to be reunited in the theonomy from which they come. Theonomy both precedes and follows the contrasting elements it contains. The process in which this happens can be described in the following way: The original theonomous union is left behind by the rise of autonomous trends which necessarily lead to a reaction of the heteronomous element. Without the liberation of autonomy from the bondage to an "archaic," mythologically founded theonomy, the culture could not develop its potentialities. Only after their liberation from the uniting myth and the theonomous state of consciousness can philosophy and the sciences,

poetry and the other arts, appear. But if they achieve independence, they lose their transcendent foundation which gave them depth, unity, and ultimate meaning; and therefore, the reaction of heteronomy starts: the experience of the ultimate, as expressed in the religious tradition, reacts against the creations of an empty autonomy. This reaction easily appears as a simple negation of autonomous creativity and as an attempt to suppress the justified demands of truth, expressiveness, humanity, and justice. But this is not the whole story. A justified warning against the loss of being and meaning is expressed in the distorted form of heteronomous reactions against cultural autonomy. If a scientific theory with a high degree of probability is rejected in the name of a religiously consecrated tradition, one must find out precisely what is rejected. If it is the theory itself, a heteronomous attack on the idea of truth takes place and has to be resisted in the power of the Spirit. If, however, it is an underlying metaphysical-and ultimately religious-assumption which is attacked in the name of religion, the situation has ceased to be a conflict between heteronomy and autonomy and has become a confrontation of two ultimates which may -lead to a conflict between religious attitudes but not to a conflict between autonomy and heteronomy.

The permanent struggle between autonomous independence and heteronomous reaction leads to the quest for a new theonomy, both in particular situations and in the depth of the cultural consciousness in general. This quest is answered by the impact of the Spiritual Presence on culture. Wherever this impact is effective, theonomy is created, and wherever there is theonomy, traces of the impact of the Spiritual Presence are visible.

3. Theonomous Manifestations of the Spiritual Presence

a) *Theonomy: truth and* expressiveness.-The Spiritual Presence drives toward the conquest of the ambiguities of culture by creating theonomous forms in the different realms of the cultural self-creation of life. In order to present these forms it is necessary to refer to the enumeration of cultural ambiguities given before and to indicate what happens to them under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. But this must be preceded by a discussion of the basic ambiguity which has appeared, more or less obviously, in all cultural functions, the cleavage of subject and object, and of the way in which it is conquered under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. Is there a general theonomous answer

to the question of subject against object? Philosophers, mystics, lovers, seekers of intoxication-even of death-have tried to conquer this cleavage. In some of these attempts the Spiritual Presence is manifest; in others the desperate and often demonic desire to escape the cleavage by escaping reality is visible. Psychology has become aware of this problem; the unconscious desire to return to the mother's womb or to the devouring womb of nature or to the protective womb of contemporary society is an expression of the will to dissolve one's subjectivity into something transsubjective, which is not objective (otherwise it would reinstate the subject) but lies beyond subjectivity and objectivity. The most pertinent answers have been given by two phenomena that are related in this respect-mysticism and *eros*. Mysticism answers with the description of a state of mind in which the "universe of discourse" has disappeared but the experiencing self is still aware of this disappearance. Only in eternal fulfilment does the subject (and consequently the object) disappear completely. Historical man can only anticipate in a fragmentary way the ultimate fulfilment in which subject ceases to be subject and object ceases to be object.

A similar phenomenon is human love. The separation of the lover and the beloved is the most conspicuous and painful expression of the subject-object cleavage of finitude. The subject of love is never able to penetrate fully into the object of love, and love remains unfulfilled, and necessarily so, for if it were ever fulfilled it would eliminate the lover as well as the loved; this paradox shows the human situation and with it the question to which theonomy, as the creation of the Spiritual Presence, gives the answer.

The subject-object cleavage underlies language. Our enumeration of its ambiguities—as poverty in richness, particularity in universality, enabling and preventing communication, being open to expression and to the distortion of expression, and so on--can be summed up in the statement that no language is possible without the subject-object cleavage and that language is continuously brought to self-defeat by this very cleavage. In theonomy, language is fragmentarily liberated from the bondage to the subject-object scheme. It reaches moments in which it becomes a bearer of the Spirit expressing the union of him who speaks with that of which he speaks in an act of linguistic self-transcendence. The word which bears the Spirit does not grip an object opposite to the speaking subject, but it witnesses to the sublimity of life beyond subject

and object. It witnesses, it expresses, it gives voice, to what transcends the subject-object structure. One of the ways in which this happens is the creation of the symbol. Whereas the ordinary symbol is open to an interpretation which throws it back into the subject-object scheme, the Spirit-created symbol overcomes this possibility and with it the ambiguities of language. Here we are at the point where the term "Word of God" receives its final justification and characterization. Word of God is the Spirit-determined human word. As such it is not bound to a particular revelatory event, Christian or non-Christian; it is not bound to religion in the narrower sense of the term; it is not tied up with a special content or a special form. It appears wherever the Spiritual Presence imposes itself on an individual or a group. Language, under such impact, is beyond poverty and abundance. A few words become great words! This is the ever repeated experience of mankind with the holy literature of a particular religion or of a theonomous culture. But the experience surpasses the "holy scriptures" of any particular religion. In all literature and every use of language, the Spiritual Presence can grasp him who speaks and elevate his words to the state of bearers of the Spirit, conquering the ambiguity of poverty and abundance. In the same way it conquers the ambiguities of particularity and universality. Every language is Particular because it expresses a particular encounter with reality, but the language which is a bearer of the Spirit is at the same time universal because it transcends the particular encounter which it expresses in the direction of that which is universal, the Logos; the criterion of every particular logos. The Spiritual Presence also conquers the ambiguity of the indefiniteness of language. Indefiniteness is unavoidable in all ordinary speech because of the infinite distance between the language-forming subject (collective or individual) and the inexhaustible object (every object) it tries to grasp. The word, determined by the Spiritual Presence, does not try to grasp an ever escaping object but expresses a union between the inexhaustible subject and the inexhaustible object in a symbol which is by its very nature indefinite and definite at the same time. It leaves the potentialities of both sides of the symbol-creating encounter open—and in this sense it is indefinite-but it excludes other symbols (and any arbitrariness of symbolism) because of the unique character of the encounter. One more example of the power of the Spiritual Presence to conquer the ambiguities of language is the power over the ambiguity of its communicative and anticommunicative possibilities. Since language cannot penetrate to the very center of the other self, it is always a mixture of revealing and concealing; and from the latter, the possibilities of intentional concealment-of lying, deceiving, distorting, and emptying of language-follow. The Spirit-determined word reaches the center of the other one but not in terms of definitions or circumscriptions of finite objects or finite subjectivity (for example, emotions); it reaches the center of the other one by uniting the centers of the speaker and the listener in the transcendent unity. Where there is spirit, there estrangement in terms of language is overcome-as the story of Pentecost tells. And if it is overcome, the possibility of distorting the language from its natural meaning is also overcome. In all these respects one could say that the ambiguities of the human word are conquered by that human word which becomes divine Word.

To overcome the ambiguities of cognition the divine Spirit must conquer the cleavage between subject and object even more drastically than in the case of language. The cleavage appears, for example, in the circumstances that every cognitive act must use abstract concepts, thus disregarding the concreteness of the situation; that it must give a partial answer, although "the truth is the whole" (Hegel); and that it must use patterns of conceptualization and argumentation which fit only the realm of objects and their relation to each other. This necessity cannot be dismissed on the level of finite relations; and so the question arises whether there is another relation in which the wholeness of the truth can be reached and the "demonry of abstraction" overcome. This cannot be done in the dialectical manner of Hegel, who claimed to have the whole by combining all parts in a consistent system. In doing so he became, in a conspicuous way, the victim of the ambiguities of abstraction (without reaching the totality to which he aspired). The divine Spirit embraces both the totality and the concrete, not by avoiding universals-without which no cognitive act would be possible-but by using them only as vehicles for the elevation of the partial and concrete to the eternal, in which totality as well as uniqueness are rooted. Religious knowledge is knowledge of something particular in the light of the eternal and of the eternal in the light of something particular. In this kind of knowledge the ambiguities of subjectivity as well as objectivity are overcome; it is a self-transcending cognition which comes out of the center of the totality and leads back to it. The impact of the Spiritual

Presence is also manifest in the method of theonomous cognition. Within the structure of subject-object separation, observation and conclusion are the way in which the subject tries to grasp the object, remaining always strange to it and never certain of success. To the degree in which the subject-object structure is overcome, observation is replaced by participation (which includes observation) and conclusion is replaced by insight (which includes conclusions). Such insight on the basis of participation is not a method which can be used at will but a state of being elevated to what we have called the transcendent unity. Such Spirit-determined cognition is "revelation," just as Spirit-determined language is "Word of God." And as "Word of God" is not restricted to the Holy Scriptures, so "revelation" is not restricted to the revelatory experiences on which all actual religions are based. The acknowledgment of this situation lies behind the assertion of many theologians of the classical tradition, Catholics and Protestants alike, that in the wisdom of some non-Christian wise men the divine Wisdom-the Logos-was present and that the presence of the Logos meant for them-as for us—Spiritual Presence. Wisdom can be distinguished from objectifying knowledge (*sapientia* from *scientia*) by its ability to manifest itself beyond the cleavage of subject and object. The biblical imagery describing Wisdom and Logos as being "with" God and "with" men makes this point quite obvious. Theonomous knowledge is Spirit-determined Wisdom. But as the Spirit-determined language of theonomy does not dispense with the language which is determined by the cleavage between subject and object, so Spirit-determined cognition does not contradict the knowledge which is gained within the subject-object structure of encountering reality. Theonomy never contradicts autonomously created knowledge, but it does contradict a knowledge which claims to be autonomous but is actually the result of a distorted theonomy.

The aesthetic function of man's cultural self-creation presents the same problem as language and cognition: in seeking for expressiveness in its creations it is confronted by the question of whether the arts express the subject or the object. But before a theonomous answer is sought to this question, another arises, and that is the relation of man as self-integrating personality to the whole realm of aesthetic expression-the problem of aesthetic ism. Like the preceding question, it is rooted in the subject-object structure of finite being. The subject can transform

any object into "nothing but an object" by using it for itself instead of trying to enter it in a reunion of the separated. The aesthetic function—whether pre-artistic or artistic--creates images which are objects of aesthetic enjoyment. The enjoyment is based on the expressive power of an aesthetic creation even if the subject matter expressed is ugly or terrifying. The enjoyment of aesthetically created images, pre-artistic or artistic, is in agreement with the creativity of the spirit. But aestheticism, while accepting the enjoyment, withdraws from participation. The impact of the Spiritual Presence, in uniting subject and object, makes aestheticism impossible.

Thus to the question of whether the arts express the subject or the object, we must give the obvious answer: neither the one nor the other. Subject and object must be united in a theonomous creation of the Spiritual Presence through the aesthetic function. This question has bearing on the valuation of different artistic styles. In each style the relation of subject and object is different; so the question arises whether there is a style which is more theonomous than the others or which is theonomous over against the others. It is very difficult to make such a statement, but it must be made. In analogy to the cognitive function, the question is usually asked in the form of whether a certain philosophy (for example, the Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, or Kantian) has more theonomous potentiality than the others. This question must be and has always been answered by the actual work of theologians, who used one or another of these philosophies in the conviction that it was most adequate to the human situation and for the construction of a theology. But it seems impossible to do the same thing with an enumeration of styles. In relation to the question of theonomy, we cannot distinguish styles; we can only distinguish stylistic elements. This is obvious, in view of the fact that no concrete style can be imitated as long as there is the will to original artistic expression. One can stand within a stylistic tradition, but one cannot change from one tradition to another at will. (This is the same situation that exists in relation to theonomous philosophy. No philosophical system can be duplicated by another philosopher, but all take over elements from their predecessors, and there are certainly elements which have more theonomous potentialities than others. But the decisive thing for the search for truth is that, under the principle of autonomy, all potentialities of man's cognitive encounter with reality are developed.)

With respect to stylistic elements (which reappear in all historical styles), the realistic, the idealistic, and the expressionistic elements can be distinguished. Each appears in every style, but normally one element is predominant. From the point of view of theonomy, one can say that the expressionistic element is most able to express the self-transcendence of life in the vertical line. It breaks away from the horizontal movement and shows the Spiritual Presence in symbols of broken finitude. This is the reason why most of the great religious art in all periods has been determined by the expressionist element in its stylistic expression. When the naturalistic and idealistic elements are predominant, the finite is either accepted in its finitude (though not copied) or is seen in its essential potentialities but not in its disruption and salvation. Naturalism, when predominant, produces acceptance, idealism, anticipation, and expressionism the breakthrough into the vertical. Thus expressionism is the genuinely theonomous element.

b) Theonomy: purpose and humanity.-The basic ambiguity of subject and object is expressed in relation to the technical activity of man in the conflicts caused by the unlimited possibilities of technical progress and the limits of his finitude in adapting himself to the results of his own productivity. The ambiguity of subject and object also expresses itself in the productions of means for ends which themselves become means without an ultimate end and in the technical transformation of parts of nature into things which are only things, i.e., technical objects. If one asks what theonomy could mean in relation to these ambiguities or, more precisely, how the split between subject and object can be overcome in this realm of complete objectivation, the answer can only be: by producing objects which can be imbued with subjective qualities; by determining all means toward an ultimate end and, by so doing, limiting man's unlimited freedom to go beyond the given. Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, even technical processes can become theonomous and the split between the subject and the object of technical activity can be overcome. For the Spirit, no thing is merely a thing. It is a bearer of form and meaning and, therefore, a possible object of ***eros.*** This is true even of tools, from the most primitive hammer to the most delicate computer. As in the earliest periods when they were bearers of fetish powers, so today they can be considered and artistically valuated as new embodiments of the power of being itself. This ***eros*** toward the technical ***Gestalt*** is a way in which a theonomous relation to technology

can be achieved. One can observe such eros in the relation of children and adults to such technical ***Gestalten*** as ships, cars, planes, furniture, impressive machines, factory buildings, and so on. If the ***eros*** toward these objects is not corrupted by competitive or mercenary interests, it has a theonomous character. The technical object-the only complete "thing" in the universe-is not in essential conflict with theonomy, but it is a strong factor in causing the ambiguities of culture and needs sublimation by ***eros*** and art.

The second problem which demands a theonomous solution is the indeterminate freedom of producing means for ends which in turn become means, and so on without limit. Theonomous culture includes technical self-limitation. Possibilities are not only benefits; they are also **temptations,** and the desire to actualize them can lead to emptiness and destruction. Both consequences are visible at present.

The first has been seen and denounced for a long time. It is fostered by the business- and advertisement-supported drives toward the production of what is called the "gadget." The gadget itself is not evil, but gearing a whole economy to it and repressing the question of an ultimate end of all production of technical goods is. This problem is necessarily raised under the impact of the Spiritual Presence and may revolutionize the attitude toward technical possibilities in such a way that actual production will be changed. This, of course, cannot be done from outside by ecclesiastical or quasi-religious political authorities; it can only be done by influencing the attitude of those for whom the things are produced—as advertisers well know. The divine Spirit, cutting out of the vertical direction to resist an unlimited running-ahead in the horizontal line, drives toward a technical production that is subjected to the ultimate end of all life processes-Eternal Life.

The problem caused by the unlimited possibilities of technical production is even more difficult when the consequences are almost inescapably destructive. Such consequences have become visible since the Second World War and have produced strong emotional and moral reactions in most People, above all in those who are mainly responsible for the technical "structures of destruction"-atomic weapons-which, according to the nature of the demonic, cannot be rejected and cannot be, accepted. Therefore the reaction of these men, as well as of the people, to the demonic character inherent in the stupendous technical possibilities of the atomic discoveries is split. Under the impact of the Spiritual

Presence, the destructive side of that human possibility will be "banned" (the term used in the book of Revelation for the preliminary conquest of the demonic). Again, this "ban" is not a matter of authoritarian restriction on technical possibilities but a change in attitude, a change in the will to produce things which are in their very nature ambiguous and structures of destruction. No solution is imaginable without the Spiritual Presence, because the ambiguity of production and destruction cannot be conquered on the horizontal level, even fragmentarily. To realize this, one must remember that the Spiritual Presence is not bound to the religious realm (in the narrower sense of religion) but can even be effective through outspoken foes of religion and Christianity.

From the discussion of the technical function of culture and its ambiguities, we turned to the personal (and communal) function and the ambiguities of self-determination, other-determination, and personal participation. In all three cases the split between subject and object, as in all cultural functions, is the necessary condition as well as the inescapable cause of ambiguities. The ambiguity of self-determination is rooted in the fact that the self as subject and the self as object are split and that the self as subject tries to determine the self as object in a direction from which the self as subject is itself estranged. The "good will" is only ambiguously good, just because it is not united with the self as object which it is supposed to direct. No centered self under the conditions of existence is fully identical with itself. Whenever the Spiritual Presence takes hold of a centered person, it reestablishes his identity unambiguously (though fragmentarily). The "search for identity" which is a genuine problem of the present generation is actually the search for the Spiritual Presence, because the split of the self into a controlling subject and a controlled object can be overcome only from the vertical direction, out of which reunion is given and not commanded. The self which has found its identity is the self of him who is "accepted" as a unity in spite of his disunity.

The split between subject and object also produces the ambiguities of educating and guiding another person. In both activities it is necessary, though impossible, to find a way between self-restriction and self-imposition on the part of the educator or guide. Complete self-restriction, as exemplified in some types of progressive schools, leads to complete ineffectiveness. The object is not asked to unite with the subject in a common content but is left alone in bondage to himself and to his

ambiguities as a person, while the subject, instead of educating or guiding, remains an irrelevant observer. The opposite attitude violates the object of education and guidance by transforming him into an object without subjectivity and therefore incapable of being educated to his own fulfilment or guided toward his ultimate aim. He can only be controlled by indoctrination, commands, tricks, "brainwashing," and so on, and in extreme cases, as in concentration camps, by methods of dehumanization which deprive him of his subjectivity by depriving him of the necessary biological and psychological conditions for existing as a person. They transform him into a perfect example of the principle of conditioned reflexes. The Spirit liberates both from mere subjectivity and from mere objectivity. Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence the educational act creates theonomy in the centered person by directing him toward the ultimate from which he receives independence without internal chaos. It belongs to the very nature of the Spirit that it unites freedom and form. If the educational or guiding communion between person and person is raised beyond itself by the Spiritual Presence, the split between subject and object in both relations is fragmentarily conquered and humanity is fragmentarily achieved.

The same is true of other person to person encounters. The other person is a stranger, but a stranger only in disguise. Actually he is an estranged part of one's self. Therefore one's own humanity can be realized only in reunion with him-a reunion which is also decisive for the realization of his humanity. In the horizontal line this leads to two possible but equally ambiguous solutions: the effort to overcome the split between the subject and object in a person-to-person encounter (whereby each person is both subject and object) either by surrendering one's self to the other one or by taking the other one into one's self. Both ways are continually tried, in many degrees of predominance of the one or the other element, and both are failures because they destroy the persons they seek to unite. It is again the vertical dimension out of which the answer comes: both sides in the encounter belong to some third thing that transcends them both. Neither surrender nor subjection are adequate means of reaching the other one. He cannot be reached directly at all. He can be reached only through that which elevates him above his self-relatedness. Sartre's assertion of the mutual objectivation of human beings in all of their encounters cannot be denied except from the point of view of the vertical dimension. Only through the impact

of the Spiritual Presence is the shell of self-seclusion pierced. The stranger who is an estranged part of one's self has ceased to be a stranger when he is experienced as coming from the same ground as one's self. Theonomy saves humanity in every human encounter.

c) Theonomy: power and justice.—In the communal realm, too, the gap between subject and object leads to a great number of ambiguities. We have referred to some of them, and we must now show what happens to them under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. Where there is Spirit, they are conquered, though fragmentarily. The first problem following from the establishment of any kind of community is the exclusiveness which corresponds to the limitation of its inclusiveness. As every friendship excludes the innumerable others with whom there is no friendship, so every tribe, class, town, nation, and civilization excludes all those who do not belong to it. The justice of social cohesion implies the injustice of social rejection. Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, two things happen in which the injustice within communal justice is conquered. The churches, in so far as they represent the Spiritual Community, are transformed from religious communities with demonic exclusiveness into a holy community with universal inclusiveness, without losing their identity. The indirect effect this has on the secular communities is one side of the impact of the Spiritual Presence in the communal realm. The other is the direct effect the Spirit has on the understanding and actualizing of the idea of justice. The ambiguity of cohesion and rejection is conquered by the creation of more embracing unities through which those who are rejected by the unavoidable exclusiveness of any concrete group are included in a larger group-finally in mankind. On this basis family-exclusiveness is fragmentarily overcome by friendship-inclusiveness, friendship-rejection by acceptance in local communities, class-exclusiveness by national-inclusiveness, and so on. Of course, this is a continuous struggle of the Spiritual Presence, not only against exclusiveness, but also against an inclusiveness which disintegrates a genuine community and deprives it of its identity (as in some expressions of mass society).

This example leads directly to another of the ambiguities of justice, that of inequality. Justice implies equality; but equality of what is essentially unequal is as unjust as inequality of what is essentially equal. Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence (which is the same as saying, determined by faith and love), the ultimate equality of everyone who is

called to the Spiritual Community is united with the preliminary inequality that is rooted in the self-actualization of the individual as individual. Everyone has his own destiny, based partly on the given conditions of his existence and partly on his freedom to react in a centered way to the situation and the different elements in it, as provided by his destiny. The ultimate equality, however, cannot be separated from tbe existential inequality; the latter is under a continuous Spiritual judgment, because it tends to produce social situations in which ultimate equality becomes invisible and ineffective. Although it was the influence of Stoic philosophy more than that of the Christian churches that reduced the injustice of slavery in its dehumanizing power, it was (and is) the Spiritual Presence which acted through the philosophers of Stoic provenience. But here also the struggle of the Spirit against the ambiguities of ***praxis*** is directed not only toward communal inequality but also toward forms of communal equality in which essential inequality is disregarded, for example, in the principle of equal education in a mass society. Such education is an injustice to those whose charisma is their ability to transcend the conformity of an equalizing culture. With the affirmation of the ultimate equality of all men, the Spiritual Presence affirms the polarity of relative equality and relative inequality in the actual communal life. The theonomous solution of the ambiguities of equality produces a genuine theonomy.

Among the most conspicuous ambiguities of community is that of leadership and power. It also most obviously shows the subject-object split as the source of the ambiguities. Because of the lack of a physiological centeredness such as we find in the individual person, the community must create centeredness, as far as it is possible at all, by a ruling group which itself is represented by an individual (king, president, and so on). In such an individual, communal centeredness is embodied in psychosomatic centeredness. He represents the center, but he *is* not the center in the way in which his own self is the center of his whole being. The ambiguities of justice which follow from this character of communal centeredness are rooted in the unavoidable fact that the ruler and the ruling group actualize their own power of being when they actualize the power of being of the whole community they represent. The tyranny which pervades all systems of power, even the most liberal, is one consequence of this highly dialectical structure of social power. The other consequence, resulting from opposition to the implications of power, is

a powerless liberalism or anarchism, which is usually soon succeeded by a conscious and unrestricted tyranny. Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, the members of the ruling group (including the ruler) are able to sacrifice their subjectivity in part by becoming objects of their own rule along with all other objects and by transferring the sacrificed part of their subjectivity to the ruled. This partial sacrifice of the subjectivity of the rulers and this partial elevation of the ruled to subjectivity is the meaning of the "democratic" idea. It is not identical with any particular democratic constitution which attempts to actualize the democratic principle. This principle is an element in the Spiritual Community and its justice. It is present even in aristocratic and monarchic constitutions—and it may be greatly distorted in historical democracies. Wherever it is fragmentarily actual the Spiritual Presence is at work-through or in opposition to the churches or outside the overtly religious life.

Justice in communal life is, above all, justice of the law, law in the sense of a power-supported legal system. Its ambiguities are twofold: the ambiguity of the establishment of the law and the ambiguity of its execution. The first is partly identical with the ambiguity of leadership. Legal power, exercised by the ruling group (and the individual who represents the group), is first of all legislative power. The justice of a system of laws is inseparably tied to justice as conceived by the ruling group, and this justice expresses both principles of right and wrong and principles by which the ruling group affirms and sustains and defends its own power. The spirit of a law inseparably unites the spirit of justice and the spirit of the powers in control, and this means that its justice implies injustice. Under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, the law can receive a theonomous quality to the extent that the Spirit is effective. It can represent justice unambiguously though fragmentarily; in symbolic language, it can become "the justice of the Kingdom of God." This does not mean that it can become a rational system of justice above the life of any communal group, such as some Neo-Kantian philosophers of law have tried to develop. There is no such thing, because the multidimensional unity of life does not admit a function of the spirit in which the preceding dimensions are not effectively present. The spirit of the law is necessarily not only the spirit of justice but also the spirit of a communal group. There is no justice that is not someone's justice-not the justice of an individual but of a society. The Spiritual Presence does not suppress the vital basis of the law but removes its injustices by fighting against the ideologies which justify them. This fight has sometimes been waged through the voice of the churches as images of the Spiritual Community and sometimes in a direct way by the creation of prophetic movements within the secular realm itself. Theonomous legislation is the work of the Spiritual Presence through the medium of prophetic self-criticism in those who are responsible for it. Such a statement is not "idealistic" in the negative sense of the word as long as we maintain the "realistic" statement that the Spirit works indirectly through all dimensions of life, though directly only through the dimensions of man's spirit.

The other ambiguity of the legal form of communal life is the ambiguity of the execution of the law. Here two considerations are needed. One is related to the fact that the execution of the law is dependent on the power of those who render judgments and who are, in so doing, dependent, like the lawgivers, upon their own total being in all its dimensions. Each of their judgments expresses not only the meaning of the law, not only its spirit, but also the spirit of the judge, including all the dimensions which belong to him as a person. One of the most important functions of the Old Testament prophet was to exhort the judges to exercise justice against their class interest and against their changing moods. The dignity with which the office and functions of the judge are vested is a reminder of the theonomous origin of, and theonomous ideal in, the execution of the law.

However, there is another ambiguity of the legal form of communal life, one which is rooted in the very nature of the law-its abstraction and inability to fit precisely any concrete case in which it is applied. History has shown that the situation is not improved, but rather worsened, when new, more specific laws are added to the more general ones. They are equally inadequate to any concrete situation. The wisdom of the judge lies between the abstract law and the concrete situation, and this wisdom can be theonomously inspired. In so far as this is the case, the demand of the particular case is perceived and obeyed. The law in its abstract majesty does not overrule individual differences, nor does it deprive itself of its general validity in acknowledging differences.

The last remarks have prepared the transition to what underlies justice and humanity directly and all cultural functions indirectly—morality. We must now turn to the impact of the Spiritual Presence on morality.

C. THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF MORALITY

1. Religion and Morality in the Light of the Spiritual Presence: Theonomous Morality

The essential unity of morality, culture, and religion is destroyed under the conditions of existence, and in the processes of life only an ambiguous version of it remains. However, an unambiguous, though fragmentary, reunion is possible under the impact of the divine Spirit. The Spiritual Presence creates a theonomous culture and it creates a theonomous morality. The term "theonomous," as applied to culture and morality, has the meaning of the paradoxical phrases "transcultural culture" and "transmoral morality." Religion, the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit, gives self-transcendence to both the self-creation and the self-integration of life under the dimension of spirit. We have discussed the relation of religion and culture in the light of the Spiritual Presence; we must now discuss the relation of religion and morality under the same aspect.

The question of the relation of religion and morality can be discussed in terms of the relation of philosophical and theological ethics. This duality is analogous to the duality of autonomous and Christian philosophy and is actually a part of the latter. We have already rejected the idea of a Christian philosophy, which would inevitably betray the honesty of search by determining before inquiry what results must be found. This refers to all parts of the philosophical enterprise, including ethics. If the phrase means what it says, "theological ethics" is consciously prejudiced ethics. However, this is not true of theonomous ethics, as it is not true of a theonomous philosophy. A philosophy is theonomous which is free from external interferences and in which, in the actual process of thought, the impact of the Spiritual Presence is effective. An ethics is theonomous in which the ethical principles and processes are described in the light of the Spiritual Presence. Theonomous ethics is part of theonomous philosophy. Theological ethics as an independent theological discipline must be rejected, although every theological statement has ethical implications (as it has ontological presuppositions). If theological ethics (or philosophy of religion) is dealt with academically in a separate course, this is merely a matter of expediency and should not become a matter of principle. Otherwise, an intolerable dualism between philosophical and theological ethics is set up, leading logically to the schizophrenic position of "double truth." One would affirm in the one course of study the autonomy of practical reason in the Kantian or Humean sense of the word, and in the other the heteronomy of revelatory divine commandments that is to be found in biblical and ecclesiastical documents. On the basis of the distinction between religion in the larger and the narrower sense of the word, we can establish *one* course of study in ethics which analyzes the nature of the moral function and judges the changing contents in the light of this analysis. Within the analysis, the unconditional character of the moral imperative and with it the theonomous quality of ethics may be affirmed or denied, but both affirmation and negation remain in the arena of philosophical controversy and are not decided by an external ecclesiastical or political authority. The theologian enters these controversies as a philosophical ethicist whose eyes are opened by the ultimate concern that has taken hold of him, but his arguments have the same experiential basis and the same rational cogency claimed for the arguments of those who deny the unconditional character of the moral imperative. The teacher of ethics is a philosopher, whether or not his ethics is theonomous. He is a philosopher even if he is a theologian and although his ultimate concern is dependent on the subject matter of his theological work, for example, the Christian message. But as an ethicist he does not bring his theological assertions into the arguments about the nature of the moral imperative.

One may ask whether such a combination of ultimate concern and partly detached argument is possible. Empirically speaking, it is impossible, because the theonomous quality of an ethics is always concrete and therefore dependent on concrete traditions, whether Jewish, Christian, Greek, or Buddhist. From this one would draw the conclusion that theonomy must be concrete and, therefore, in conflict with the autonomy of ethical research. But this argument disregards the fact that even the seemingly autonomous research in philosophy in general and in ethics in particular is dependent on a tradition which expresses an ultimate concern, at least indirectly and unconsciously. Autonomous ethics can be autonomous only with respect to scholarly method, not with respect to its religious substance. There is a theonomous element in all such ethics, however hidden, however secularized, however distorted. Theonomous ethics in the full sense of the phrase, therefore, is ethics in which,

under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, the religious substance-the experience of an ultimate concern—is consciously expressed through the process of free arguing and not through an attempt to determine it. Intentional theonomy is heteronomy and must be rejected by ethical research. Actual theonomy is autonomous ethics under the Spiritual Presence.

In relation to the biblical and ecclesiastical ethical material, this means that it cannot be taken over and systematized as "theological ethics," based on revelatory "information" about ethical problems. Revelation is not information, and it is certainly not information about ethical rules or norms. All the ethical material, for example, of the Old and New Testaments, is open to ethical criticism under the principle of *agape*, for the Spirit does not produce new and more refined "letters," i.e., commandments. Rather, the Spirit judges all commandments.

2. The Spiritual Presence and the Ambiguities of Personal Self-integration

In our description of the ambiguities of the integration of the moral personality, we pointed to the polarity of self-identity and self-alteration and the loss of a centered self either in an empty self-identity or in a chaotic self-alteration. The problems implied in this polarity led us to the concept of sacrifice and its ambiguities. The continual alternative—to sacrifice either the actual for the possible or the possible for the actual-appeared as an outstanding example of the ambiguities of self-integration. The ever returning questions are: How many contents of the encountered world can I take into the unity of my personal center without disrupting it? And, How many contents of the encountered world must I take into the unity of my personal center in order to avoid an empty self-identity? Into how many directions can I push beyond a given state of my being without losing all directedness of the life process? And, Into how many directions must I try to encounter reality in order to avoid a narrowing-down of my life process to monolithic poverty? And the basic question is: How many potentialities, given to me by virtue of my being man and, further, by being this particular man, can I actualize without losing the power to actualize anything seriously? And, **How** many of my potentialities ***must*** I actualize in order to avoid the state of mutilated humanity? These sets of questions, of course, are not asked ***in abstracto*** but always in the concrete form: Shall I sacrifice this that I have for this that **I** could have?

The alternative is resolved, though fragmentarily, under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. The Spirit takes the personal center into the universal center, the transcendent unity which makes faith and love possible. When taken into the transcendent unity, the personal center is superior to encounters with reality on the temporal plane, because the transcendent unity embraces the content of all possible encounters. It embraces them beyond potentiality and actuality, because the transcendent unity is the unity of the divine life. In the "communion of the Holy Spirit," the essential being of the person is liberated from the contingencies of freedom and destiny under the conditions of existence. The acceptance of this liberation is the all-inclusive sacrifice which, at the same time, is the all-inclusive fulfilment. This is the only unambiguous sacrifice a human being can make. But since it is made within the processes of life, it remains fragmentary and open to distortion by the ambiguities of life.

Theconsequences of this consideration for the three double questions asked above can be described as follows: In so far as the personal center is established in relation to the universal center, the encountered contents of finite reality are judged for their significance in expressing the essential being of the person before they are allowed to enter, or are barred from entering, the unity of the centered self. The element of Wisdom in the Spirit makes such judgment possible (compare, for example, the judging function of the Spirit in I Corinthians, chapter 3). It is a judgment directed toward what we have distinguished as the two poles in the self-integration of the moral self, self-identity and self-alteration. The Spiritual Presence maintains the identity of the self without impoverishing the self, and it drives toward the alteration of the self without disrupting it. In this way the Spirit conquers the double anxiety which logically (but not temporally) precedes the transition from essence to existence, the anxiety of not actualizing one's essential being and the anxiety of losing oneself within one's self-actualization. Where there is Spirit, the actual manifests the potential and the potential determines the actual. In the Spiritual Presence, man's essential being appears under the conditions of existence, conquering the distortions of existence in the reality of the New Being. This state-

ment is derived from the basic christological assertion that in the Christ the eternal unity of God and man becomes actual under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them. Those who participate in the New Being are in an analogous way beyond the conflict of essence and existential predicament. The Spiritual Presence actualizes the essential within the existential in an unambiguous way.

The question of the amount of strange content which can be taken into the unity of the centered self has led to an answer which refers to all three questions asked above and especially to the question of the sacrifice of the potential for the actual. But more concrete answers are necessary. The ambiguity of the life processes with respect to their directions and aims must be conquered by an unambiguous determination of the life processes. Where Spiritual Presence is effective, life is turned into the direction which is more than one direction among others-the direction toward the ultimate within all directions. This direction does not replace the others but appears within them as their ultimate end and therefore as the criterion of the choice between them. The "saint" (he who is determined by the Spiritual Presence) knows *where* to go and where *not* to go. He knows the way between impoverishing asceticism and disrupting libertinism. In the life of most people the question of where to go, in which directions to spread and which direction to make predominant, is a continuous concern. They do not know where to go, and therefore many cease to go at all and permit their life processes to fall into the poverty of anxious self-restriction; others start off in so many directions that they cannot follow up any of them. The Spirit conquers restriction as well as disruption by preserving the unity in divergent directions, both the unity of the centered self who takes the divergent directions and the unity of the directions which reconverge after they have diverged. They reconverge in the direction of the ultimate.

With respect to the double question of how many potentialities-in general human and in particular individual-one *can* actualize and how many one *must* actualize, the answer is the following: Finitude demands the sacrifice of potentialities which can be actualized only by the sum of all individuals, and even the power of these potentialities to be actualized is restricted by the external conditions of the human race and its finitude. Potentialities remain unactualized in every moment of history because their actualization has never become a possibility. In the same way, in

every moment of every individual life potentialities remain unactualized because they have never reached the state of possibility. However, there are potentialities that are also possibilities that, nevertheless, must be sacrificed because of human finitude. Not all the creative possibilities of a person, or all the creative possibilities of the human race, have been or will be actualized. The Spiritual Presence does not change that situation-for although the finite can participate in the infinite, it cannot become infinite-but the Spirit can create an acceptance of man's and mankind's finitude, and in so doing can give a new meaning to the sacrifice of potentialities. It can remove the ambiguous and tragic character of the sacrifice of life possibilities and restore the genuine meaning of sacrifice, namely, the acknowledgement of one's finitude. In every religious sacrifice, finite man deprives himself of a power of being which seems to be his but which is not his in an absolute sense, as he acknowledges by the sacrifice; it is his only because it is given to him and, therefore, not ultimately his, and the acknowledgment of this situation is the sacrifice. Such an understanding of the sacrifice excludes the humanistic ideal of the all-round personality in which every human potentiality is actualized. It is a God-man idea, which is quite different from the God-man image created by the divine Spirit as the essence of the man Jesus of Nazareth. This image shows the sacrifice of all human potentialities for the sake of the one which man himself cannot actualize, the uninterrupted unity with God. But the image also shows that this sacrifice is indirectly creative in all directions of truth, expressiveness, humanity, justice-in the picture of the Christ as well as in the life of the churches. In contrast to the humanist idea of man which actualizes what man can be directly and without sacrifice, the Spirit-determined fulfilment of man sacrifices all human potentialities, to the extent that they lie on the horizontal plane, to the vertical direction and receives them back into the limits of man's finitude from the vertical direction, the direction of the ultimate. This is the contrast between autonomous and theonomous personal fulfilment.

3. The Spiritual Presence and the Ambiguities of the Moral Law

The intention of the following consideration is to establish a theonomous foundation for the moral law. The ambiguities of the moral law in its heteronomous and autonomous expressions have been shown above, and the paradox of a "transmoral morality" has been considered.

It has been considered under three aspects: the validity of the moral imperative, the relativity of the moral content, the power of the moral motivation. Agape, the love which reunites centered person with centered person, was the answer in each case. If this answer is valid, the moral law is both accepted and transcended. It is accepted as the expression of what man essentially or by creation is. It is transcended in its form as law, that is, as that which stands against man in his existential estrangement, as commandment and threat. Love contains and transcends the law. It does voluntarily what the law commands. But now the question arises: Is not love itself a law, the all-embracing law? "Thou *shalt* love. ..." And if love itself is a law, does it not fall under the ambiguities of the law even more than any particular law? Why is it valid; what are its contents; how does it get motivating power? The possibility of summing up all laws in the law of love does not solve the problem of the law and its ambiguities. The question cannot be answered as long as love appears as law. It has been said that the commandment "Thou shalt love ..." is impossible because love, as an emotion, cannot be commanded. But this argument is not valid because the interpretation of love as an emotion is wrong. Love as commandment is impossible because man in existential estrangement is incapable of love. And since he cannot love, he denies the unconditional validity of the moral imperative, he has no criterion by which to choose within the flux of ethical contents, and he has no motivation for the fulfilment of the moral law. However, love is not a law; it is a reality. It is not a matter of ought-to-be-even if expressed in imperative form-but a matter of being. Theonomous morals are morals of love as a creation of the Spirit. This refers to the three problems of validity, content, and motivation.

The Spiritual Presence shows the validity of the moral imperative unambiguously, just by showing its law-transcending character. The Spirit elevates the person into the transcendent unity of the divine life and in so doing it reunites the estranged existence of the person with his essence. And this reunion is just what the moral law commands and what makes the moral imperative unconditionally valid. The historical relativity of all ethical contents does not contradict the unconditional validity of the moral imperative itself, because all contents must, in order to be valid, confirm the reunion of man's existential with his essential being; they must express love. In this way the Kantian formalism of the moral imperative is accepted and surpassed. Love unites the unconditional character of the formalized moral imperative with the conditional character of the ethical content. Love is unconditional in its essence, conditional in its existence. It is against love to elevate any moral content, except love itself, to unconditional validity, for only love is by its very nature open to everything particular while remaining universal in its claim.

This answer anticipates the second question arising from the ambiguities of the moral law, the question of its content. The contents of the moral imperative are the moral demands implied in concrete situations and abstract norms derived from ethical experiences in relation to concrete situations. The ambiguity of the law, which we have described before, leads to an oscillation of man's deciding center between the lists of general laws which never reach down to a concrete situation and the riddle of a unique case which pushes the mind back to general laws. This oscillation makes every ethical judgment ambiguous and leads to the question of an unambiguous criterion for ethical judgments. Love, in the sense of ***agape,*** is the unambiguous criterion of all ethical judgments. It is unambiguous but, like every creation of the Spiritual Presence in time and space, remains fragmentary. This answer implies that love overcomes the oscillation between the abstract and the concrete elements in a moral situation. Love is as near the abstract norms as it is near the particular demands of a situation, but the relation of love to each of these two elements of an ethical problem is different. In relation to the abstract element, the formulated moral laws, love is effective through wisdom. The wisdom of the ages and the ethical experiences of the past (including revelatory experiences) are expressed in the moral laws of a religion or philosophy. This origin gives an overwhelming significance to the formulated ethical norms, but it does not give them unconditional validity. Under the impact of the prophetic criticism, moral laws change their meaning or are abrogated altogether. If they have become powerless to help the ethical decision in concrete situations, they are obsolete and-if preserved-destructive. Once created by love, they are now in conflict with love. They have become "letter," and the Spirit has left them.

The concrete situation is the continuous source of ethical experience. In itself it is mute-like every fact unaccompanied by interpretative concepts. It needs ethical norms in order to give voice to its meaning.

But the norms are abstract and do not reach the situation. **Only love can** do that, because love unites with the particular situation out of which the concrete demand grows. Love itself uses wisdom, but love transcends the wisdom of the past in the power of another of its elements, courage. It is the courage to judge the particular without subjecting it to an abstract norm-a courage which can do justice to the particular. Courage implies risk, and man must take the risk of misconceiving the situation and of acting ambiguously and against love-perhaps because he acts against a traditional ethical norm or perhaps because he subjects himself to a traditional ethical norm. To the degree that **Spirit**-created love prevails in a human being, the concrete decision is unambiguous, but it never can escape the fragmentary character of finitude. With respect to moral content, theonomous morality is determined by Spirit-created love. It is supported by the Spirit-created wisdom of the ages, expressed in the moral laws of the nations. It is made concrete and adequate by the application of the courage of love to the unique situation.

Love is also the motivating power in theonomous morality. We have seen the ambiguities of the law's demanding obedience-even if it is the law of love. Love is unambiguous, not as law, but as grace. Theologically speaking, Spirit, love, and grace are one and the same reality in different aspects. Spirit is the creative power; love is its creation; grace is the effective presence of love in man. The very term "grace" indicates that it is not a product of any act of good will on the part of him who receives it but that it is given gratuitously, without merit on his side. The great "in spite of" is inseparable from the concept of grace. Grace is the impact of the Spiritual Presence that makes the fulfilment of the law possible-though fragmentarily. It is the reality of that which the law commands, the reunion with one's true being, and this means the reunion with oneself, with others, and with the ground of one's self and others. Where there is New Being, there is grace, and vice versa. Autonomous or heteronomous morality is without ultimate moral motivating power. Only love or the Spiritual Presence can motivate by giving what it demands.

This is the judgment brought against all non-theonomous ethics. They are unavoidably ethics of the law, and the law makes for the increase of estrangement. It cannot conquer it but instead produces hatred of itself as law. The many forms of ethics without Spiritual Presence

are judged by the fact that they cannot show the power of motivation, the principle of choice in the concrete situation, the unconditional validity of the moral imperative. Love can do it, but love is not a matter of man's will. **It is a** creation of the Spiritual Presence. It is grace.

D. THE HEALING POWER OF THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF LIFE IN GENERAL

1. The Spiritual Presence and the Ambiguities of Life in General

All the preceding discussions concerning the Spirit are related to the functions of the human spirit: morality, culture, religion. But the descriptions of the ambiguities of life in the dimensions which precede the appearance of the dimensions of the spirit take a large space and are a preparation for the descriptions of the ambiguities of life under the dimension of the spirit. The question which thus arises is whether the Spirit has a relation to these dimensions of life as definite as to the human spirit. Has the Spiritual Presence a relationship to life in general?

The first answer we must give is that there is no direct impact of the Spiritual Presence on life in the dimensions of the inorganic, of the organic, and of self-awareness. Divine Spirit appears in the ecstasy of human spirit but not in anything which conditions the appearance of spirit. The Spiritual Presence is not an intoxicating substance, or a stimulus for psychological excitement, or a miraculous physical cause. This must be emphasized in view of the many instances in the history of religion, including biblical literature, in which physical or psychological effects are derived from the Spirit in its quality as divine power, for example, the removal of a person from one place to another "through the air," the killing of a healthy but morally disintegrated person by mere words, the generation of an embryo in the mother's womb without male participation, or the knowledge of foreign languages without a process of learning. All these effects are considered as caused by the Spiritual Presence. Obviously, if these stories are taken literally, they make the divine Spirit a finite, though extraordinary, cause beside other causes. In this view Spirit is a kind of physical matter. Both its Spirituality and its divinity are lost. If, in spiritualistic movements, the Spirit is described as a substance of higher power and dignity than that of the ordinary natural substances, this is an abuse of the word "Spirit." Even if there were "higher" natural substances than we know, they would not

deserve the name "Spirit"; they would be "lower" than spirit in man and not under the direct impact of the Spiritual Presence. This is the first answer to the question of the relation of the Spirit to iife in general.

The second answer is that the multidimensional unity of life implies an indirect and limited influence of the Spiritual Presence on the ambiguities of life in general. If the presupposition is true that all dimensions of life are potentially or actually present in each dimension, happenings under the predominance of one dimension must imply happenings in other dimensions. This means that all we have said about the impact of the Spiritual Presence on man's spirit and its three basic functions implies changes in all dimensions which constitute man's being and condition the appearance of spirit in him. The impact, for example, of the Spiritual Presence on the creation of theonomous morality implies effects on the psychological self and its self-integration, and this implies effects on biological self-integration and the physiological and chemical processes out of which it arises. However, these implications should not be misunderstood as a chain of causes and effects, starting with the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the human spirit and causing changes in all other realms through the human spirit. The multidimensional unity of life means that the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the human spirit is ***at the same time,*** an impact on the ***psyche,*** the cells, and the physical elements which constitute man. And although the term "impact" unavoidably uses causal imagery, it is not a cause in the categorical sense but a presence which participates in the object of its impact. Like the divine creativity in all respects, it transcends' the category of causality, although human language must make use of causality in a symbolic way. As the "impact" of the Spiritual Presence is not a cause in the categorical sense, so it does not start a chain of causes into all dimensions of life but is "present" to all of them in one and the same Presence. However, this presence is restricted to those beings in whom the dimension of the spirit has appeared. Although qualitatively it refers to all realms, quantitatively it is limited to man as the being in whom spirit is actualized.

If we look at the processes of self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence with these limitations in mind, we understand why their ambiguities cannot be conquered totally and universally by the Divine Spirit. The Spirit grasps the spirit and only indirectly and in a limited way the ***psyche*** and the *physis.* The universe is not yet transformed; it

"waits" for transformation. But the Spirit transforms actually in the dimension of the spirit. Men are the "first fruits" of the New Being; the universe will follow them. The doctrine of the Spirit leads to the doctrine of the Kingdom of God as eternal fulfilment.

But there is a function which unites the universality of the Kingdom of God with the limited impact of the Spiritual Presence-the function of healing. All dimensions of life are involved in it. It is produced by actions in all realms, including the realm which is determined by the dimension of spirit. It is an effect of the Spiritual Presence and an anticipation of eternal fulfilment. Therefore it requires a special consideration. Salvation means healing, and healing is an element in the work for salvation.

2. Healing, Salvation, and the Spiritual Presence

The life process under all dimensions unites self-identity with self-alteration. Disintegration occurs if one of the two poles is so predominant that the balance of life is disturbed. The name of this disturbance is disease, and its final result is death. Healing forces within organic processes, whether they lie inside or originate outside the organism, try to break the predominance of one of the poles and revive the influence of the other one. They work for the self-integration of a centered life, for health. Since disease is a disruption of centeredness under all dimensions of life, the drive for health, for healing, must also occur under all dimensions. There are many processes of disintegration leading to disease, and there are many ways of healing, of trying to reintegrate, and many kinds of healers, depending on the different processes of disintegration and the different ways of healing. The question in our context is whether there is Spiritual healing, and if it exists, how it is related to the other ways of healing, and further, how it is related to that kind of healing which in the language of religion is called "salvation."

The multidimensional unity of life is most conspicuous in the realm of health, disease, and healing. Each of these phenomena must be described in terms of multidimensional unity. All dimensions of life are included in each of them. Health and disease are states of the whole person; they are "psychosomatic," as a contemporary technical term incompletely indicates. Healing must be directed to the whole person. But such statements need drastic qualification in order to give a true picture

of the reality. The different dimensions which constitute the human being are not only united; they are also distinct and capable of being affected and of reacting with relative independence. Certainly, there is no absolute independence in the dynamics of the different dimensions, but neither is there an absolute dependence. An injury of a small part of the body (for example, an injured finger) always has some impact on the biological and psychological dynamics of a person as a whole, although it does not make the whole person sick and the healing can be limited (for example, surgery). The degree in which unity or independence prevails decides the most adquate kind of healing. It decides, above all, how many kinds should be used together and whether it is not better for the health of the person as a whole that a limited disease not be subjected to an attempt at healing at all (for example, some neurotic compulsions). All this refers to healing under the different dimensions of life, without considering the healing power of the Spiritual Presence. It shows the variety of mixtures between interdependence and independence of the factors which determine health, disease, and healing. It shows that any one-sided approach to healing must be strongly rejected and that even an approach from many or all sides is inadequate in some causes. The conflicts, for example, between chemical and psychological ways of healing, are unavoidable only if the one or the other method claims exclusive validity. Sometimes both ways should be used together; sometimes one alone is preferable. But in all cases the question of the relations of the different methods to each other should be asked without a dogmatic prejudice, whether for chemical medicine, for example, or for psychotherapy.

If we now ask how these different approaches are related to healing under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, a very ambiguous concept is offered as answer: the concept of faith healing. Since faith is the first creation of the Spirit, the term "faith healing" could simply mean healing under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. But this is not the case. The term "faith healing" is currently used for psychological phenomena which suggest the term "magic healing." Faith, in the faith-healing movements or by individual faith healers, is an act of concentration and autosuggestion, produced ordinarily, but not necessarily, by acts of another person or of a group. The genuinely religious concept of faith, as the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern or, more specifically, by the Spiritual Presence, has little in common with this autosuggestive

concentration called "faith" by the faith healers. In a sense it is just the opposite, because the religious concept of faith points to its receptive character, the state of being grasped by the Spirit, whereas the faith-healer's concept of faith emphasizes an act of intensive concentration and self-determination.

In calling faith healing "magic" we do not intend to use a pejorative term. Faith healing can be and has been quite successful, and there is probably no healing of any kind which is completely free from elements of magic. For magic must be defined as the impact of one being upon another which does not work through mental communication or physical causation but which nevertheless has physical or mental effects. The propagandist, the teacher, the preacher, the counselor, the doctor, the lover, the friend, can combine an impact on the perceiving and deliberating center with an impact on the whole being by magic influence, and the latter can subdue the former to such a degree that dangerous consequences result from by-passing the deliberating, deciding, and responsible self. All communication would be only intellectual and all influence of one human being upon another a matter of physical causes or arguments, without the magic element. Magic healing, of which faith healing is a conspicuous form, is one of many ways of healing. In the name of the Spiritual Presence it can be neither unambiguously accepted nor unambiguously rejected. But three things must be stated with respect to it: first, that it is not healing through faith but by magic concentration; second, that it is justified as an element in many human encounters, though it has destructive as well as creative possibilities; and third, that if it excludes other ways of healing in principle (as some faith-healing movements and individuals do) it is predominantly destructive.

There is faith healing within the Christian churches as well as in particular groups and circles. Intensive and often repeated prayers are the main tool, to which sacramental performances are added for psychological support. Since prayers and intercessions for health belong to the normal intercourse between man and God, it is difficult to draw a sharp boundary line between Spirit-determined and magical praying. Generally speaking, one can say that a Spirit-determined prayer seeks to bring one's own personal center, including one's concern for the health of one's self or of someone else, before God, and that it is willing to accept the divine acceptance of the prayer whether its overt content

is fulfilled or not. Conversely, a prayer which is only a magical concentration on the desired aim, using God for its realization, does not accept an unfulfilled prayer as an accepted prayer, for the ultimate aim in the magic prayer is not God and the reunion with him but the object of the prayer, for example, health. A prayer for health in faith is not an attempt at faith healing but an expression of the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence.

It is now possible to relate the different ways of healing to the reality of the New Being and its significance for healing. The basic statement, derived from all the previous considerations of this part of the theological system, is that the integration of the personal center is possible only by its elevation to what can be called symbolically the divine center and that this is possible only through the impact of the divine power, the Spiritual Presence. At this point health and salvation are identical, both being the elevation of man to the transcendent unity of the divine life. The receiving function of man in this experience is faith; the actualizing function is love. Health in the ultimate sense of the word, health as identical with salvation, is life in faith and love. In so far as it is created by the Spiritual Presence, the health of unambiguous life is reached; and although unambiguous, it is not total but fragmentary, and it is open to relapses into the ambiguities of life in all its dimensions.

The question now is how this unambiguous though fragmentary health, created by the Spirit, is related to the healing activities under the different dimensions. The first answer is negative from both sides: The healing impact of the Spiritual Presence does not replace the ways of healing under the different dimensions of life. And, conversely, these ways of healing cannot replace the healing impact of the Spiritual Presence. The first statement rejects not only the wrong claims of the faith healers but also the much more serious but rather popular error that derives disease directly from a particular sin or from a sinful life. Such an error produces a despairing conscience in those who are stricken and a pharisaic self-righteousness in those who are not. To be sure there is often a simple line of cause and effect between a sinful act or behavior and a particular incidence of disease. But even then, healing is not a matter of forgiveness alone but also a matter of medical or psychological care. It is decisive for judging this situation that the sinful state itself is not a matter of the responsible self alone but also a matter of the destiny which includes ambiguities in all the dimensions which constitute the person. The different dimensions in which diseases occur have a relative independence of each other and of the Spiritual impact on the person, and demand a comparatively independent way of healing. But the other answer to our question is equally important, and that is that the other ways of healing cannot replace the healing power of the Spirit. In periods when the medical and the priestly functions were completely separate, this was not a serious problem, especially when medical healing claimed absolute validity, even against any striving of psychotherapy for independence. In this situation salvation had nothing to do with healing; it was the salvation from hell in a future life and the medical profession gladly left it to the priest. But the situation changed when mental diseases ceased to be derived from demonic possession or, in contrast, from physically observable causes. With the development of psychotherapy as an independent way of healing, problems arose in the directions both of medicine and of religion. Today psychotherapy (including all schools of psychological healing) often tries to eliminate both medical healing and the healing function of the Spiritual Presence. The first is usually a matter of practice rather than of theory, the second mostly a matter of principle. The psychoanalyst, for example, claims that he can overcome the negativities of man's existential situation—anxiety, guilt, despair, emptiness, and so on. But in order to support his claim the analyst must deny both the existential estrangement of man from himself and the possibility of his transcendent reunion with himself; that is, he must deny the vertical line in man's encounter with reality. If he is not willing to deny the vertical line, because he is aware of an unconditional concern in himself, he must accept the question of an existential estrangement. He must, for example, be willing to distinguish between existential anxiety to be conquered by a courage created by the Spiritual Presence and a neurotic anxiety to be conquered by analysis, perhaps in combination with methods of medical healing. It seems that the insight into these structures is gaining among representatives of the several ways of healing. In any case, the "struggle of the faculties" has lost its theoretical foundation as well as practical ground. The ways of healing do not need to impede each other, as the dimensions of life do not conflict with each other. The correlate of the multidimensional unity of life is the multidimensional unity of healing. No individual can exercise all the ways of healing with authority, although more than one way may be used by some

individuals. But even if there is a union of different functions, for example, of the priestly and medical functions in one man, the functions must be distinguished and neither confused with the other, nor may one be eliminated by the other.

Healing is fragmentary in all its forms. Manifestations of disease struggle continuously with manifestations of health, and it often happens that disease in one realm enhances health in another realm and that health under the predominance of one dimension increases disease under another dimension (for example, the healthy athlete with all the symptoms of neurosis or the healthy activist who hides an existential despair). Not even the healing power of the Spirit can change this situation. Under the condition of existence it remains fragmentary and stands under the "in spite of" of which the Cross of the Christ is the symbol. No healing, not even healing under the impact of the Spiritual Presence, can liberate the individual from the necessity of death. Therefore the question of healing, and this means the question of salvation, goes beyond the healing of the individual to the healing through history and beyond history; it leads us to the question of the Eternal Life as symbolized by the Kingdom of God. Only universal healing is total healing-salvation beyond ambiguities and fragments.

IV

THE TRINITARIAN SYMBOLS

A. THE MOTIVES OF THE TRINITARIAN SYMBOLISM

THE Spiritual Presence is the Presence of God under a definite aspect. It is not the aspect expressed in the symbol of creation, nor is it the aspect expressed in the symbol of salvation, although it presupposes and fulfils both. It is the aspect of God ecstatically present in the human spirit and implicitly in everything which constitutes the dimension of the spirit. These aspects are reflections of something real in the nature of the divine for religious experience and for the theological tradition. They are not merely different subjective ways of looking at the same thing. They have a *fundamentum* in *re*, a foundation in reality, however much the subjective side of man's experience may contribute. In this sense we can say that the trinitarian symbols are a religious discovery which had to be made, formulated, and defended. What then, we ask, led to their discovery? One can distinguish at least three factors which have led to trinitarian thinking in the history of religious experience: first, the tension between the absolute and the concrete element in our ultimate concern; second, the symbolic application of the concept of life to the divine ground of being; and third, the threefold manifestation of God as creative power, as saving love, and as ecstatic transformation. It is the last of the three which suggests the symbolic names, Father, Son, and Spirit; but without the two preceding reasons for trinitarian thinking the last group would lead only into a crude mythology. We have dealt with the first two groups in describing the development of the idea of God and in discussing the application of the symbol of life to God. In the first consideration we have found that the more the ultimacy of our ultimate concern is emphasized, the more the religious need for a concrete manifestation of the divine develops, and that the tension between the absolute and the concrete elements in the idea of God drives toward the establishment of divine figures between God and man. It is the possible conflict between these figures and the ultimacy of the ultimate which motivates the trinitarian symbolism

in many religions and which remained effective in the trinitarian discussions of the early church. The danger of falling into tritheism and the attempts to avoid this danger were rooted in the inner tension between the ultimate and the concrete.

The second reason for the trinitarian symbolism has been discussed under the heading "God as Life." It led to the insight that if God is experienced as a living God and not as a dead identity an element of nonbeing must be seen in his being, that is, the establishment of otherness. The Divine Life then would be the reunion of otherness with identity in an eternal "process." This consideration brought us to the distinction of God as ground, God as form, and God as act, a pretrinitarian formula which makes trinitarian thinking meaningful. Certainly, the trinitarian symbols express the divine mystery as do all symbols which state something of God. This mystery, which is *the* mystery of being, remains unapproachable and impenetrable; it is identical with the divinity of the divine. It was the mistake of the classical German philosophers (whose thought is basically a philosophy of life) that, although seeing the trinitarian structure of life, they did not safeguard the divine mystery against cognitive hubris; but they were right (and so were most classical theologians) in using the dialectics of life in order to describe the eternal process of the divine ground of being. The doctrine of the Trinity-this is our main contention-is neither irrational nor paradoxical but, rather, dialectical. Nothing divine is irrational-if irrational means contradicting reason—for reason is the finite manifestation of the divine Logos. Only the transition from essence to existence, the act of self-estrangement, is irrational. Nor is the doctrine of the Trinity paradoxical. There is only one paradox in the relation betewen God and man, and that is the appearance of the eternal or essential unity of God and man under the conditions of their existential separation-or in Johannine language, the Logos has become flesh, i.e., has entered historical existence in time and space. All other paradoxical statements in Christianity are variations and applications of this paradox, for example, the doctrine of justification by grace alone or the participation of God in the suffering of the universe. But the trinitarian symbols are dialectical; they reflect the dialectics of life, namely the movement of separation and reunion. The statement that three is one and one is three was (and in many places still is) the worst distortion of the mystery of Trinity. If this is meant as a numerical identity, it is a trick or simply nonsense. If it is meant as

the description of a real process, it is not paradoxical or irrational at all but a precise description of all life processes. And in the trinitarian doctrine it is applied to the Divine Life in symbolic terms.

But all this is preparatory for the developed trinitarian doctrine in Christian theology which is motivated by the third basic reason for trinitarian thinking, that is, the manifestation of the divine ground of being in the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. With the statement that the historical Jesus is the Christ, the trinitarian problem became a part of the christological problem, the first and basic part, as indicated by the fact that the trinitarian decision in Nicaea preceded the definitely christological decision of Chalcedon. This sequence was logical, but in terms of motivation the sequence is reversed; the christological problem gives rise to the trinitarian problem.

For this reason it is adequate in the context of the theological system to discuss the trinitarian symbolism after having discussed the christological assertions of Christianity. But christology is not complete without pneumatology (the doctrine of the Spirit), because "the Christ is the Spirit" and the actualization of the New Being in history is the work of the Spirit. It was an important step in the direction of an existential understanding of theological doctrines when Schleiermacher put the doctrine of the Trinity at the end of the theological system. Certainly, the basis of his system, the Christian consciousness, with the lines drawn from it to its divine causation, was too weak to carry the burden of the system. It is not the Christian consciousness but the revelatory situation of which the Christian consciousness is only the receiving side that is the source of religious knowledge and theological reflection, including the trinitarian symbols. But Schleiermacher is right when he derives these symbols from the different ways in which faith is related to its divine cause. It was a mistake of Barth to start his Prolegomena with what, so to speak, are the Postlegomena, the doctrine of the Trinity. It could be said that in his system this doctrine falls from heaven, the heaven of an unmediated biblical and ecclesiastical authority.

Like every theological symbol, the trinitarian symbolism must be understood as an answer to the questions implied in man's predicament. It is the most inclusive answer and rightly has the dignity attributed to it in the liturgical practice of the church. Man's predicament, out of which the existential questions arise, must be characterized by three concepts: finitude with respect to man's esential being as creature, es-

trangement with respect to man's existential being in time and space, ambiguity with respect to man's participation in life universal. The questions arising out of man's finitude are answered by the doctrine of God and the symbols used in it. The questions arising out of man's estrangement are answered by the doctrine of the Christ and the symbols applied to it. The questions arising out of the ambiguities of life are answered by the doctrine of the Spirit and its symbols. Each of these answers expresses that which is a matter of ultimate concern in symbols derived from particular revelatory experiences. Their truth lies in their power to express the ultimacy of the ultimate in all directions. The history of the trinitarian doctrine is a continuous fight against formulations which endanger this power.

We have referred to several motifs effective in trinitarian thought. All of them are based on revelatory experiences. The road to monotheism and the corresponding rise of mediating figures has appeared under the impact of the Spiritual Presence; the experience of God as a "living God" and not as dead identity is a work of the Spiritual Presence as is the experience of the creative ground of being in every being, the experience of Jesus as the Christ, and the ecstatic elevation of the human spirit toward the union of unambiguous life. On the other hand, the trinitarian doctrine is the work of theological thought which uses philosophical concepts and follows the general rules of theological rationality. There is no such thing as trinitarian "speculation" (where "speculation" means conceptual phantasies). The substance of all trinitarian thought is given in revelatory experiences, and the form has the same rationality that all theology, as a work of the Logos, must have.

B. THE TRINITARIAN DOGMA

It is not possible within the framework of this system to go into the intricacies of the trinitarian struggles. Only a few remarks in the light of our methodological procedures are possible. The first remark concerns the interpretation of the trinitarian dogma as given by the Ritschlian school, above all by the histories of dogma of Harnack and Loofs. It seems to me that the criticism of this theology by the different antiliberal schools of contemporary theology has in no way undercut its basic insights. Harnack and Loofs have shown both the greatness of the fundamental decision the church made at Nicaea and the impasse into which Christian theology was driven by the conceptual form used for the

decision. The liberating influence these insights had is still felt even in the antiliberal groups of contemporary theology and should never be lost in Protestantism. The limits of a work like Harnack's lie, from a historical point of view, in his misrepresentation of classical Greek, and even more of Hellenistic thought, as "intellectualistic." This leads him to a rejection of the whole of early 'Christian theology as an invasion of Hellenistic attitudes into the preaching of the Gospel and the life of the church. But Greek thought is existentially concerned with the eternal, in which it seeks for eternal truth and eternal life. Hellenism could receive the Christian message only in these categories, as the mind of the Jews of the Diaspora could receive it only in categories similar to those used by Paul and as the first disciples could receive it only in categories used by contemporaneous eschatological movements. In the light of these facts, it would be as false to reject a theology because it uses such categories as it would be to bind all future theology to the use of these categories.

Harnack's criticism of the trinitarian dogma of the early church shows full awareness of the latter point. But it betrays a lack of positive valuation of what the synodal decisions achieved in spite of their questionable formulations. This, of course, is connected with the attempt of the Ritschlian school to replace the ontological categories of Greek thought by the moral categories of modern, particularly Kantian, thought. But, as the later development of the Neo-Kantian school itself has proved, ontological categories are always used, if not explicitly, implicitly! Therefore one should approach the trinitarian dogma of the early church with neither a positive nor a negative prejudice but with the question: What has been and what has not been achieved by it ?

If God is the name for what concerns us ultimately, the principle of exclusive monotheism is established: there is no god besides God! But the trinitarian symbolism includes a plurality of divine figures. This presents the alternative either of attributing to some of these divine figures a diminished divinity or of dropping the exclusive monotheism and with it the ultimacy of the ultimate concern. The ultimacy of the ultimate concern is replaced by half-ultimate concerns and monotheism by quasi-divine powers as its expressions. This was the situation when the divinity of the Christ became a problem of theological interpretation instead of remaining an act of liturgical devotion. The problem was unavoidable, not only because of the reception of the message of the

Christ by the Greek mind, but also because man cannot repress his cognitive function in dealing with the content of his religious devotion. The great attempt of early Greek theology to solve the problem with the help of the Logos doctrine was the basis of all its later achievements and difficulties. It is understandable that the difficulties into which the doctrine was driven induced some theological schools to dismiss the doctrine altogether. But even if it were possible to develop a christology without applying the predicate Logos to the Christ, it is impossible to develop a doctrine of the living God and of the creation without distinguishing the "ground" and the "form" in God, the principle of abyss and the principle of the self-manifestation in God. Therefore one can say that even aside from the christological problem some kind of Logos doctrine is required in any Christian doctrine of God. On this basis it was and is necessary to merge the prechristological and the christological assertions about the divine life into a fully developed trinitarian doctrine. This synthesis has so great an inner necessity that even the sharpest and most justified criticism of the Logos doctrine of the classical theologians cannot annihilate it. He who sacrifices the Logos principle sacrifices the idea of a living God, and he who rejects the application of this principle to Jesus as the Christ rejects his character as Christ.

The question put before the church in Nicaea as well as in the preceding and subsequent struggles was not the establishment of the Logos principle-this was done long before the Christian era and not only in Greek philosophy-nor was it the application of this principle to Jesus as the Christ-this was done definitively in the Fourth Gospel. It was rather the question of the relation betwen God and his Logos (also called Son). This question was so existential for the early church because the valuation of Jesus as the Christ and his revelatory and saving power depends on the answer to it. If the Logos is defined as the highest of all creatures, as the left-wing theologians of the Origenistic school asserted, the Christ, in whom the Logos is manifest as historical personality, is himself, with all creatures, in need of revelation and salvation. In having him, men would have something less than "God with us." Neither error nor guilt nor death would have been conquered. This is the existential concern behind the fight of the right wing of the Origenistic school under the leadership of Athanasius. In the trinitarian decision of Nicaea their position prevailed theologically, devotionally, and politically. The half-god Jesus of Arian teaching was avoided. But

the trinitarian problem was more stated than solved. In the terminology of Nicaea, the divine "nature" (*ousia*) is identical in God and his Logos, in the Father and the Son. But the *hypostasis* is different. *Ousia* in this context means that which makes a thing what it is, its particular *physis*. ***Hypostasis*** in this context means the power of standing upon itself, the independence of being which makes mutual love possible. The decision of Nicaea acknowledged that the Logos-Son, like the God-Father, is an expression of ultimate concern. But how can ultimate concern be expressed in two divine figures who, although identical in substance, are different in terms of mutual relations? In the post-Nicaean struggles the divinity of the Spirit was discussed, denied, and finally affirmed in the second ecumenical synod. The motive for it was again christological. The divine Spirit who created and determined Jesus as the Christ is not the spirit of the man Jesus; and the divine Spirit who creates and directs the church is not the spirit of a sociological group. And the Spirit who grasps and transforms the individual person is not an expression of his spiritual life. The divine Spirit is God himself as Spirit in the Christ and through him in the church and the Christian. The consistency of this transformation of a binitarian strain in the early church into a fully developed Trinity is obvious, but it did not help to solve the basic problem: How can ultimate concern be expressed in more than one divine *hypostasis*?

In terms of religious devotion, one can ask: Is the prayer to one of the three ***personae*** in whom the one divine substance exists directed toward someone different from another of the three to whom another prayer is directed? If there is no difference, why does one not simply address the prayer to God? If there is a difference, for example, in function, how is tritheism avoided? The concepts of *ousia* and ***hypostasis*** or of ***substantia*** and ***persona*** do not answer this basic devotional problem. They only confuse it and open the way to the unlimited number of objects of prayer which appeared in connection with the veneration of Mary and the saints-in spite of the theological distinctions between a genuine prayer, directed to God (adoration), and the evocation of the saints.

The difficulty appears as soon as the question is asked as to what the historical Jesus, the man in whom the Logos became "flesh," means for the interpretation of the Logos as the second ***hypostasis*** in the Trinity? We have spoken about it in connection with the symbols of the

preexistence and postexistence of the Christ. From the point of view of the trinitarian doctrine, any non-symbolic interpretation of these symbols would introduce into the Logos a finite individuality with a particular life history, conditioned hy the categories of finitude. Certainly the Logos, the divine self-manifestation, has an eternal relation to his self-manifestation in the Christ as the center of man's historical existence, as the Logos has an eternal relation to all potentialities of being; but one cannot attribute to the eternal Logos in himself the face of Jesus of Nazareth or the face of "historical man" or of any particular manifestation of the creative ground of being. But certainly, the face of God manifest for historical man is the face of Jesus as the Christ. The trinitarian manifestation of the divine ground is Christocentric for man, but it is not Jesu-centric in itself. The God who is seen and adored in trinitarian symbolism has not lost his freedom to manifest himself for other worlds in other ways.

The trinitarian doctrine was accepted in the West as well as in the East, but its spirit was Eastern and not Western. This became visible in Augustine's attempt to interpret the difference of the hypostases by psychological analogies, his acknowledgment that the statements about the mutual relations of the ***personae*** are'empty, and his emphasis on the unity of the acts of the Trinity ***ad extra.*** All this reduced the danger of tritheism, which could never be fully removed from the traditional dogma and which was always connected with a kind of subordination of the Son to the Father and the Spirit to the Son. Behind the subordinational element in the Greek Orthodox understanding of the Trinity lies one of the most fundamental and most persistent traits of the classical Greek encounter with reality, the interpretation of reality in grades, leading from the lowest to the highest (and conversely). This profoundly existential understanding of reality runs from Plato's ***Symposium*** to Origen and through him to the Eastern church and to Christian mysticism. In the monarchianistic tendencies of the Roman church and in Augustine's voluntaristic emphasis, it came into conflict with a strangely personalistic world view. After the sixth century the dogma could not be changed any further. Not even the reformers attempted it, in spite of Luther's biting criticism of some of the concepts used in it. It had become the politically guaranteed symbol of all forms of Christianity and the basic liturgical formula in all churches. But we must ask whether, after the historical analysis and the systematic criticism of the

dogma in Protestant theology since the eighteenth century, this state of things can last-in spite of its reaffirmation in the so-called basis of the World Council of Churches, which in any case falls short of the real achievement of Nicaea and Chalcedon.

C. REOPENING THE TRINITARIAN PROBLEM

The situation of the dogma of the Trinity, as indicated in the preceding paragraph, has several dangerous consequences. The first one is a radical change in the function of the doctrine. While originally its function was to express in three central symbols the self-manifestation of God to man, opening up the depth of the divine abyss and giving answers to the question of the meaning of existence, it later became an impenetrable mystery, put on the altar, to be adored. And the mystery ceased to be the eternal mystery of the ground of being; it became instead the riddle of an unsolved theological problem and in many cases, as shown before, the glorification of an absurdity in numbers. In this form it became a powerful weapon for ecclesiastical authoritarianism and the suppression of the searching mind.

It is understandable that the autonomous revolt against this situation in the period of the Renaissance and Reformation led to a radical rejection of the doctrine of Trinity in Socinianism and Unitarianism. The smallness of the direct effect of this revolt was due to the fact that it did not do justice to the religious motives of the trinitarian symbolism, as analyzed above; however, its indirect effect on most Protestant churches since the eighteenth century has been great. One may cite the general rule that an organ which has lost its function becomes crippled and an impediment to life. Protestantism generally did not attack the dogma, but it did not use it either. Even in denominations with a "high" Christology and an emphatic confession of the divinity of the Christ (for example, the Protestant Episcopal church), no new understanding of the Trinity was produced. But in most Protestant churches something developed which one could call a "Christocentric Unitarianism," It removed the emphasis on God as God, on the mystery of the divine ground and his creativity. It prevented an understanding of the Spiritual Presence and the ecstatic character of faith, love, and prayer. It reduced Protestant Christianity to a tool for moral education, accepted by society for this reason. The source book for this education is the "teachings of Jesus." In spite of all this, the trinitarian creeds and prayers of the

liturgy are still used, the hymns with their trinitarian implications are sung, and the Unitarians are excluded from the World Council of Churches.

Will it ever again be possible to say without theological embarrassment or mere conformity to tradition the great words, "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"? (The term "Holy Ghost" must be purged from every liturgical or other use.) Or will it be possible again to pray for blessings through the "love of God, the Father, and the grace of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" without awakening superstitious images in those who hear the prayer? I believe it is possible, but it requires a radical revision of the trinitarian doctrine and a new understanding of the Divine Life and the Spiritual Presence.

Besides the attempts in this direction which are made in all parts of the present system, some questions remain to be answered. The first concerns the number three implied in the word "trinity." What is the justification for keeping this number? Why was the early binitarian trend of thinking about God and Christ overcome by trinitarian symbolism? And after this, why was the Trinity not enlarged to a quaternity and beyond? These questions have a historical ground as well as a systematic one. Originally the distinction between the Logos and the Spirit was indefinite or non-existent. The christological problem developed independently of the concept of the Spirit. The concept of the Spirit was reserved for the divine power which drives individuals and groups into ecstatic experiences. There was also a trend toward quaternity in theological thought. One of the reasons for the trend is the possibility of distinguishing the common divine nature of the three personae from the three ***personae*** themselves, either by establishing a divinity above them or by considering the Father both as one of the three ***personae*** and as the common source of divinity. Another motive for the enlargement of the Trinity was the elevation of the Holy Virgin to a position in which she more and more approached divine dignity. For the devotional life of most Roman Catholics, she has by far surpassed the Holy Spirit and in modern Catholicism all three ***personae*** of the Trinity. If the doctrine which has already been discussed among Catholics, that she is to be considered as co-savior with the Christ, should become dogma, the Virgin would become a matter of ultimate concern and, consequently, a ***persona*** within the divine life. No scholastic distinctions would then be able to prevent the Trinity from becoming a quaternity.

These facts show that it is not the number "three" which is decisive in trinitarian thinking but the unity in a manifoldness of divine self-manifestations. If we ask why, in spite of this openness to different numbers, the number "three" has prevailed, it seems most probable that the three corresponds to the intrinsic dialectics of experienced life and is, therefore, most adequate to symbolize the Divine Life. Life has been described as the process of going out from itself and returning to itself. The number "three" is implicit in this description, as the dialectical philosophers knew. References to the magic power of the number "three" are unsatisfactory because other numbers for example, four, surpass three in magic valuation. In any case, our earlier assertion that the trinitarian symbolism is dialectical is confirmed by the persistence of the number "three" in devotional formulas and theological thought.

The symbolic power of the image of the Holy Virgin from the fifth century after Christ up to our own time raises a question for Protestantism, which has radically removed this symbol in the struggle of the Reformation against all human mediators between God and man. In this purge the female element in the symbolic expression of ultimate concern was largely eliminated. The spirit of Judaism with its exclusively male symbolism prevailed in the Reformation. Without doubt, this was one of the reasons for the great successes of the Counter Reformation over against the originally victorious Reformation. It gave rise within Protestantism itself to the often rather effeminate pictures of Jesus in Pietism; it is the cause of many conversions to the Greek or Roman churches, and it is also responsible for the attraction of Oriental mysticism for many Protestant humanists.

It is highly unlikely that Protestantism will ever reinstate the symbol of the Holy Virgin. As the whole history of religion shows, a concrete symbol of this kind cannot be reestablished in its genuine power. The religious symbol may become a poetic symbol, but poetic symbols are not objects of veneration. The question can only be whether there are elements in genuine Protestant symbolism which transcend the alternative male-female and which are capable of being developed over against a one-sided male-determined symbolism.

I want to point to the following possibilities. The first is related to the concept "ground of being" which is-as previously discussed—partly conceptual, partly symbolical. In so far as it is symbolical, it points

to the mother-quality of giving birth, carrying, and embracing, and, at the same time, of calling back, resisting independence of the created, and swallowing it. The uneasy feeling of many Protestants about the first (not the last!) statement about God, that he is being-itself or the ground of being, is partly rooted in the fact that their religious consciousness and, even more, their moral conscience are shaped by the demanding father-image of the God who is conceived as a person among others. The attempt to show that nothing can be said about God theologically before the statement is made that he is the power of being in all being is, at the same time, a way of reducing the predominance of the male element in the symbolization of the divine.

With respect to the Logos, as manifest in Jesus as the Christ, it is the symbol of the self-sacrifice of his finite particularity which transcends the alternative male-female. Self-sacrifice is not a character of male as male or of female as female, but it is, in the very act of self-sacrifice, the negation of the one or the other in exclusion. Self-sacrifice breaks the contrast of the sexes, and this is symbolically manifest in the picture of the suffering Christ, in which Christians of both sexes have participated with equal psychological and spiritual intensity.

If we finally turn to the divine Spirit, we are reminded of the image of the Spirit brooding over the chaos, but we cannot use it directly because the female element, implied in this image, was dropped in Judaism, although it never became an outspoken male symbol-not even in the story of the virginal birth of Jesus, where the Spirit replaces the male principle but does not become male itself. It is the ecstatic character of the Spiritual Presence which transcends the alternative of male and female symbolism in the experience of the Spirit. Ecstasy transcends both the rational element and the emotional element, which usually are attributed respectively to the male and female types. Again it is Protestant moralistic personalism which is distrustful of the ecstatic element in the Spiritual Presence and drives many people, in protest, toward an apersonal mysticism.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not closed. It can be neither discarded nor accepted in its traditional form. It must be kept open in order to fulfil its original function-to express in embracing symbols the self-manifestation of the Divine Life to man.

PART V

HISTORY AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

THE SYSTEMATIC PLACE OF THE FIFTH PART OF THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM AND THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF LIFE

IN THE analysis of the dimensions of life given in the fourth part of the system, the historical dimension was put in brackets. It requires a special treatment because it is the most embracing dimension, presupposing the others and adding a new element to them. This element is fully developed only after the dimension of the spirit has been actualized by the processes of life. But the processes of life themselves are horizontally directed, actualizing the historical dimension in an anticipatory way.This actualization is begun but unfulfilled. It would certainly be possible to call the birth, growth, aging, and dying of a particular tree its history; and it is even easier to call the development of the universe or of the species on earth history. The term "natural history" directly attributes the dimension of history to every process in nature. But the term history is ordinarily and predominantly used of human history. This points to the awareness that, although the historical dimension is present in all realms of life, it comes into its own only in human history. Analogues to history proper are found in all realms of life. There is no history proper where there is no spirit. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the "historical dimension," which belongs to all life processes, from history proper, which is something occurring in mankind alone.

The fifth part of the theological system is an extension of the fourth part, separated from it for traditional and practical reasons. Any doctrine of life must include a doctrine of the historical dimension of life in general and of human history as the most comprehensive life process in particular. Any description of the ambiguities of life must include a description of the ambiguity of life under the historical dimension. And finally, the answer of "life unambiguous" to the questions implied in life's ambiguities leads to the symbols "Spiritual Presence," "Kingdom of God," and "Eternal Life." Nevertheless, a separate treatment of the historical dimension within the whole of theological thought

is advisable. As in the first part of the system the correlation between reason and revelation was taken out of the context of the second, third, and fourth parts and treated first, so in the fifth part the correlation between history and the Kingdom of God is taken out of the context of the three central parts and treated last. In both cases the theological tradition is partly responsible for this procedure: the 'questions of the relation of revelation to reason and of the Kingdom of God to history have always received a comparatively independent and extensive treatment. But there is also a more theoretical reason for dealing separately with the ambiguities of history and the symbols which answer the questions implied in them. It is the embracing character of the historical dimension and the equally embracing character of the symbol "Kingdom of God" that give particular significance to the discussion of history. The historical quality of life is potentially present under all its dimensions. It is actualized under them in an anticipatory way, i.e., it is not only potentially but in part actually present under them, whereas it is fully actualized in human history. Therefore it is adequate to discuss, first, history in its full and proper sense, i.e., human history, then to strive to understand the historical dimension in all realms of life, and finally, to relate human history to the "history of the universe."

A theological discussion of history must, in view of its particular question, deal with the structure of historical processes, the logic of historical knowledge, the ambiguities of historical existence, the meaning of the historical movement. It must also relate all this to the symbol of the Kingdom of God, both in its inner-historical and in its transhistorical sense. In the first sense it reaches back to the symbol "Spiritual Presence", in the second sense it goes over into the symbol "Eternal Life."

With the symbol "Eternal Life," problems appear which are normally discussed as "eschatological," that is, concerned with the doctrine of the "last things." As such their place at the end of the theological system seems natural. But it is not. Eschatology deals with the relation of the temporal to the eternal, but so do all parts of the theological system. Therefore it would be quite possible to begin a systematic theology with the eschatological question—the question of the inner aim, the *telos* of everything that is. Besides reasons of expediency, there is only one systematic reason for the traditional order, which is followed here, and that is that the doctrine of creation uses the temporal mode of "past" in order to symbolize the relation of the temporal to the eternal, whereas

eschatology uses the temporal mode of "future" in order to do the same- and time, in our experience, runs from what is past to what is future.

Between the questions "where from" and "where to" lies the whole system of theological questions and answers. But it is not simply a straight line from the one to the other. The relation is more intrinsic: "where to" is inseparably implied in "where' from"; the meaning of creation is revealed in its end. And conversely, the nature of the "where to" is determined by the nature of the "where from"; that is, only the valuation of the creation as good makes an eschatology of fulfilment possible; and only the idea of fulfilment makes the creation meaningful. The end of the system leads back to its beginning.

I

HISTORY AND THE QUEST FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A. LIFE AND HISTORY

1. MAN AND HISTORY

a) History and historical consciousness.-A semantic consideration may help us to discover a particular quality of history. The well-known fact that the Greek word ***historia*** means primarily inquiry, information, report, and only secondarily the events inquired about and reported is a case in point. It shows that for those who originally used the word "history" the subjective side preceded the objective side. Historical consciousness, according to this view, "precedes" historical happenings. Of course, historical consciousness does not precede in temporal succession the happenings of which it is conscious. But it transforms mere happenings into historical events, and in this sense it "precedes" them. Strictly speaking, one should say that the same situation produces both the historical occurrences and the awareness of them as historical events.

Historical consciousness expresses itself in a tradition, i.e., in a set of memories which are delivered from one generation to the other. Tradition is not a casual collection of remembered events but the recollection of those events which have gained significance for the bearers and receivers of the tradition. The significance which an occurrence has for a tradition-conscious group determines whether it will be considered as a historical event.

It is natural that the influence of the historical consciousness on the historical account should mold the tradition in accordance with the active needs for the historical group in which the tradition is alive. Consequently the ideal of pure, unbiased historical research appears at a rather late stage in the development of the writing of history. It is preceded by combinations of myth and history, by legends and sagas, by epic poetry. In all these cases, occurrences are elevated to historical significance, but the way in which it is done transforms the occurrences

into symbols of the life of a historical group. Tradition unites historical reports with symbolic interpretations. It does not report "naked facts," which itself is a questionable concept; but it does bring to mind significant events through a symbolic transformation of the facts. This does not mean that the factual side is mere invention. Even the epic form in which tradition is expressed has historical roots, however hidden they may he, and saga and legend reveal their historical origins rather obviously. But in all these forms of tradition it is virtually impossible to separate the historical occurrence from its symbolic interpretation. In every living tradition the historical is seen in the light of the symbolic, and historical research can disentangle this amalgamation only in terms of higher or lower probability. For the way in which historical events are experienced is determined by their valuation in terms of significance, which implies that in their original receptions the records are partly dependent on their symbolic element. The biblical records, discussed in the third part of the system, are classical examples of this situation.

But one must ask whether the scholarly approach to historical facts is not also dependent on concealed symbols of interpretation. It seems this cannot be denied. There are several points in every historical statement of an intentionally detached character which show the influence of a symbolic vision. The choice of occurrences which are to be established as facts is the most important. Since in every moment of time at every point of space an inexhaustible number of occurrences takes place, the choice of the object of historical inquiry is dependent on the valuation of its importance for the establishment of the life of a historical group. In this respect history is dependent on historical consciousness. But this is not the only point in which this is the case. Every piece of historiography evaluates the weight of concurring influences on a person or a group and on their actions. This is one cause of the endless differences in historical presentations of the same factual material. Another cause, which is less obvious but even more decisive, is the context of the active life of the group in which the historian works, for he participates in the life of his group, sharing its memories and traditions. Out of this factor questions arise to which the presentation of the facts gives the answer. Nobody writes history on a "place above all places." Such a claim would be no less utopian than the claim that perfect social conditions are just approaching. All history-writing is

dependent both on actual occurrences and on their reception by a concrete historical consciousness. There is no history without factual occurrences, and there is no history without the reception and interpretation of factual occurrences by historical consciousness.

These considerations do not conflict with the demands of the methods of historical research; the scientific criteria used by historical scholarship are as definite, obligatory and objective as those in any other realm of inquiry. But precisely in and through the act of applying them the influence of the historical consciousness becomes effective-though unintentionally in the case of honest historical work.

Another implication of the subject-object character of history must be mentioned. Through the interpretative element of all history, the answer to the question of the meaning of history has an indirect, mediated impact on a historical presentation. One cannot escape the destiny of belonging to a tradition in which the answer to the question of the meaning of life in all its dimensions, including the historical, is given in symbols which influence every encounter with reality. It is the purpose of the following chapters to discuss the symbols in which Christianity has expressed its answer to the question of the meaning of historical existence. There can be no doubt that even the most objective scholar, if he is existentially determined by the Christian tradition, interprets historical events in the light of this tradition, however unconscious and indirect its influence may be.

b) The historical dimension in the light of human history.-Human history, as the semantic study of the implications of the term ***historia*** has shown, is always a union of objective and subjective elements. An "event" is a syndrome (i.e., a running-together) of facts and interpretation. If we now turn from the semantic to the material discussion, we find the same double structure in all occurrences which deserve the name "historical event."

The horizontal direction under the dimension of the spirit has the character of intention and purpose. In a historical event, human purposes are the decisive, though not the exclusive, factor. Given institutions and natural conditions are other factors, but only the presence of actions with a purpose makes an event historical. Particular purposes may or may not be actualized, or they may lead to something not intended (according to the principle of the "heterogony of purposes");

but the decisive thing is that they are a determining factor in historical events. Processes in which no purpose is intended are not historical.

Man, in so far as he sets and pursues purposes, is free. He transcends the given situation, leaving the real for the sake of the possible. He is not bound to the situation in which he finds himself, and it is just this self-transcendence that is the first and basic quality of freedom. Therefore, no historical situation determines any other historical situation completely. The transition from one situation to another is in part determined by man% centered reaction, by his freedom. According to the polarity of freedom and destiny, such self-transcendence is not absolute; it comes out of the totality of elements of past and present, but within these limits it is able to produce something qualitatively new.

Therefore, the third characteristic of human history is the production of the new. In spite of all abstract similarities of past and future events, every concrete event is unique and in its totality incomparable. This assertion, however, needs qualification. It is not only human history in which the new is produced. The dynamics of nature create the new by producing individuality in the smallest parts as well as in the largest composites of nature and also by producing new species in the evolutionary process and new constellations of matter in the extensions and contractions of the universe. But there is a qualitative difference between these forms of the new and the new in history proper. The latter is essentially related to meanings or values. Both terms can be adequate if correctly defined. Most philosophies of history in the last one hundred years have spoken of history as the realm in which values are actualized. The difficulty of this terminology is the necessity of introducing a criterion which distinguishes arbitrary values from objective values. Arbitrary values, unlike objective values, are not subject to such norms as truth, expressiveness, justice, humanity, holiness. The bearers of objective valuations are personalities and communities. If we call such valuations "absolute" (where by "absolute" we mean that their validity is independent of the valuating subject), it is possible to describe the creation of the new in human history as the creation of new actualizations of value ***in*** centered personalities. However, if one is hesitant about the term "value," an alternative is "meaning." Life in meanings, according to previous considerations, is life determined by the functions of the spirit and the norms and principles controlling them. The word

"meaning," of course, is not unambiguous. But the merely logical use of the term ("a word has a meaning") is transcended if one speaks of "life in meanings." If the term "meaning" is used in this sense, one should describe the production of the new in history as the production of new and unique embodiments of meaning. My preference for this latter terminology is based partly on the rejection of the anti-ontological value theory and partly on the importance of terms like "the meaning of life" for the philosophy of religion. A phrase like "the value of life" has neither the depth nor the breadth of "the meaning of life."

The fourth characteristic of history proper is the significant uniqueness of a historical event. The unique, novel quality of all processes of life is shared by the historical processes. But the unique event has significance only in history. To signify something means to point beyond one's self to that which is signified-to represent something. A historical personality is historical because it represents larger events, which themselves represent the human situation, which itself represents the meaning of being as such. Personalities, communities, events, and situations are significant when more is embodied in them than a transitory occurrence within the universal process of becoming. These occurrences, of which innumerable ones come and go in every second of time, are not historical in the proper sense, but a combination of them may assume historical significance if it represents a human potentiality in a unique, incomparable way. History describes the sequence of such potentialities but with a decisive qualification: it describes them as they appear under the conditions of existence and within the ambiguities of life. Without the revelation of human potentialities (generally speaking, potentialities of life), historical accounts would not report significant events. Without the unique embodiment of these potentialities, they would not appear in history; they would remain pure essences. Yet they are both significant, because they are above history, and unique, because they are within history. There is, however, another reason for the significance of unique historical events: the significance of the historical process as a whole. Whether there is such a thing as "world history" or not, the historical processes within historical mankind have an inner aim. They go ahead in a definite direction, they run toward a fulfilment, whether they reach it or not. A historical event is significant in so far as it represents a moment within the historical movement toward the end. Thus, historical events are significant for three reasons:

they represent essential human potentialities, they show these potentialities actualized in a unique way, and they represent moments in the development toward the aim of history-in which way the aim itself is symbolized.

The four characteristics of human history (to be connected with purpose, to be influenced by freedom, to create the new in terms of meaning, to be significant in a universal, particular, and teleological sense) lead to the distinction between human history and the historical dimension in general. The distinctions are implicit in the four characteristics of human history and can also be shown from the other side, i.e., from the dimension of the historical in the realms of life other than human history. If we take as examples the life of higher animals, the evolution of species, and the development of the astronomical universe, we observe first of all that in none of these examples are purpose and freedom effective. Purposes, e.g., in the higher animals, do not transcend the satisfaction of their immediate needs; the animals do not transcend their natural bondage. Nor is there any particular intention operating in the evolution of the species or in the movements of the universe. The question becomes more complicated when we ask whether there is absolute meaning and significant uniqueness in these realms of life, e.g., whether the genesis of a new species in the animal realm has meaning comparable to the rise of a new empire or a new artistic style in human history. Obviously, the new species is unique, but the question is whether it is significantly unique in the sense of an embodiment of absolute meaning. Again we must answer negatively: there is no absolute meaning and there is no significant uniqueness where the dimension of the spirit is not actual. The uniqueness of a species or of a particular exemplar within a species is real but not ultimately significant, whereas the act in which a person establishes himself as a person, a cultural creation with its inexhaustible meaning, and a religious experience in which ultimate meaning breaks through preliminary meanings are infinitely significant. These assertions are based on the fact that life under the dimension of the spirit is able to experience ultimacy and to produce embodiments and symbols of the ultimate. If there were absolute meaning in a tree or a new animal species or a new galaxy of stars, this meaning could be understood by men, for meaning is experienced by man. This factor in human existence has led to the doctrine of the infinite value of every human soul. Although such

a doctrine is not directly biblical, it is implied in the promises and threats pronounced by all biblical writers: "heaven" and "hell" are symbols of ultimate. meaning and unconditional significance. But no such threat or promise is made about other than human life.

Nevertheless, there is no realm of life in which the historical dimension is not present and' actualized in an anticipatory way: Even in the inorganic, and certainly in the organic, realm, there is *telos* (inner aim) which is quasi-historical, even though it is not a part of history proper. This is also true of the genesis of species and the development of the universe; they are analogues to history, but they are not history proper. The analogy appears in the spontaneity in nature, in the new produced by the progress in biological evolution, in the uniqueness of cosmic constellations. But it remains analogy. Freedom and absolute meaning are lacking. The historical dimension in life universal is analogous to life in history proper, but it is not history itself. In life universal the dimension of spirit is actualized only in anticipation. There are analogies between life under the biological dimension and life under the dimension of the spirit, but the biological is not spirit. Therefore, history remains an anticipated, but unactualized, dimension in all realms except that of human history.

c) ***Prehistory and posthistory***.-The development from anticipated to actual history can be described as the stage of prehistorical man. He is already man in some respects, but he is not yet historical man. For if that being which eventually will produce history is called "man," he must have the freedom to set purposes, he must have language and universals, however limited these may be, and he must also have artistic and cognitive possibilities and a sense of the holy. If he had all this he would already be historical in a way in which no other being in nature is historical, but the historical potentiality in him would only be in transition from possibility to reality. It would be, metaphorically speaking, the state of "awakening" humanity. There is no way of verifying such a state; yet it can be postulated as the basis for the later development of man, and it can be used as a critical weapon against unrealistic ideas about the early state of mankind which attribute to prehistorical man either too much or too little. Too much is attributed to him if he is endowed with all kinds of perfections which anticipate either later developments or even a state of fulfilment. Examples of this are theological interpretations of the paradise myth which attribute to Adam

the perfections of the Christ and the secular interpretations of the original state of mankind which attribute to the "noble savage" the perfections of the humanist ideal of man.

On the other hand, too little is attributed to prehistorical man if he is considered as, a beast without at least the possibility of universals and, consequently, of language. If this were true, there would be no prehistorical man, and historical man would be a "creation out of nothing." But all empirical evidence stands against such an assumption. Prehistorical man is that organic being which is predisposed to actualize the dimensions of spirit and history and which in his development drives toward their actualization. There is no identifiable moment when animal self-awareness becomes human spirit and when human spirit enters the historical dimension. The transition from one dimension to the other is hidden, although the result of this transition is obvious when it appears. We do not know when the first spark of historical consciousness dawned in the human race, but we do recognize expressions of this consciousness. We can distinguish historical from prehistorical man though we do not know the moment of transition from one to the other because of the mixture of slow transformation and sudden leap in all evolutionary processes. If evolution proceeded only by leaps, one could identify the result of each leap. If evolution proceeded only by a slow transformation, no radical change could be noticed at all. But evolutionary processes combine both the leap and the slow change, and therefore, although one can distinguish the results, one cannot fix the moments in which they appear. The darkness which veils prehistorical mankind is not a matter of preliminary scholarly failure but rather of, the indefiniteness of all evolutionary processes with respect to the appearance of the new. Historical man is new, but he is prepared for and anticipated by prehistorical man, and the point of transition from the one to the other is essentially indefinite.

A similar consideration must be brought to bear upon the idea of posthistory. The question is whether one must anticipate a stage of the evolutionary process in which historical mankind, though not as human race, comes to an end. The significance of this question lies in its relation to utopian ideas with respect to the future of mankind. The last stage of historical man has been identified with the final stage of fulfilment-with the Kingdom of God actualized on earth. But the "last" in the temporal sense is not the "final" in the eschatological sense. It is not

by chance that the New Testament and Jesus resisted the attempt to put the symbols of the end into a chronological frame. Not even Jesus knows when the end will come; it is independent of the historical-post-historical development of mankind, although the mode of "future" is used in its symbolic description. This leaves the future of historical mankind open for possibilities derived from present experience. For example, it is not impossible that the self-destructive power of mankind will prevail and bring historical mankind to an end. It is also possible that mankind will lose not its potential freedom of transcending the given-this would make of him something no longer man-but the dissatisfaction with the given and consequently the drive toward the new. The character of the human race in this state would be similar to what Nietzsche has described as the "last man" who "knows everything" and is not interested in anything; it would be the state of "blessed animals." The negative utopias of our century, such as *Brave New World*, anticipate-rightly or wrongly-such a stage of evolution. A third possibility is a continuation of the dynamic drive of the human race toward unforeseeable actualizations of man's potentialities, up to the gradual or sudden disappearance of the biological and physical conditions for the continuation of historical mankind. These and perhaps other chances of posthistorical mankind must be envisaged and liberated from any entanglement with the symbols of the "end of history" in their eschatological sense.

d) The bearers of history: communities, personalities, mankind.— Man actualizes himself as a person in the encounter with other persons within a community. The process of self-integration under the dimension of the spirit actualizes both the personality and the community. Although we have described the actualization of the personality in connection with moral principles, we have postponed the discussion of the actualization of the community to this point because life processes in a community are immediately determined by the historical dimension in accordance with the fact that the direct bearers of history are groups rather than individuals, who are only indirect bearers.

History-bearing groups are characterized by their ability to act in a centered way. They must have a centered power which is able to keep the individuals who belong to it united and which is able to preserve its power in the encounter with similar power groups. In order to fulfil the first condition a history-bearing group must have a central, law-

giving, administering, and enforcing authority. In order to fulfil the second condition a history-bearing group must have tools to keep itself in power in the encounter with other powers. Both conditions are fulfilled in what is called, in modern terminology, a "state," and in this sense history is the history of states. But this statement needs several qualifications. First, one must point to the fact that the term "state" is much younger than the statelike organizations of large families, clans, tribes, cities, and nations, in which the two conditions of being bearers of history were previously fulfilled. Second, one must emphasize that historical influence can be exercised in many ways by economical, cultural, or religious groups and movements that work within a state or that cut across many states. Still, their historical effect is conditioned by the existence of the organized internal and external power of history-bearing groups. The fact that in many countries even the periods of artistic style are named for emperors or sequences of emperors indicates the basic character of political organization for all historical existence.

The history-bearing group was described as a centered group with internal and external power. This, however, does not mean that the political power in both directions is a mechanism independent of the life of the group. In every power structure *eros* relations underlie the organizational form. Power through administering and enforcing the law, or power through imposing law by conquest, presupposes a central power group whose authority is acknowledged at least silently; otherwise it would not have the support necessary for enforcement and conquest. A withdrawal of such silent acknowledgment by the supporters of a power structure undercuts it. The support is based on an experience of belonging, a form of communal *eros* which does not exclude struggles for power within the supporting group but which unites it against other groups. This is obvious in all statelike organizations from the family up to the nation. Blood relations, language, traditions, and memories create many forms of eros which make the power structure possible, Preservation by enforcement and increase by conquest follow, but do not produce, the historical power of a group. The element of compulsion in every historical power structure is not its foundation but an unavoidable condition of its existence. It is at the same time the cause of its destruction if the eros relations disappear or are completely replaced by force.

One way among others in which the *eros* relations that underlie a power

structure express themselves is in the legal principles that determine the laws and their administration by the ruling center. The legal system of a history-bearing group is derived neither from an abstract concept of justice nor from the will to power of the ruling center. Both factors contribute to the concrete structure of justice. They also can destroy it if one of them prevails, for neither of them is the basis of a statelike structure. The basis of every legal system is the *eros* relations of the group in which they appear.

It is, however, not only the power of the group in terms of enforceable internal unity and external security but also the aim toward which it strives which makes it a history-bearing group. History runs in a horizontal direction, and the groups which give it this direction are determined by an aim toward which they strive and a destiny they try to fulfill. One could call this the "vocational consciousness" of a history-bearing group. It differs from group to group not only in character but also in the degree of consciousness and of motivating power. But vocational feeling has been present since the earliest times of historical mankind. Its most conspicuous expression is perhaps the call to Abraham in which the vocational consciousness of Israel finds its symbolic expression; and we find analogous forms in China, in Egypt, and in Babylon. The vocational consciousness of Greece was expressed in the distinction between Greeks and barbarians, that of Rome was based on the superiority of the Roman law, that of medieval Germany on the symbol of the Holy Roman Empire of German nationality, that of Italy on the "rebirth" of civilization in the Renaissance, that of Spain on the idea of the Catholic unity of the world, that of France on its leadership in intellectual culture, that of England on the task of subjecting all peoples to a Christian humanism, that of Russia on the salvation of the West through the traditions of the Greek church or through the Marxist prophecy, that of the United States on the belief in a new beginning in which the curses of the Old World are overcome and the democratic missionary task fulfilled. Where the vocational consciousness has vanished or was never fully developed, as in nineteenth-century Germany and Italy and smaller states with artificial boundaries, the element of power becomes predominant either in an aggressive or in a merely defensive sense. But even in these cases, as the recent examples of Germany and Italy show, the need for a vocational self-understanding is so strong

that the absurdities of Nazi-racism were accepted because they filled a vacuum.

The fact of a vocational consciousness shows that the content of history is the life of the history-bearing group in all dimensions. No dimension of life is excluded from the living memory of the group, but there are differences in choice. The political realm is always predominant because it is constitutive of historical existence. Within this frame, social, economic, cultural, and religious developments have an equal right to consideration. In some periods, more-and in other periods, less-emphasis can be given any one of them. Certainly, the history of man's cultural functions is not confined to any concrete history-bearing group, not even the largest. But if the cultural or religious historian crosses the political boundaries he is aware that this is an abstraction from actual life, and he does not forget that the *political* unities, whether large or small, remain the conditions of all cultural life. The primacy of political history cannot be disregarded, either for the sake of an independent intellectual history demanded by idealistic historians or for the sake of a determining economic history demanded by materialistic historians. History itself has refuted the demands of the latter whenever they seemed to be near fulfilment, as in Zionist Israel or Communist Russia. It is significant that the symbol in which the Bible expresses the meaning of history is political: "Kingdom of God," and not "Life of the Spirit" or "economic abundance." The element of centeredness which characterizes the political realm makes it an adequate symbol for the ultimate aim of history.

This leads to the question of whether one could call mankind, rather than particular human groups, the bearer of history. For the limited character of groups necessarily seems to disrupt the unity which is intended in the symbol "Kingdom of God." But the form of this question prejudices the answer; the aim of history does not lie in history. There is no united mankind within history. It certainly did not exist in the past; nor can it exist in the future because a politically united mankind, though imaginable, would be a diagonal between convergent and divergent vectors. Its political unity would be the framework for a disunity that is the consequence of human freedom with its dynamic that surpasses everything given. The situation would be different only if the unity of mankind were the end of history and the frame for the post-

historical stage in which man's aroused freedom would have come to rest. This would be the state of "animal blessedness." As long as there is history, a "united mankind" is the frame for a "disunited mankind." Only in posthistory could the disunity disappear, but such a stage would not be the Kingdom of God, for the Kingdom of God is not "animal blessedness."

Historical groups are communities of individuals. They are not entities alongside or above the individuals of whom they are constituted; they are products of the social function of these individuals. The social function produces a structure which gains a partial independence from the individuals (as is the case in all other functions), but this independence does not produce a new reality, with a center of willing and acting. It is not "the community" that wills and acts; it is individuals in their social quality and through their representatives who make communal actions possible by making centeredness possible. The "deception of personifying the group" should be revealed and denounced, especially to point out tyrannical abuses of this deception. So we must ask again: In what sense is the individual a bearer of history? In spite of the criticism of any attempt to personalize the group, the answer must be that the individual is a bearer of history only in relation to a history-bearing group. His individual life process is not history, and therefore biography is not history. But it can become significant either as the story of somebody who actively and symbolically represents a history-bearing group (Caesar, Lincoln) or as an individual who represents the average situation within a group (the peasant, *the* bourgeois). The relation to the group of historically significant individuals is especially obvious in persons who have left the community to go into seclusion in the "desert" or into "exile." In so far as they are historically significant, they remain related to the group from which they come and to which they might return, or they establish a relation with the new group which they enter and in which they may become historically significant. But as mere individuals they have no historical significance. History is the history of groups.

This, however, does not answer the question: Who determines the historical processes, "great" individuals or mass movements? The question in this form is unanswerable because no empirical evidence can be found to support the one or the other point of view. The question is also misleading. The adjective "great," in history, is attributed to persons who are great as leaders in the movements of history-bearing groups.

The term "great" in this sense implies the relation to masses. Individuals who have had potential historical greatness but have never reached actualization are not called great, because the potentiality to greatness can be tested only by its actualization. Concretely speaking, one would have to say that no one can achieve historical greatness who is not received by history-bearing groups. On the other hand, the movements of the masses would never occur without the productive power of individuals in whom the potentialities and actual trends of the many become conscious and formulated. The question of whether individuals or "masses" determine history must be replaced by an exact description of their interplay.

2. History and the Categories of Being

a) Life processes and categories.- I n the second part of the theological system, **"Being** and God," we discussed the principal categories-time, space, causality, and **substance—**and showed their relation to the finitude of being. When in the fourth part we characterized the different dimensions of life, we did not deal with the relations of the categories to the dimensions. This was omitted in order to consider these relations in their totality, including the historical dimension.

Each category is differentiated within itself according to the dimension under which it is effective. There is, for example, not *one* time for all dimensions, for the inorganic, the organic, the psychological, the historical; but in each of them, there is time. Time is both an independent and a relational concept: time remains time in the whole realm of finitude; but the time of the amoeba and the time of historical man are different. And the same is true of the other categories. However, one can describe that which gives each of the four categories identity, justifying the identity of the term in the following way **:** one can define that which makes time time, under all dimensions, as the element of "aftereach-other-ness." Temporality is after-each-other-ness in each of its forms. Of course, such a definition is not possible without using the category of time, which is implied in the phrase "after-each-otherness." Nevertheless, it is not useless to extrapolate this element, because it is qualified in different ways under different dimensions, though remaining the basis in every form of temporality. In the same way one can define that which makes space space under all dimensions as the element of "beside-each-other-ness." Again, this is not a true definition, because it

uses that which is to be defined in the definition: the category of space is implied in the phrase "beside-each-other-ness." Here again it appears useful to extrapolate this, element, because it identifies space as space, however qualified by other elements it may be. That which makes a cause a cause is the relation in which a consequent situation is conditioned by a preceding one, though the character of this conditioning is different under the different dimensions of life. The conditioning exercised by a solid body in motion upon another solid body is different from the conditioning of a historical event by preceding ones. The category of substance expresses the remaining unity within the change of what are called "accidents," It is literally that which underlies a process of becoming and gives it its unity, making it into a definite, relatively lasting thing. Substance in this sense characterizes objects under all dimensions, but not in the same way. The relation of a chemical substance to its accidents is different from the relation of the substance of the feudal culture to its manifestations. But "remaining unity in change" characterizes both substances equally.

The question now arises whether, in spite of the differences in the relations of the categories to the dimensions of life, there is a unity in each category, not only of the element which determines the definition, but also of the actualized forms in which it is applied and qualified. Concretely speaking, one would ask: Is there time which comprises all forms of temporality, space which comprises all forms of spatiality, causality which implies all forms of causality, substantiality which implies all forms of substantiality? The fact that all parts of the universe are contemporal, conspatial, causally conditioned by each other, and substantially distinct from each other demands an affirmative answer to the question of the categorical unity of the universe. But this unity cannot be known, as the universe qua universe cannot be known. The character of a time which is not related to any of the dimensions of life but to all of them, thus transcending all of them, belongs to the mystery of being-itself. Temporality, not related to any identifiable temporal process, is an element in the transtemporal, time-creating ground of time. Spatiality, not related to any identifiable space, is an element in the trans-spatial, space-creating ground of space. Causality, not related to any identifiable causal nexus, is an element in the transcausal, cause-creating ground of causality. Substantiality, not related to any identifiable substantial form, is an element in the transubstantial, substance-

creating ground of substantiality. These considerations, besides their immediate significance for the question raised before, give the basis for symbolic use of the categories in the language of religion. This use is justified, because the categories have in their very nature a point of self-transcendence.

The following examples are chosen according to their importance for the understanding of historical processes, as the four categories themselves are chosen--in the whole system—on the basis of their importance for the understanding of the religious language. Other categories as well as other examples of their functions under the different dimensions of life could have been chosen. The analysis is not complete and probably, as the history of the doctrine of categories has shown, cannot be complete by its very nature; the boundary line between categories and realms is open to an indefinite process of reformulation.

b) Time, space, and the dimensions of life in general.-It is expedient and in some ways unavoidable (as Kant has shown), to treat time and space interdependently. There is a kind of proportional relation in the degree to which time or space is predominant in a realm of beings. Generally speaking, one can say that the more a realm is under the predominance of the inorganic dimension, the more it is also under the predominance of space; and conversely, the more a realm is under the predominance of the historical dimension, the more it is also under the predominance of time. In the interpretations of life and history, this fact has led to the "struggle between time and space," which appears most conspicuously in the history of religion.

In the realms which are determined by the dimension of the inorganic, space is, almost without restriction, the dominant category. Certainly, inorganic thiigs are moving in time, and their movements are calculated in temporal measures; but this calculation has been taken into the calculation of physical processes as a "fourth dimension" of space. The spatial solidity of physical objects, i.e., their power of providing an impenetrable, particular place for themselves, is continuously encountered in everybody's average existence. Existing means above all to have a place among the places of all other beings and to resist the threat of losing one's place and with it existence altogether.

The quality of beside-each-other-ness which characterizes every space has the quality of exclusiveness in the inorganic realm. The same exclusiveness characterizes time under the predominance of the dimen-

sion of the inorganic. In spite of the continuity of the time-flux, every discernible moment of time in a physical process excludes the preceding and the following moments. A drop of water running down the riverbed is here in this moment and there in the next, and nothing unites the two moments. It is this character of time which makes the after-each-other-ness of temporality exclusive. And it is a bad theology that uses the endless continuation of this kind of time as the symbolic material for eternity.

In the realms which are determined by the dimension of the biological, a new quality, both of time and space, appears : the exclusive character of beside-each-other-ness and after-each-otherness is broken by an element of participation. The space of a tree is not the space of an aggregate of unconnected inorganic parts but the space of a unity of interdependent elements. The roots and the leaves have an exclusive space only in so far as they are also determined by the dimension of the inorganic; but under the predominance of the organic, they participate in each other, and what happens in the roots also happens in the leaves, and conversely. The distance between roots and leaves does not have the quality of exclusiveness. In the same way the exclusive after-each-other-ness of temporality is broken by the participation of the stages of growth within each other; in the present now, the past and the future are effective. And only here do the modes of time become actual and qualify reality. In the young tree, the old tree is included as "not yet," and conversely, the young tree is included in the old as "no longer." The immanence of all the stages of growth in every stage of the growth of a living being overcomes temporal exclusiveness. As the space of all parts of a tree is the whole tree, so the time of all moments of a process of growth is the whole process.

When, in animal life, the dimension of self-awareness appears, the immanence of past and future in the present now is experienced as memory and anticipation; here the immanence of the modes of time is not only real but also known as real. In the psychological realm (under the predominance of self-awareness), the time of a living being is experienced time, the experienced present which includes the remembered past and the anticipated future in terms of participation. Participation is not identity, and the element of after-each-other-ness is not removed; but its exclusiveness is broken, both in reality and in awareness. Under the dimension of self-awareness, spatiality is correlative with tempo-

rality. It is the space of self-directed movement in which the beside-each-other-ness of all forms of space is partly overcome. The space of an animal is not only the space taken by the physical existence of its body but also the space of its self-directed movement, which can be very small, as in some lower animals, or very large, as, for example, in migrating birds. The space covered by their movement is *their* space. In the time and space of growth and self-awareness, space is still predominant over time, but its absolute predominance is broken. In the directedness of growth and the futuristic character of self-awareness, time, so to speak, prepares for the full breakthrough of its bondage to space which occurs in time under the dimension of history ("historical time").

With the emergence of the dimension of the spirit as predominant, another form of besideeach-other-ness and after-each-other-ness appears; the time and space of the spirit. Their first characteristic, given with the power of abstraction, is essential unlimitedness. The mind experiences limits by transcending them. In the act of creativity, basically in language and technique, the limited is posited as limited in contrast to the possibility of going beyond it without limit. This is the answer to the question of the finite or infinite character of time and space (as Kant has seen, following in this respect the Augustinian-Cusanian tradition). The question cannot be answered in the context of inorganic or biological or psychological time and space; it can be answered only in the context of the time and space of the creative spirit. The time of the creative spirit unites an element of abstract unlimitedness with an element of concrete limitedness. The very nature of creation as an act of the spirit implies this duality: creating means transcending the given in the horizontal direction without a priori limits, and it means bringing something into a definite, concrete existence. The saying "Self-limitation shows the master" implies both the possibility of the unlimited and the necessity of limitation in the creative act. The concreteness of time under the dimension of the spirit gives time a qualitative character. The time of a creation is not determined by the physical time in which it is produced but by the creative context which is used and transformed by it. The time of a painting is neither the stretch of time in which it is painted nor the date when it is finished, but the time which is qualified by the situation in the development of painting to which it belongs and which it changes to a lesser or greater degree. The spirit has a time which

cannot be measured by physical time although it lies within the whole of physical time. This, of course, leads to the question of how physical time and the time of the spirit are related, i.e., to the question of historical time.

Analogous statements must be made about the space of the spirit. The combination of the words space and spirit seems strange, but it is so only if spirit is understood as a bodiless level of being instead of as a dimension of life, in unity with all other dimensions. In reality spirit has its space as well as its time. The space of the creative spirit unites an element of abstract unlimitedness with an element of concrete limitation. The creative transformation of a given environment has no limits imposed by this environment; the creative act runs ahead without limit into space, not only in imagination, but also in reality (as shown in the so-called conquest of space in our period). But creation implies concreteness, and the imagination must return to the given environment, which through the act of transcending and returning becomes a section of space universal with a particular character. It becomes a space of settlement-a house, a village, a city. It becomes a space of social standing within a social order. It becomes a space of community such as family, neighborhood, tribe, nation. It becomes a space of work, such as land, factory, school, studio. These spaces are qualitative, lying within the frame of physical space but incapable of being measured by it. And thus the question arises as to how physical space and the space of the spirit are related to each other, i.e., the question of historical space.

c) ***Time and space under the dimension of*** history.-The question of the relation of physical time and space to time and space under the dimension of spirit has led us to the problem of history and the categories. In the processes which we call historical in the proper sense, those which are restricted to man, all forms of after-each-other-ness and beside-each-other-ness are directly effective; history moves in the time and the space of the inorganic realm. In history there are centered groups which grow and age and develop organs, in a way analogous to that in the dimension of self-awareness. Therefore history includes time and space, qualified by growth and self-awareness. And history determines and is determined by interdependence, by life under the dimension of spirit. In history the creative act of the spirit and with it the time and space of the spirit are always present.

But historical time and space show qualities beyond the temporal and spatial qualities of the preceding dimensions. First of all, in history time becomes predominant over space as in the inorganic realm space is predominant over time. But the relation of these two extremes is not that of a simple polarity: in history potentialities of the inorganic become actual; therefore the actualized historical realm includes the actualized inorganic realm, but not vice versa. This relation also applies to time and space. Historical time includes inorganic time actually; inorganic time includes historical time only potentially. In every historical event the atoms move according to the order of inorganic time, but not every movement of atoms provides a basis for a historical event. This difference of the contrasted dimensions with respect to time is analogously true of space. Historical space includes the space of the physical realm as well as the space of growth, of self-awareness, of creativity. But as in the organic and inorganic realms time was subordinated to space, so under the historical dimension space is subordinated to time. This particular relation of space to time in the realm of history requires first an analysis of historical time.

Historical time is based on a decisive characteristic of form of after-each-other-ness, and that characteristic is irreversibility. Under no dimension does time go backward. Some qualities of a particular moment of time can repeat themselves, but only those qualities which are abstracted from a whole situation.The situation in which they reappear, for example, a sunset or the rejection of the creatively new by most people, is different each time, and consequently, even the abstracted elements have only similarity and not identity. Time, so to speak, runs ahead toward the new, the unique, the novel, even in repetitions. In this respect time has an identifying mark under all dimensions; the after-each-other-ness cannot be reversed. But, given this common basis, historical time possesses a quality of its own. It is united with the time of the spirit, the creative time, and it appears as time running toward fulfilment. Every creative act aims at something. Its time is the time between the vision of the creative intention and the creation brought into existence. But history transcends every creative act horizontally. History is the place of all creative acts and characterizes each of them as unfulfilled in spite of their relative fulfilment. It drives beyond all of them toward a fulfilment which is not relative and which does not need another temporality for its fulfilment. In historical man, as the bearer of the spirit, time running toward

fulfilment becomes conscious of its nature. In man, that toward which time is running becomes a conscious aim. Historical acts by a historical group drive toward a **fulfilment** which transcends every particular **creation** and is considered to be the aim of historical existence itself. But historical existence is embedded in universal existence and cannot be separated from it. "Nature participates in history" and in the fulfilment of the universe. With respect to historical time, this means that the **fulfilment** toward which historical time runs is the fulfilment toward which time under all dimensions runs. In the historical act the **fulfilment** of time universal becomes a conscious aim. The question of the symbols in which this aim has been expressed and in which it should be expressed is' identical with the question of the "end of history," and it must be answered with the answer to this question. The answer given in our context is "Eternal Life."

Time under the non-historical dimensions is neither endless nor ending. The question of its beginning cannot be asked (which should deter theology from identifying an assumed beginning of physical time with the symbol of creation). Nor can the question of its end be asked (which should deter theology from identifying an assumed physical end with the symbol of consummation). The end of history is the aim of history, as the word "end" indicates. The end is the fulfilled aim, however this aim may be envisioned. Yet, where there is an end there must be a beginning, the moment in which existence is experienced as unfulfilled and in which the drive toward fulfilment starts. The beginning and the end of time are qualities which belong to historical time essentially and in every moment. According to the multidimensional unity of all dimensions of life, there can be no time without space and, consequently, no historical time without historical space. Space in the historical dimension stands under the predominance of time. The beside-each-other-ness of all spatial relations appears in the historical dimension as the encounter of the history-bearing groups, their separations, struggles, and reunions. The space on which they stand is characterized by the different kinds of beside-each-other-ness under the different dimensions. But beyond it, they have the quality of driving toward a unity which transcends all of them without annihilating them and their creative potentialities. In the symbol "Kingdom of God," pointing to the aim toward which historical time is running, the spatial element is obvious: a "kingdom" is a realm, a place beside other places.

Of course, the place of which God is ruler is not a place beside others but a place above all places; nevertheless it is a place and not spaceless "spirituality" in the dualistic sense. Historical time, driving toward fulfilment, is actual in the relations of historical spaces. And as historical time includes all other forms of time, so historical space includes all other forms of space. As in historical time the meaning of **after-each-other-ness** is raised to consciousness and has become a human problem, so in historical space the meaning of beside-each-other-ness is raised to consciousness and has also become a problem. The answer in both cases is identical with the answer to the question of the aim of the historical process.

d) Causality, substance, and the dimensions of life in general.-Causality in the dimension of the historical must be considered in contrast to and in unity with substance; but in order to understand the special character of both of them under the historical dimension, their nature in the other realms must be analyzed. As in the case of time and space, there is an element which is common to causality in all its varieties, namely, the relation in which one complex precedes another in such a way that the other would not be what it is without the preceding one. A cause is a conditioning precedent, and causality is the order of things according to which there is a conditioning precedent for everything. The implications of this order for the understanding of finitude have been discussed in another part of the system.[1] Here the question is: How does the conditioning occur under the different dimensions?

In the ***same*** way, the category of substance under the dimension of the historical must first be considered by an analysis of the meaning of substance in general, then under the non-historical dimensions, and finally under the dimension of the historical itself. The general character of substance is "underlying identity," that is, identity with respect to the changing accidents. This identity which makes a thing a thing has different characteristics and different relations to causality under the different dimensions. It is of the utmost importance for theology to be aware of these distinctions if it uses both causality and substance in its description of the relation of God and the world, of the divine Spirit and the human spirit, of providence and ***agape.***

Under the predominance of the dimension of the inorganic, the conditioning precedent and conditioned consequent (cause and effect) are

[1] *Systematic Theology, I, x64-66, 195-96.*

separated, as in the corresponding character of time the observed moments are separated from each other. Causation in this sense keeps the effect at a distance from the cause by which the effect is, at the same time, determined. In the ordinary encounter with reality (except at the microcosmic and macrocosmic boundary lines of the inorganic realm), the determination can be expressed in quantitative terms and mathematical equations. Causality under the dimension of the inorganic is a quantitative, calculable conditioning of the consequent by the precedent.

Substance in the same realm is the transitory identity of the causing precedent with itself and the transitory identity of the caused consequent with itself. It goes without saying that substance in this sense is not seen as an "underlying immovable thing" (as the immortal soul-substance of earlier metaphysics). Substance is that amount of identity within the changing accidents which makes it possible to speak of their complex as a "thing." Obviously, substance in this realm is dependent on arbitrary divisions which are indefinitely possible. There is no substantial unity between two pieces of a metal after they have been split from each other; but each of them then has now a transitory substantial identity with itself. They are subject to the radical beside-each-other-ness of space in the inorganic realm.

The dependence of theological literalism on the ordinary understanding of the categories is shown when causality and substance are endowed with characteristics that appear only in the inorganic realm and are surpassed in the other realms. We see examples of this dependence when God is conceived as cause and the world as effect or when we make God a substance and the world another substance.

Under the dimensions of the organic and the psychological, causality and substance change both in their character and in their relations to each other. The element of separation between cause and effect and between one individual substance and another is balanced by an element of participation. Within an organism the conditioning precedent is a state of the organism and the conditioned consequent is another state of the same organism. There may be causal influences on an organic system from outside, but they are not the cause of the consequent state of the organism; they are an occasion for the organic processes which lead from the one to to the other state. Organic causality is effective through a centered whole-which definitively includes the chemical-physical processes internal to the organism and their quantitatively

measurable causation. Under the dimension of self-awareness, we find the same situation. There is no quantitatively measurable relation between stimulus and response in centered self-awareness. Here also the external cause is effective through the psychological whole which moves under the occasioning impact from one state to another. This does not exclude the validity of the calculable element in 'the processes of association, reaction, and so on, but its calculability is limited by the individual center of self-awareness within whose circle those processes occur.

The centered self within which organic and psychological causality are effective is an individual substance with a definite identity. It is not transitory because (in so far as it is centered) it cannot be divided. Its contents can change but only in a continuity which, in the realm of self-awareness, is experienced as memory. If the continuity (biological or psychological) is completely interrupted, the individual substance has ceased to exist (normally by death, sometimes by a complete loss of memory). Under the dimensions of the organic and the psychological, causality is, so to speak, the prisoner of substance. Causation takes place in the unity of a centered whole, and causes from outside the circle are effective through the whole-if they do not destroy it. This is the reason why an individual substance comes to an end if it is not able to take external influences into its substantial identity but is disrupted by them. Then quantitatively calculable processes (chemical, associative, and so on,) take over, as in bodily sickness and mental disease, and lead to an annihilation of the substance.

Although under the dimension of self-awareness causality is contained within substance, under the dimension of the spirit causality breaks through this containment. Causality must participate in the quality of spirit to be creative. The conditioning precedent determines the margin within which the creative act is possible, and it also determines the impulse to an act which might be creative. But it does not determine the content of the creation, for the content is the new, which makes the creative act creative. The concept of the new needs further consideration. Since actual being has the character of becoming, one can say that everything that happens in the smallest moment of time is new in comparison with what has happened in the previous moment. If "new" means each situation in the process of becoming, everything is always new, and this certainly is true-in spite of the assertion of Ecclesiastes that there is nothing new under the sun. But the concept of the new demands as

many distinctions as the meaning of the categories-according to the dimensions in which the new appears. The new which results from causation qua quantitative transformation is different from the new which results from causation qua qualitative transformation within an individual substance, and both kinds of newness are different from that newness which is the result of causation through a creative act of man's spirit. In the first two cases, determination is predominant over the freedom of positing the new. In the case of the spirit, freedom prevails over determination, and the underivably new is created. In the creation of ***Hamlet*** by Shakespeare the material, particular form, personal presuppositions, occasioning factors, and so on, are derivable. All these elements are effective in the artistic process which created ***Hamlet;*** but the result is new in the sense of the underivable. It is in this sense that we speak when we say that under the dimension of the spirit, general causality becomes causality as creating the new.

The new is not bound to the individual substance, but it rises out of the substance and has effects on the character of the substance. The individual substance becomes spirit-determined; the center of self-awareness becomes a person. In the person the substantial identity has the character of oughtness in an unconditional sense. This has led former metaphysics into the error of establishing an immortal substance as a separated being which maintains its identity in the process of inorganic time. Such a conclusion contradicts the nature of all categories to be manifestations of finitude. But the basis of the argument is sound, for it involves the insight into the unconditional element which makes a person a person and gives him his infinite significance. The spirit-determined, centered being, the person, is the source of creative causality; but the creation surpasses the substance out of which it comes-the person.

e) ***Causality and substance under the dimension of history.***—Historical causality is the embracing form of causality because of the fact that in historical events all dimensions of life are actively participant. It is dependent on the freedom of creative causality, but it is equally dependent on the inorganic and organic developments which have made historical man possible and which remain as the frame or substructure of his whole history. And this is not all; since the bearers of history are historical groups, the nature of these groups represents the decisive interpenetration of determining and free causality in the historical process. In

a historical group a double causation can be observed; the causation from a given sociological structure to the creation of cultural content and the causation from this content toward a transformed sociological structure. The "givenness" of the sociological is an ideal point in an infinite past in which the historical process started. From this point on (the transition from prehistory to history), creativity has broken through the given culture and in this way contributed to it, so that a transformed culture was caused, out of which new creativity arose, and so on. Therefore it is as impossible to derive the contents of the creative act from the given culture, as some anthropologists do, as it is to derive a given culture exclusively from creative acts, as classical idealism did.

Substance under the historical dimension can be called the "historical situation." A given culture, as discussed before, is such a situation. It can appear on a family, tribal, national, or international basis. It can be restricted to a particular history-bearing group; it can be enlarged to a combination of such groups; it can embrace continents. In any case, where there is a situation out of which historical causality drives toward the new, there is substance under the historical dimension. If a history-creating situation is called a substance, this means that there is a point of identity in all its manifestations. A situation in this sense reaches into all dimensions : it has a geographical basis, a space in the inorganic realm; it is borne by biological groups, by the self-awareness of groups and individuals, and by sociological structures. It is a system of sociological, psychological, and cultural tensions and balances. But it ceases to be substance in the historical sense. Names of historical periods (such as Renaissance, Enlightenment) express this point of identity if the balances fail and tensions destroy the element of identity which constitutes the substance. Without applying the category of substance to history, either implicitly or explicitly, no historiography would be possible. Historical names, such as Hellenism, Renaissance, Absolutism, "West and East" in the cultural sense, "eighteenth century" in a qualitative sense, or India in a geographical and cultural sense, would be meaningless if they did not point to a historical substance, a situation out of which historical causation can or did grow and which, at the same time, is the result of historical causation.

Like historical time, historical causality is future-directed; it creates the new. And as historical time draws historical space into its "futuristic" movement, so historical causality draws historical substance into the di-

rection toward the future. Historical causality drives toward the new beyond every particular new, toward a situation or historical substance beyond every particular situation or substance. In this it transcends the particular creations under the dimension of the spirit. The very concept of the new which belongs to creative causality implies the transcending character of the historical movement. The ever repeated creation of particular newness has in itself an element of oldness. Not only do the creations become old (they become static in a given substance), but the process of creating the particular new in endless variations has in itself the quality of oldness. Therefore man's historical consciousness has always looked ahead beyond any particular new to the absolutely new, symbolically expressed as "New Creation." The analysis of the category of historical causality can lead up to this point, but it cannot give an answer to the question of the "New-Itself."

Historical situation or substance, if drawn into the dynamics of historical causality, contains the quest for a universal historical substance (including all forms of dimensionally qualified substance) or a situation which transcends every situation. It would be a situation in which all possible historical tensions are universally balanced. Here again man's historical consciousness has been aware of this implication of the category of historical substance and has looked ahead beyond any situation to symbols of an ultimate situation, for example, the universal unity of the Kingdom of God.

3. THE DYNAMICS OF HISTORY

a) The movement of history: trends, structures, periods.-Having discussed the categorical structure of history, we now turn to a description of the movement of history within this structural frame. The categories under the dimension of history provide the basic elements for such a description: time provides the element of irreversibility of the historical movement; causality provides the element of freedom, creating the underivably new; space and substance provide the relatively static element out of which the dynamics of time and causality break and to which they return. With these elements in mind we can approach several questions arising out of the historical movement.

The question of the relation of necessity and contingency in the dynamics of history is first in importance. It is important not only for the method of historiography but also for historical decisions and actions.

The element of necessity arises out of the historical situation; the element of contingency arises out of historical creativity. But neither of these elements is ever alone. Considered under the predominance of the element of necessity, I call their unity "trend," and under the predominance of the element of contingency, "chance."

The nature of trends (as well as the irreversibility of historical time) should prevent any attempt to establish historical laws. Such do not exist, because every moment in history is new in relation to all preceding moments, and a trend, however powerful it may be, can be changed. History is never without changes of seemingly unchangeable trends. There are, however, certain regularities in the sequences of events, rooted in sociological and psychological laws, which, in spite of their lack of strictness, participate in determining a historical situation. But these regularities cannot be predicted with that certainty which makes natural laws the scientific ideal. Trends can be produced by sociological laws—of which point the rule that successful revolutions have the tendency to annihilate their original leaders is an example. Trends can also be produced by creative acts, such as new inventions and their impact on society, or by increasing reactions against such impacts. There are situations in which trends are almost irresistible. There are situations in which trends are less manifest even if no less effective. There are situations in which trends are balanced by chances, and there are trends hidden under an abundance of chances.

As every historical situation contains trends, so it contains chances. Chances are occasions to change the determining power of a trend. Such occasions are produced by elements in the situation which are contingent with respect to the trend and have for the observer the character of the unforeseeable. The chance-giving occasion, in order to become a real chance, must be used by an act of creative causality; and the only proof that there is a real occasion is the historical act in which a trend is successfully transformed. Many chances never come into the open because there is nobody who takes them, but in no historical situation can one say with certainty that no chance is present. Of course, neither chances nor trends are absolute. The determining power of the given situation limits the margin of chances and often makes it very small. Nevertheless, the existence of chances, balancing the determining power of trends, is the decisive argument against all forms of historical determinism-naturalistic, dialectical, or predestinarian. All three envisage

a world without chances-a vision, however, which is continually contradicted by the thoughts and actions through which even their own adherents see chances and take them; for example, the chance to work for socialism or for one's own salvation or for a deterministic metaphysics. In every creative act chances are presupposed, consciously or unconsciously.

The second question about the dynamics of history refers to structures of the historical movement. It is the merit of Arnold Toynbee's A ***Study*** of ***History*** that he has tried to show such structures which appear again and again, without rendering them universal and without making them laws. Geographical; biological, psychological, and sociological factors are effective in the structures, producing situations out of which creative acts can arise.

Other structures, such as those of progress and regression, action and reaction, tension and solution, and growth and decay, and most important of all, the dialectical structure of history, have been described in earlier efforts. The general judgment with respect to all of them must be that they have a limited truth and, even more, that they are used in practice in every historical work, even by those who reject them when formulated ***in abstracto.*** For without them no meaningful description of the texture of events would be possible. But they share a danger which has produced the strong resistance against them on the part of empirical historians: they are often used not as particular structures but as universal laws. As soon as this happens they distort facts, even if, in consequence of their particular truth, they reveal facts. Just because it is the character of historical causality to be creative and to use chances, it cannot be said that a universal structure of historical movement exists. In some cases the attempt to formulate such a law is based on a confusion of the historical dimension with the self-transcendent function of history. It is a confusion between a scientific description and a religious interpretation of history. For instance, progress in some realms (like regression in other realms) is observable in all periods of history, but the law of universal progress is a secularized and distorted form of the religious symbol of divine providence. Stories of growth and decay are contained in all historical works; yet even this most obvious of all structures of the historical movement is not an empirical law. Empirically, there are many instances which contradict it. However, if it is made into a universal law, it assumes a religious character and is an application of the

circular interpretation of existence to historical movements-which is a confusion of dimensions.

The dialectical structure of historical events demands special consideration. It has influenced world history more profoundly than any of the other structural analyses. First of all, one must emphasize that it is true not only of many historical phenomena 'but of life-processes in general. It is an important scientific tool for the analysis and description of the dynamics of life as life. If life is dissolved into elements and these elements are recomposed according to purposes, dialectics have no place; but if life is left unviolated, dialectical processes go on and can be described. Such descriptions are much older than Plato's use of dialectics in his dialogues and **Hegel's** application of the dialectical method to all dimensions of life and especially to history. Wherever life comes into conflict with itself and drives toward a new stage beyond the conflict, objective or real dialectics take place. Whenever such processes are described in terms of "yes" and "no," subjective or methodological dialectics are used. The movement of life from self-identity to self-alteration and back to self-identity is the basic scheme of dialectics, and we have seen that it is adequate even for the symbolic description of the divine life.

Nevertheless, one cannot make a universal law of dialectics and subsume the universe in all its movements under it. When elevated to such a function, it is no longer empirically verifiable but presses reality into a mechanized scheme which ceases to mediate knowledge, as is shown, for example, in **Hegel's *Encyclopedia.*** Obviously-and it was so intended by Hegel-his dialectics are the religious symbols of estrangement and reconciliation conceptualized and reduced to empirical descriptions. But again, this is a confusion of dimensions.

The term "materialistic dialectics" is ambiguous and dangerous because of its ambiguity. The term "materialistic" can be understood as metaphysical materialism (which was strongly rejected by Marx) or as moral materialism (which he attacked as the characteristic of bourgeois society). Both interpretations are wrong. Rather, materialism, in connection with dialectics, expresses the belief that the economic-social conditions of a society determine all other cultural forms and that the movement of the economic-social basis has a dialectical character which produces tensions and conflicts in a social situation and drives beyond them toward a new economic-social stage. It is obvious that the **dialecti-**

cal character of this materialism excludes metaphysical materialism and includes the element of the new which Hegel called "synthesis" and which cannot be reached without historical action-as Marx himself realized and applied in practice. The relative truth of social dialectics, rooted in economic conflicts, cannot be denied, but truth becomes error if this kind of dialectics is raised to the status of a law for all history. Then it becomes a quasi-religious principle and loses any empirical verifiability.

A third problem raised by the dynamics of history is the problem of the rhythm of the historical movement. It is the question of historical periods. In the discussion of substance under the dimension of history, we pointed to the identity of a historical situation and emphasized that without naming historical periods historiography would be impossible. In early chronicles the sequence of imperial dynasties provided names for historical periods because the character of each dynasty was supposed to represent the historically significant character of the period in which it ruled. Such characterization has not disappeared, as is shown by the use of the term "Victorian period" for the second half of the nineteenth century in England and large parts of Europe. Other names are taken from predominant styles in the arts, in politics, and in social structures, as, for example, "baroque", "absolutism", "feudalism", or from a total cultural situation, as, for example, "Renaissance." Sometimes the numbers of centuries have received a qualitative character and designate a historical period in abbreviated form ("eighteenth century"). The most universal periodization is based on religion : the time before and after Christ in the Christian era. It implies a universal change in the quality of historical time through the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, making him the "center of history" in the Christian view.

The question to be asked at this point is only: What is the validity of these periodizations? Does history move in such a way that the distinction of periods has a foundation in reality and not only in the mind of the historian? The answer is implied in two earlier observations: the first concerns the subjective-objective character of history, and the second concerns the concept of historical importance. Periods are subjective-objective according to the valuation of importance in a history-bearing group. No periodization is meaningful if it is not based on events in time and space, but no periodization would take place without a valuation of these events as historically decisive by history-conscious representatives of a historical group. The period-creating events can be sudden, dramatic, and widespread, as in the Reformation, or they can be slow, undramatic, and restricted to small groups, as in the Renaissance. In each case the consciousness of western Europe has seen in these events the beginning of a new period, and it is impossible to confirm or to deny this view by research into the events themselves. In the same way it is impossible to discuss the historical centrality of the event of Jesus as the Christ by positive or negative arguments based on new discoveries about the historical circumstances of this event. Something happened which for two thousand years has induced people to see in it, in terms of existential significance, the boundary between the two main periods of human history.

History moves in a periodic rhythm, but periods are periods only for those who can see them as such. In the sequence of events there are continuous transitions, overlappings, advances, and delays, and no signpost marks a new period. But for those who valuate these events according to the principle of importance, signposts become visible, marking the boundary line between qualitatively different stretches of historical time.

b) History and the processes of life.—The processes of life, together with their ambiguities, which we have described in all dimensions, are not absent under the dimension of history. Life strives toward self-integration and may disintegrate in every history-creating act. Life creates and may destroy itself when the dynamics of history drive toward the new. Life transcends itself and may fall into profanity when it runs toward the ultimately new and transcendent.

All this happens in the bearers of history. It occurs directly in the historical groups and indirectly in the individuals who both constitute the historical groups and are constituted by them. We have discussed the nature and the ambiguities of social groups in the sections of the fourth part of the system dealing with the cultural function of man's spirit, especially the function of ***praxis:*** the personal and the communal act. And we have discussed the ambiguities of ***praxis*** under the headings of the ambiguities of technical and personal and, above all, of communal transformation. In these discussions the historical dimension was "put into brackets"; we described the historical groups only from the point of view of their character as cultural creations, subject to the criteria of humanity and justice. It was especially the relation of power and justice in the communal realm that was the center of our attention. This, how-

ever, was a preparation for the description of the movement of the history-bearing groups in history.

At the present point the focus is on the relation of the historical dimension to the processes of life in the personal-communal realm. In all three processes it is the character of historical time that makes the difference: history runs ahead toward the ever new and toward the ultimately new. From this point of view both the nature and the ambiguities of the drive toward self-integration, self-creativity, and self-transcendence must be seen. This, however, as indicated in the former discussions ("the ambiguities of communal transformation"), has the consequence that the three processes of life are united in ***one*** process: the movement toward an aim. There is still self-integration, but not as an end in itself; self-integration under the historical dimension serves the drive toward universal and total integration. There is still self-creativity, but not for the sake of particular creations; self-creativity under the historical dimension serves the drive toward that which is universally and totally new. And there is still self-transcendence, but not toward a particular sublimity; self-transcendence under the historical dimension serves the drive toward the universally and totally transcendent. History runs toward fulfilment through all processes of life, notwithstanding the fact that while it runs toward the ultimate it remains bound to the preliminary, and in running toward fulfilment it defeats fulfilment. It does not escape the ambiguities of life by striving in all processes toward unambiguous life.

The aim of history can now be expressed in terms of the three processes of life and their unity in the following way: History, in terms of the self-integration of life, drives toward a centeredness of all history-bearing groups and their individual members in an unambiguous harmony of power and justice. History, in terms of the self-creativity of life drives toward the creation of a new, unambiguous state of things. And history, in terms of the self-transcendence of life, drives toward the universal, unambiguous fulfilment of the potentiality of being.

But history, like life in general, stands under the negativities of existence and therefore under the ambiguities of life. The drive toward universal and total centeredness, newness, and fulfilment is a question and remains a question as long as there is history. This question is implied in the great ambiguities of history which have always been felt and powerfully expressed in myth, religious and secular literature, and art.

They are the questions to which (in the sense of the method of correlation) the religious (and quasi-religious) interpretations of history as well as the eschatological symbolism relate. They are the questions to which, within the circle of Christian theology, the Kingdom of God is the answer.

c) ***Historical progress: its reality and its*** limits.-In every creative act progress is implied, namely, a step (*gressus*) beyond the given. In this sense the whole movement of history is progressive. It progresses to the particularly new and tries to reach the ultimately new. This applies to all sides of the cultural function of the human spirit, to the functions of ***theoria*** as well as to the functions of ***praxis,*** and it applies to morality and religion in so far as cultural content and cultural forms are implied in them. There is intended and sometimes actual progress from the beginning to the end of a political action or a lecture or a scientific inquiry, and so on. In every centered group, even the most conservative, creative acts aiming at progress are continuous.

Beyond these indisputable facts, progress has become a symbol, defining the meaning of history itself. It has become a symbol beyond reality. As such it expresses the idea that history progressively approaches its ultimate aim or that infinite progress itself is the aim of history. We shall discuss these answers to the question of the meaning of history later; at this point we have to ask in which realm of being progress is possible and in which realm it is impossible, according to the nature of the reality at stake.

There is no progress where individual freedom is decisive. This implies that there is no progress in the moral act. Each individual, in order to become a person, must make moral decisions of his own. They are the absolute precondition for the appearance of the dimension of spirit in any individual with self-awareness. But there are two kinds of progress in connection with the moral function, the two kinds being those of ethical content and of educational level. Both are cultural creations and open to the new. The ethical content of moral action has progressed from primitive to mature cultures in terms of refinement and breadth, although the moral act in which the person is created is the same whatever content is actualized. This distinction is fundamental if one speaks of moral progress. It is in the cultural element within the moral act that progress takes place, not in the moral act itself.

In the same way moral education belongs to culture and not to the

moral act itself. Such education appears both as education by others and as education by oneself. In both cases it consists of repetitions, exercises, and the resulting habit which is a matter of progress. In this way mature moral personalities can be created and the level of moral habits in a group can be raised. But the actual moral situation demands free decision on every level of maturity and in every degree of ethical sensitivity; and it is by these decisions that the person is confirmed as person (even if the moral habit and the ethical sensitivity are creations of the Spirit, that is, grace). This is the reason for the stories of the temptations of the saints in the Catholic tradition, for the need to receive forgiveness at every stage of sanctification in Protestant experience, for the struggle with despair about one's self in the greatest and maturest representatives of humanism, and for the self-limitation of psychotherapeutic healing to the point where the patient is set free for moral decisions of his own.

Within the realm of cultural creation there is no progress beyond the classical expressions of man's encounter with reality, whether it is in the arts, in philosophy, or in the personal or communal realms. There is often, although not always, progress from inadequate attempts to reach the classical expression of a style, but there is no progress from one mature style to the other. It was the great mistake of the classicistic art criticism to see in the Greek and Renaissance styles the norm for visual arts, by which everything else was to be measured as either progress toward it or regression from it or relegated to a state of primitive impotence. The justified reaction against this doctrine in our century has sometimes gone to unjustified extremes in the opposite direction, but it has established the principle of the essentially non-progressive character of the history of the arts.

The same must be said for philosophy-in so far as it is defined as the attempt to answer in the most universal concepts the question of the nature and structure of being. Here again one can distinguish between undeveloped and mature types of the philosophical encounter with reality and see a progress from one to the other. And certainly the logical tools and scientific materials used in philosophical systems are being progressively refined, corrected, and enlarged. But there is an element in the central vision of the representative philosophers which is not derived from their scientific material or their logical analysis but which has its source in an encounter with ultimate reality, i.e., in a quasi-revelatory experience. It has been called *sapientia* in contrast to *scientia* and appears, for example, in the book of Job, personified as the companion of God at which he looked in creating the world, or in Heraclitus, as the Logos which is present equally in the laws of the universe and in the wisdom of a few among men. In so far as philosophy is Logos-inspired, it can have many faces, according to its inner potentialities and 'the receiving organs of individuals and periods, but there is no progress from one face to another. Each, of course, presupposes a new creative endeavor, in addition to a critical use of logical form and scientific material, and it requires the discipline gained by a knowledge of earlier solutions. The Logos-inspired character of philosophy does not mean that it is arbitrary. But it does mean that philosophy is enabled to give an answer to the question of being-which answer, therefore, lies above progress and obsolescence. The history of philosophy clearly shows that none of the great philosophical solutions has ever become obsolete, although their scientific observations and theories soon become antiquated. And it is only consistent that some analytic philosophers reject the entire history of philosophy before the rise of analytic philosophy because they see no, or little, progress in it toward what they believe to be the only task of philosophy : logical and semantic analysis.

Although the moral act as an act of freedom is beyond progress, the question remains whether there is progress in approaching the principle of humanity and creating the formed personality and in approaching the principle of justice and creating the organized community. As in aesthetic and cognitive creativity, one must distinguish between two elements, the qualitative and the quantitative elements. Only in the latter is progress possible-that is, in breadth and refinement-and not in the former. Persons embodying the principle of humanity in a mature way are not dependent on the changing developments of culture, whether progressive or obsolescent or regressive. Certainly, humanity is a new creation in every individual in which it is actualized and in every period in which the cultural situation affords new potentialities. But there is no progress from one representative of personal humanity to another in a later period. He who knows sculptural representations from the earliest cultures to the present knows examples of expressive humanity (in terms of dignity, seriousness, serenity, wisdom, courage, compassion) in the images of every period.

The situation with respect to justice is no different. This, of course:

is a bold statement in a culture which considers its own social-political system as not only the adequate expression of its own idea of justice but the ideal of justice to which all previous forms are but insufficient approaches. Nevertheless, the assertion must be made that the justice of democracy represents progress above other forms of justice only in its quantitative elements, not in its qualitative character. Systems of justice in the history of mankind develop out of geographical, economic, and human conditions through the encounter of man with man and the quest for justice that results from this encounter. Justice becomes injustice to the degree that the change of conditions is not matched by a correlative change in the systems of justice. But in itself every system includes an element which is essential for the encounter of man with man and a valid principle for a concrete situation. Each of such systems points to the "Justice of the Kingdom of God," and there is no progress from the one to the other in this respect. However, as in the previous considerations, we must distinguish those stages in which the principle is still undeveloped and those stages in which it disintegrates from the stage of mature fulfilment. There is progress or obsolescence or regression on the way from one stage to the other. Only mature systems, embodying qualitatively different visions of justice, are beyond progress.

The most important question in this context is that of a possible progress in religion. Obviously there is no progress in the religious function as such. The state of ultimate concern admits no more of progress than of obsolescence or regression. But the question of progress arises with the existence of historical religions and their foundations, revelatory experiences. It might seem that the question of progress has already been answered affirmatively when we called the revelation in Jesus as the Christ the final revelation, and the history of religion the process in which the "center of history" is prepared for or received. But the situation is more complex.

In discussions about the "absoluteness" of Christianity, the evolutionary-progressivistic scheme has been applied to the relation of the Christian religion to the others. The classical formulation of this idea is Hegel's philosophical interpretation of the history of religion, but analogous constructions are also openly present or hidden in the anti-Hegelian systems of liberal theology. Even secular philosophers of religion distinguish between primitive and great religions. But against this evolutionary scheme stands the claim of each of the great religions that

it itself is absolute in contrast to the other religions which are considered as relatively true or completely false. Analogously to the previous discussions, we must first emphasize the distinction between the essentially religious and the cultural elements in the historical religions. There is certainly progress, obsolescence, and regression in the cultural side of every religion, in its cognitive self-interpretation and in its aesthetic self-expression, as in its way of forming personality and community. But of course this progress is limited by the extent to which these functions are themselves open to progress. The decisive question, however, is whether the foundations of religions, the revelatory experiences on which they are based, have progressive possibilities. Can one speak of a progressive history of revelation? This is the same question as whether one can speak of a progressive "history of salvation" (*Heilsgeschichte*). The first answer must be that the revelatory and saving manifestation of the Spiritual Presence is always what it is, and that in this respect there is no more or less, no progress or obsolescence or regression. But the content of such manifestations and their symbolic expressions, like styles in the arts and visions in philosophy, are dependent on the potentialities implied in the human encounter with the holy, on the one hand, and on the receptivity of a human group for one or another of these potentialities, on the other. The human receptivity is conditioned by the totality of external and internal factors which constitute historical destiny-religiously speaking, historical providence. Progress in this respect is possible between different cultural stages in which the revelatory experience takes place or between different degrees of clarity and power with which the manifestation of the Spiritual is received. (This corresponds to the progress from immaturity to maturity in the cultural realms.)

In the light of these considerations, a particular religion could not maintain a claim to be based on the final revelation. The only possible answer to the question of progress in religion would be the coexistence of different types without a universal claim. But there is one point of view which can change the picture—the conflict between the divine and the demonic in every religion. Out of this conflict the question arises: Upon which religious basis and in which revelatory event is the power of the demonic, outside and inside the religious reality, broken? Christianity answers that this has happened on the basis of the prophetic type of religion in the event of Jesus as the Christ. According to Christianity

this event is not the result of a progressive approximation, nor is it the actualization of another religious potentiality, but it is the uniting and judging fulfilment of all potentialities implied in the encounter with the holy. Therefore the whole history of religion, past and future, is the universal basis, and the prophetic type of revelatory experience is the particular basis of the central event. This view excludes the idea of a horizontal progress from the universal to the particular basis and from the particular basis to the unique event, out of which Christianity has grown. The idea which claims that Christianity as a religion is "absolute" and that the other religions are a progressive approximation to it is also excluded. It is not Christianity as a religion that is absolute but the event by which Christianity is created and judged to the same extent as any other religion, both affirmatively and negatively. This view of the history of religions-derived from the Christian claim that it is based on the final, victoriously antidemonic revelatory event-is not horizontal but vertical. The unique event, which is both the criterion of all religions and the power which has, in principle, broken the demonic for all time, stands at one point on the larger basis of past and future religious developments and on the particular basis of prophetism in past and future. There is no progressivistic scheme in this view.

It is now necessary to sum up the realms in which progress has its place, as indicated in the preceding discussions. The first and almost unlimited realm in which progress is decisive is technology. The phrase "better and better" has its proper field here and only here. The better tool, and generally the technically better means for whatever end, is a cultural reality of never ending consequences. A non-progressive element appears only if the questions are raised: For which ends? Or, are there tools which by their consequences may defeat the ends for which they are produced (e.g., atomic weapons)? The second realm in which progress is essential is that of the sciences in all realms of methodological research, not in the natural sciences alone. Every scientific statement is a hypothesis open for testing, rejecting, and changing; and in so far as there is a scientific element in philosophy, the philosopher must use the same method. A non-progressive element appears only where philosophical elements are presupposed consciously or unconsciously or where decisions must be made as to what subject matter shall be investigated or where existential participation in the subject matter is required in order to penetrate it. The third realm in which progress

is real is that of education, whether it is by training for skills, by the mediation of cultral contents, or by introduction into given systems of life. This is obvious in individual education which directs the progress of a person toward maturity, but it is also true of social education, by which every generation is heir to the gains of the preceding ones. A non-progressive element is present only in the assertion of an ultimate educational aim in the interpretation of human nature and destiny and in the kind of an educational community between educators and educated. The fourth realm in which progress is real is the increasing conquest of spatial divisions and separations within and beyond mankind. Partly parallel with this conquest of space is the increasing participation of human beings in all cultural creations. In these respects, which can be measured quantitatively, progress was and is real and may remain real in an indefinite future. A non-progressive element in these movements is the fact that quantitative changes can have qualitative consequences and create a new age which, in relation to others, is unique but in itself is neither a progess nor a regression.

This analysis of the reality and the limits of progress in history gives a basis for the valuation of progress as a symbol in the religious interpretation of history.

B. THE AMBIGUITIES OF LIFE UNDER THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION

1. The Ambiguities of Historical Self-integration: Empire and Centralization

History, while running ahead toward its ultimate aim, continuously actualizes limited aims, and in so doing it both achieves and defeats its ultimate aim. All ambiguities of historical existence are forms of this basic ambiguity. If we relate them to the processes of life, we can distinguish the ambiguity of historical self-integration, the ambiguity of historical self-creativity, and the ambiguity of historical self-transcendence.

The greatness of man's political existence-his striving toward universality and totality in the process of the self-integration of life under the historical dimension-is expressed in the term "empire." In biblical literature the ambiguity of the empires plays an important role. The same is true of all phases of church history, and it is equally true of secular movements up to the present day. Empires are built and grow and fall before they have reached their aim, which is to become all-

inclusive. It would be rather superficial to derive this striving for universality simply from the will to power, whether political or economic. The will to power, in all its forms, is a necessary element in the self-integration of the history-bearing groups, for it is only through their centered power that they are able to act historically. But there is another element in the drive toward all-inclusiveness: the vocational self-interpretation of a historical group. The stronger and more justified this element is, the greater the group's empire-building passion becomes; and the more it has the support of all its members, the better its chance is to last a long time. The history of mankind is full of examples. In Western history the greatest, though not the only, examples of vocational consciousness are the following: the Roman empire's bidding to represent the law, the Germanic empire's representation of the Body Christian, the British empire's representation of Christian civilization, the Russian empire's representation of the depth of humanity against a mechanized culture, and the American empire's call to represent the principle of liberty. And there are corresponding examples in the Eastern section of mankind. The great conquerors are, as Luther visualized them, the demonic "masks" of God through whose drive toward universal centeredness he performs his providential work. In this vision the "ambiguity of the empire" is symbolically expressed. For the disintegrating, destructive, and profanizing side of empire-building is as obvious as the integrating, creative, and sublimating side. No imagination can grasp the amount of suffering and destruction of structure, life, and meaning that is inevitably connected with the growth of empires. In our period the trend toward all-inclusiveness in the two great imperial powers, the United States and Russia, has led to the deepest and most universal split of mankind, and this has happened just because neither of the two empires has come into existence by a simple will to economic or political power; they have risen and become powerful by their vocational consciousness in unity with their natural self-affirmation. But the tragic consequences of their conflict are noticeable in every historical group and every individual human being, and they may become destructive for mankind itself.

This situation gives us a clue to what has been called world history. "World," in this phrase, means mankind; it means the history of all mankind. But there is no such thing; all we have had up to the present century are histories of human groups, and the compilation of their

histories as far as they are known may be called world history but certainly not a history of mankind. However, in our century, the technical conquest of space has produced a unity which makes a history of mankind as a whole possible and has started to make it real. This, of course, does not change the isolated character of former histories, but it is a new stage for man's historical integration. In this sense our century belongs with the great centuries in regard to the creation of the new. But the first direct result of mankind's technical (and more than technical) union has been the tragic split, the "schizophrenia," of mankind. The moment of greatest integration in all history implies the danger of the greatest disintegration, even of radical destruction.

In view of this situation, one must ask: Is it justifiable to speak of one aim? This question becomes even more urgent if one realizes that not all tribes and nations have striven or are striving toward all-inclusiveness, that not every conquest has the ambiguity of empire-building, and that even those in whom the drive toward universal integration has been effective have often made it ineffective by withdrawing to a limited tribal or national centeredness. These facts show that there is in history-bearing groups a tendency against the universalistic element in the dynamics of history. The daring, ultimately prophetic character of the idea of empire produces reactions toward tribal or regional or national isolation and the defense of a limited spatial unity; such reactions have indirectly contributed much to the movement of history as a whole. But one can show that in all important cases of this kind the isolationist movement was and is not a genuine action but a reaction, a withdrawal from involvement in universalist movements. Historical existence stands under the "star" of historical time and runs ahead against every particularist resistance. Therefore the isolationist attempts are never ultimately successful; they are frustrated by the dynamics of history which are universalist by their very nature. No individual and no group can avoid the dynamics of history in order to avoid the tragic implications of the greatness of history as it is expressed in the symbol of empire. But even so the concept of world history remains doubtful in view of past unknown or unconnected historical movements. It cannot be defined empirically but must be understood in terms of an interpretation of history as self-transcending.

The ambiguities of centeredness refer not only to the extensive but also to the intensive aspect of historical integration. Every history-bear-

ing group has a power structure without which it would not be able to act historically. This structure is the source of the ambiguities of centeredness within a historical group. We have discussed the structural side in the discussion of the ambiguities of leadership. Under the historical dimension the dynamic side must be considered; we must look at the relation of intensive to extensive centeredness, which, in political terms, is the relation of politics to international relations. There are two contradictory tendencies, the one toward a totalitarian control of the life of everyone who belongs to a history-bearing and especially to an imperial group, the other toward the personal freedom that fosters creativity. The first tendency is strengthened if external conflicts demand an increase in centered power or if disintegrating forces within the group endanger the centeredness itself. In both cases the necessity of a powerful center reduces and tends to annihilate the element of freedom which is the precondition for all historical creativity. The group is able to act historically because of its severe centralization, but it cannot use its power creatively because it has suppressed those creative potencies which drive into the future. Only the dictatorial elite-or the dictator alone—is free to act historically, and then actions, because they are deprived of the meaning which can appear only in the encounter of free, moral, cultural, and religious agents, become empty power drives, though often on a grand scale. They may serve as tools of historical destiny, but they pay for their loss of meaning by the destruction of the historical group they use. For power which has lost meaning also loses itself as power.

The opposite attitude toward political centeredness and historical creativity is the sacrifice of the former to the latter. This can result from a diversity of power centers within a history-bearing group, if the center of the group as a whole is changing from one subcenter to another or if no embracing center can be established at all. These are the most tragic and often the most creative periods in history. It is also possible that the center, in spurring individual creativity, may deprive itself of the power which is necessary for centered historical action-a situation which is usually followed by a dictatorial period. In this case the effect, even of great individual creation, on history as a whole remains indirect because a centered historical action is lacking.

These considerations drive to the question: How can the ambiguities of the external imperial trend and of internal centralization be conquered within an unambiguous historical integration?

2. The Ambiguities of Historical Self-creativity : Revolution and Reaction

Historical creativity takes place in the non-progressive as well as in the progressive element of the dynamics of history. It is the process in which the new is created in all realms under the historical dimension. Everything new in history keeps within itself elements of the old out of which it grows. Hegel has expressed this fact in the well-known phrase that the old is in the new, both negated and preserved (*aufgehoben*). But Hegel did not take seriously the ambiguity of this structure of growth and its destructive possibilities. These factors appear in the relation between the generations, in the struggles of artistic and philosophical styles, in the ideologies of the political parties, in the oscillation between revolution and reaction, and in the tragic situations to which these conflicts lead. The greatness of history is that it runs toward the new, but greatness, because of its ambiguity, is also the tragic character of history.

The problem of the relation between the generations is not that of authority (which has been discussed earlier) but that of the old and the new in the dynamics of history. In order to make a place for the new the young generation has to disregard the creative processes out of which the old has arisen. Representatives of the new attack the final results of those processes, unaware of the answers to former problems which are implied in these results. Therefore the attacks are necessarily unfair; their unfairness is an unavoidable element of their strength to break through the given. Naturally, their unfairness produces negative reactions on the side of the old-negative not so much in terms of unfairness as in terms of inability to understand. Representatives of the old see in the given results the toil and greatness of their own creative past; they do not see that they constitute stumbling blocks in the way of the new generation to creativity. In this conflict partisans of the old become hardened and bitter, and partisans of the new frustrated and empty.

It is natural that political life is largely structured by the ambiguity of historical creativity. Every political act is directed toward something new; but the difference is whether this new step is taken for the sake of the new itself or for the sake of the old. Even in non-revolutionary situations the struggle between the conservative and progressive forces leads to the disruption of human ties, to a partly unconscious, partly

conscious, distortion of factual truth, to promises the fulfilment of which was not even intended, and to the suppression of the creative forces belonging to the other side. Finally, a revolutionary situation may develop with its devastating struggles between revolution and reaction. There are situations in which only a revolution (not always a bloody one) can achieve the breakthrough to a new creation. Such violent breakthroughs are examples of destruction for the sake of creation, a destruction sometimes so radical that a new creation becomes impossible and a slow reduction of the group and its culture to the stage of an almost vegetative existence takes place. It is this danger of utter chaos that gives the established powers the ideological justification to suppress revolutionary forces or to try to overcome them in a counterrevolution. Often the revolution itself runs in a direction which contradicts its original meaning and annihilates those who have created it. If the reaction is victorious, history has not returned to the "ideal" stage in the name of which the counterrevolution was undertaken but to something new which disclaims newness and is slowly eroded by the forces of the new, which cannot be excluded in the long run, however distorted their emergence may be. The immensity of personal sacrifice and destruction of things in these processes drives to the question of unambiguous historical creativity.

3. The Ambiguities of Historical Suf-transcendence : The "Third Stage" as Given and as Expected

The historical conflicts between the old and the new reach their most destructive stage if either side claims ultimacy for itself. This self-elevating claim to ultimacy is the definition of the demonic, and nowhere is the demonic as manifest as under the historical dimension. The claim to ultimacy takes the form of the claim to have or to bring the ultimate toward which history runs. This has happened not only in the political but even more directly in the religious sphere. The struggle between the sacred old and the prophetic new is a central theme of the history of religions, and, according to the fact that the demonic's favored place is the holy, these conflicts reach an all-surpassing destructiveness in religious wars and persecutions. From the point of view of historical dynamics, this is the conflict between different groups which claim to represent the aim of history either in terms of its actual or in terms of its anticipated fulfilment. In this connection we can use

the traditional symbol of the "third stage." Its mythological background is the cosmic drama of paradise, fall, and restitution. Its application to history has led to apocalyptic visions of several world ages and the expected coming of the new and last age. In Augustine's interpretation of history, the last age begins with the foundation of the Christian church. In opposition to him, Joachim de Fiore, following Montanist ideas, speaks of three ages, of which the third has not yet appeared but which will appear in a few decades. The feeling of being at the beginning of the last stage of history was expressed by sectarian movements in religious terminology, for example, by the symbol of the thousand years in which the Christ will rule history before the final end. In the periods of Enlightenment and idealism, the symbol of the third stage was secularized and assumed a revolutionary function. Both bourgeoisie and proletariat construed their world historical role respectively as that of the bearers of the "age of reason" or of the "classless society," terms which are variations of the symbol of the third stage. In each form of the symbol, religious or secular, the conviction is expressed that the third stage has started, that history has reached a point which cannot be surpassed in principle, that the "beginning of the end" is at hand, and that we can see the ultimate fulfilment toward which history moves, in the course of which it transcends itself and each of its moments. In these ideas the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of history is expressed and leads to two utterly ambiguous attitudes: the first being the self-absolutizing one, in which the present situation is identified with the third stage, and the second being the utopian one, in which the third stage is seen as immediately at hand or already beginning. The self-absolutizing attitude is ambiguous because, on the one hand, it makes the self-transcendence of life manifest in religious or quasi-religious symbols and, on the other, it conceals the self-transcendence of life by identifying these symbols with the ultimate itself. The classical expression of this ambiguity is the Roman church's claim that it is the fulfilment of the apocalyptic vision of the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, receiving from this self-interpretation both its divine and its demonic traits. In sectarian as well as secular utopianism, the ambiguity is most manifest when we contrast the way in which these movements create new historical realities through the enthusiasm of their expectation and the sacrifices they make to fulfill it, with the result of profound existential disappointment, followed by cynicism and indifference, when and

if the state of things fails to corroborate their expectations. History expresses the ambiguity of its self-transcendence most conspicuously in these oscillations. In them, above all, the riddle of history becomes an existential concern as well as a philosophical and theological problem.

The last three considerations have shown that it is possible and revealing to apply the distinction of the three functions of life also to history and that, as in the other dimensions of life, they lead to conflicts which are inescapable and which cause both the greatness and the tragedy of historical existence. Such analyses can liberate us from both utopianism and despair with regard to the meaning of history.

4. The Ambiguities of the Individual in History

Most religions and philosophies agree with Hegel's judgment that "history is not the place in which the individual can find happiness." Even a superficial look into world history shows the truth of this statement, and a deeper and more embracing view overwhelmingly confirms it. Nevertheless, this is not the whole truth. The individual receives his life as a person from the history-bearing group to which he belongs. History has given to everyone the physical, social, and spiritual conditions of his existence. Nobody who uses language is outside history, and nobody can withdraw from it. The monk and the hermit, those who try to cut all social and political ties, are dependent on the history they want to avoid, and further, they influence the historical movement from which they try to separate themselves. It is an often repeated fact that those who have refused to act historically have had a greater impact on history than those who were near the centers of historical action.

History is not only political; all sides of man's cultural and religious activity have a historical dimension. Therefore everyone, in every realm of human activity, acts historically. The smallest and lowest services help to uphold the technical and economic basis of society and consequently support its historical movement. However, the universal participation of every human being in history does not exclude the predominance of the political function in historical activity. The reason for this predominance is the internal and external political character of the history-bearing groups. The precondition of all life, including life in history, is the centeredness of the agents of life-in the case of history, the centeredness of historical groups in their static and dynamic qualities. And the function in which this centeredness is actualized is the

political. Therefore the image of history, whether in the popular view or in scholarly books, is dominated by political personalities and their actions. Even historical accounts of economics, science, art, or the church cannot avoid continual reference to the political frame within which cultural and religious activities take place.

The predominance of the political function and, at the same time, the ambiguity of the individual in history are most conspicuous in the democratic organization of the political realm. As stated before, democracy is not an absolute political system, but it is the best way discovered so far to guarantee the creative freedom of determining the historical process to everyone within a centered historical group. The predominance of politics includes the dependence of all other functions in which creative freedom is presupposed upon the political organization. For verification of this, it is sufficient to look at the dictatorial systems and their attempts to subject all forms of cultural creativity, including ethics and religion, to the central political power. The result is the deprivation not only of freedom of political creativity but also of the freedom of creativity of any kind except where the central authorities desire it (as in scientific work in Soviet Russia). Democracy makes it possible to fight for freedom in all realms which contribute to the historical movement by fighting for freedom in the political realm. Nevertheless, the participation of the individual in democratic systems of politics is not without limits and ambiguities. In political activity in particular, the techniques of representation drastically reduce the participation of the individual, sometimes even to the vanishing point in mass societies with an all-powerful party bureaucracy. A majority can be produced and maintained by methods which deprive a large number of individuals of political influence altogether and for an indefinite time. The channels of public communication in the hands of ruling groups can become instruments of a conformity which kills creativity in all realms as successfully as under dictatorships, the realm of politics being the chief example. On the other hand, democracy can become unworkable because of disruptive splits within the group-for example, the rise of so many parties that a majority capable of action becomes impossible. Or parties can arise which are absolutistic in ideology and which wage a life and death struggle against opposing parties. In such cases, dictatorship is not far away.

There are ambiguities of the individual in history which are valid

under every political system. They can be summed up in the ambiguity of historical sacrifice. It is this basic character of the individual's participation in history which induces in many people the desire to escape history altogether. In Hamlet's monologue "To be or not to be," many of the historical causes for such a desire are enumerated. Today the breakdown of the progressivistic ideology has produced a widespread indifference, and the East-West split with its thread of universal self-destruction has driven innumerable individuals to cynicism and despair; they feel with the Jewish apocalyptics that the earth has become "old"—a realm in which demonic forces rule-and they look above history in resignation or mystical elevation. The symbols of hope expressing the goal toward which history runs, whether secular or religious, have lost their moving power. The individual feels himself a victim of forces which he cannot influence. For him history is negativity without hope.

The ambiguities of life under the dimension of history and the implication of these ambiguities for the life of the individual within his historical group lead to the question: What is the significance of history for the meaning of existence universally? All interpretations of history try to give an answer to this question.

C. INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORY AND THE QUEST FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. The Nature and the Problem of an Interpretation of History

Every legend, every chronicle, every report of past events, every scholarly historical work, contains interpreted history. This is the consequence of the subject-object character of history that we discussed before. Such interpretation, however, has many levels. It includes the selection of facts according to the criterion of importance, the valuation of causal dependences, the image of personal and communal structures, a theory of motivation in individuals, groups, and masses, a social and political philosophy, and underlying all this, whether admitted or not, an understanding of the meaning of the history in unity with the meaning of existence in general. Such understanding influences consciously or unconsciously all other levels of interpretation, and it, conversely, is dependent on a knowledge of historical processes, both specifically and universally. This mutual dependence of historical knowledge in all its levels and an interpretation of history should be realized by everyone who deals with history on any level.

Our problem is the interpretation of history in the sense of the question: What is the significance of history for the meaning of existence in general? In what way does history influence our ultimate concern? The answer to this question must be related to the ambiguities implied in the processes of life under the dimension of history, all of which are expressions of the basic antinomy of historical time.

How is an answer to the question of the meaning of history possible? Obviously, the subject-object character of history precludes an objective answer in any detached, scientific sense. Only full involvement in historical action can give the basis for an interpretation of history. Historical activity is the key to understanding history. This, however, would lead to as many interpretations as there are types of historical activity, and the question arises : Which type provides the right key? Or, in other words, in which historical group must one participate to be given the universal view that opens up the meaning of history? Every historical group is particular, and participation in its historical acitivities implies a particular view of the aim of historical creativity. It is the vocational consciousness, referred to above, that decides upon the key and what it opens in the understanding of history. For example, the Greek vocational self-interpretation, as given in Aristotle's ***Politics, sees*** in the contrast between Greeks and barbarians the key to an interpretation of history, while the Jewish vocational self-interpretation, as given in the prophetic literature, sees such a key in the establishment of the rule of Jahweh over the nations of the world. More examples will be given later. At this point the question is: Which group and which vocational consciousness are able to give a key to history as a whole? Obviously, if we try to answer, we have already presupposed an interpretation of history with a claim to universality; we have already used the key in justifying its use.This is an unavoidable consequence of the "theological circle" within which systematic theology moves; but it is an unavoidable circle wherever the question of the ultimate meaning of history is asked. The key and what the key opens are experienced in one and the same act; the affirmation of the vocational consciousness in a definite historical group and the vision of history implied in this consciousness go together. Within the circle of this theological system, it is Christianity in which key and answer are found. In the Christian vocational consciousness, history is affirmed in such a way that the problems implied in the ambiguities of life under the dimension of history are answered through the

symbol "Kingdom of God." This, however, is an assertion which must be tested by contrasting this symbol with the other main types of understanding history and by reinterpreting the symbol in light of these contrasts.

The interpretation of history includes more than an answer to the question of history. Since history is the all-embracing dimension of life, and since historical time is the time in which all other dimensions of time are presupposed, the answer to the meaning of history implies an answer to the universal meaning of being. The historical dimension is present in all realms of life, though only as a subordinated dimension. In human history, it comes into its own. But after it has come into its own, it draws into itself the ambiguities and problems under the other dimensions. In terms of the symbol of the Kingdom of God, this means that "Kingdom" includes life in all realms, or that everything that is participates in the striving toward the inner aim of history: fulfilment or ultimate sublimation.

Such an assertion, of course, is more than an answer to the question of the interpretation of history. It implies an interpretation; therefore, the question now is: How can this particular understanding of the inner aim of history, as it appears in the theological system, be described and justified?

2. Negative Answers to the Question of the Meaning of History

The ambiguities of history, as the final expression of the ambiguities of life under all its dimensions, have led to a basic split in the valuation of history and life itself. We have referred to it in the discussion of the New Being and its expectation by the two contrasting types of interpreting history-the non-historical and the historical. The non-historical type, our first subject of consideration, presupposes that the "running ahead" of historical time has no aim either within or above history but that history is the "place" in which individual beings live their lives unaware of an eternal *telos* of their personal lives. This is the attitude toward history for the largest number of human beings. One can distinguish three forms of such non-historical interpretations of history: the tragic, the mystical, the mechanistic.

The tragic interpretation of history receives its classical expression in Greek thought but is by no means restricted to it. History, in this view, does not run toward a historical or transhistorical aim but in a circle

back to its beginning. In its course it provides genesis, acme, and decay for every being, each one at its time and with definite limits; there is nothing beyond or above this stretch of time which itself is determined by fate. Within the cosmic circle, periods can be distinguished which as a whole constitute a process of deterioration, starting with an original perfection and falling by degrees into a stage of utter distortion of what the world and man essentially are. Existence in time and space and in the separation of individual from individual is tragic guilt, which leads necessarily to self-destruction. But tragedy presupposes greatness, and in this view there is heavy emphasis on greatness in terms of centeredness, creativity, and sublimation. The glory of life in nature, nations, and persons is praised, and it is just for this reason that the shortness and misery and tragic quality of life are deplored. But there is no hope, no expectation of an immanent or transcendent fulfilment of history. It is non-historical, and the tragic circle of genesis and decay is its last word. None of the ambiguities of life is conquered; there is no consolation for the disintegrating, destructive, profanizing side of life, and its only resource is the courage which raises both hero and wise man above the vicissitudes of historical existence.

This way of transcending history points to the second type of the non-historical interpretation of history, the mystical. Although it appears also in Western culture (as, for example, in Neoplatonism and Spinozism), it is most fully and effectively developed in the East, as in Vedanta Hinduism, in Taoism, and in Buddhism. Historical existence has no meaning in itself. One must live in it and act reasonably, but history itself can neither create the new nor be truly real. This attitude, which demands elevation above history while living in it, is the most widespread of all within historical mankind. In some Hindu philosophies there is a speculation similar to that of Stoicism about cosmic cycles of genesis and decay and the deteriorization of historical mankind from one period to another up to the last in which we are living. But in general there is no awareness of historical time and of an end toward which it is running in this type of non-historical interpretation of history. The emphasis is on the individual and particularly on the comparatively few illuminated individuals who are aware of the human predicament. The others are objects of a pharisaic judgment about their *karma* for which they are responsible in a former incarnation, or they are objects of compassion and adaptation of the religious demands to their unenlightened stage, as in some forms of Buddhism.

In any case, these religions contain no impulse to transform history in the direction of universal humanity and justice. History has no aim, either in time or in eternity. And again, the consequence is that the ambiguities of life under all dimensions are unconquerable. There is only one way to cope with them and that is to transcend them and live within them as someone who has already returned to the Ultimate One. He has not changed reality but he has conquered his own involvement in reality. There is no symbol analogous to that of the Kingdom of God. But there is often a profound compassion for the universality of suffering under all dimensions of life-au element often lacking under the influence of historical interpretations of history in the Western world.

Under the impact of the modern scientific interpretation of reality in all its dimensions, the understanding of history has undergone a change, not only in relation to the mystical interpretation of history, but also in relation to the tragic interpretation. Physical time controls the analysis of time so completely that there is little place for the special characteristics of biological, and even less of historical, time. History has become a series of happenings in the physical universe, interesting to man, worthy to be recorded and studied, but without a special contribution to the interpretation of existence as such. One could call this the mechanistic type of non-historical interpretation of history (where the term "mechanistic" is used in the sense of a "reductionistic naturalism"). Mechanism does not emphasize the tragic element in history as the classical naturalism of the Greeks did. Since it is intimately related to the technical control of nature by science and technology, it has in some cases a progressivistic character. But it is also open to the opposite attitude of cynical devaluation of existence in general and of history in particular. The mechanistic view usually does not share the Greek emphasis on the greatness and tragedy of man's historical existence, and it shares to an even lesser extent the interpretation of history from the point of view of an inner-historical or transhistorical aim toward which history is supposed to run.

3. Positive but Inadequate Answers to the Question of the Meaning of History

In some cases the mechanistic interpretation of history is allied with "progressivism," the first type of a historical interpretation of history that will be discussed. In it "progress" is more than an empirical fact (which it also is); it has become a quasi-religious symbol. In the chapter on progress we discussed the empirical validity and empirical limitations of the concept of progress. Here we must look at its use as a universal law determining the dynamics of history. The significant side of progressivistic ideology is its emphasis on the progressive intention of every creative action and its awareness of those areas of the self-creativity of life in which progress is of the essence of the reality concerned, for example, technology. In this way the symbol of progress includes the decisive element of historical time, its running ahead toward an aim. Progressivism is a genuinely historical interpretation of history. Its symbolic power was in some periods of history as strong as any of the great religious symbols of historical interpretation, including the symbol of the Kingdom of God. It gave impetus to historical actions, passion to revolutions, and a meaning to life for many who had lost all other faith and for whom the eventual breakdown of the progressivistic faith was a spiritual catastrophe. In short, it was a quasi-religious symbol in spite of its inner-historical aim.

One can distinguish two forms of it: the belief in progress itself as an infinite process without an end, and the belief in a final state of fulfilment, for example, in the sense of the concept of the third stage. The first form is progressivism in the proper sense; the second form is utopianism (which requires separate discussion). Progressivism, as the belief in progress as progress without a definite end, has been produced by the idealistic wing of the philosophical self-interpretation of modern industrial society; Neo-Kantianism was most important for the development of the idea of infinite progress. Reality is the never finished creation of man's cultural activity. There is no "reality in itself" behind this creation. Hegel's dialectical processes have the element of infinite progress in their structure and that element is the driving power of negation, which, as Bergson has strongly emphasized, requires an infinite openness for the future--even in God. The fact that Hegel stopped the dialectical movement with his own philosophy was incidental to his principle and has not prevented his becoming one of the most powerful influences for progressivism in the nineteenth century. The positivistic wing of nineteenth-century philosophy-as Comte and Spencer show—could accept progressivism on its own terms; and this school has given a large amount of material for a scientific justification of progress as a universal law of history, appearing under all dimensions of life but becoming conscious of itself only in human history. The progressivistic belief was undercut by the experiences of our century: the world-histori-

cal relapses to stages of inhumanity supposed to have been conquered long ago, the manifestation of the ambiguities of progress in the realms in which progress takes place, the feeling of the meaninglessness of an infinite progress without an end, and the insight into the freedom of every newborn human being to start again for good and evil. It is astonishing to notice how sudden and radical the breakdown of progressivism was, so radical that today many (including this writer) who twenty years ago fought against the progressivistic ideology now feel driven to defend the justified elements of this concept.

Perhaps the sharpest attack on the belief in infinite progress came from an idea which originally has grown out of the same root-the utopian interpretation of history. Utopianism is progressivism with a definite aim: arrival at that stage of history in which the ambiguities of life are conquered. In discussing utopianism it is important to distinguish, as in the case of progressivism, the utopian impetus from the literally interpreted symbol of utopia, the latter being the "third stage" of the historical development. The utopian impetus results from an intensification of the progressive impetus, and is distinguishable from it by the belief that present revolutionary action will bring about the final transformation of reality, that stage of history in which the *ou-tópos* (no-place) will become the universal place. This place will be the earth, the planet which in the geocentric world view was farthest removed from the heavenly spheres and which, in the heliocentric world view, has become a star among the others, of equal dignity, equal finitude, and equal internal infinity. And it will be man, the microcosm, the representative of all dimensions of the universe, through whom the earth will be transferred into the fulfilment of what in paradise was mere potentiality. These ideas of the Renaissance lie behind the many forms of secular utopianism in the modern period and have given incentive to revolutionary movements up to the present day.

The problematic character of the utopian interpretation of history has been clearly betrayed in the developments of the twentieth century. Certainly, the power and truth of the utopian impetus has become manifest in the immensity of success in all those realms in which the law of progress is valid, as foreseen in the Renaissance utopias; but at the same time, there has appeared a complete ambiguity between progress and relapse in those realms in which human freedom is involved. Realms involving human freedom were also envisaged in a state of unambiguous fulfilment by the utopianists of the Renaissance and all their successors

in the revolutionary movements of the last three hundred years. But these expectations were disappointed with that profound disappointment which follows every idolatrous reliance on something finite. A history of such "existential disappointments" in modern times would be a history of cynicism, mass indifference, a split consciousness in leading groups, fanaticism, and tyranny. Existential disappointments produce individual and social diseases and catastrophes: the price for idolatrous ecstasy must be paid. For utopianism, taken literally, is idolatrous. It gives the quality of ultimacy to something preliminary. It makes unconditional what is conditioned (a future historical situation) and at the same time disregards the always present existential estrangement and the ambiguities of life and history. This makes the utopian interpretation of history inadequate and dangerous.

A third form of inadequate historical interpretation of history could be called the "transcendental" type. It is implicit in the eschatological mood of the New Testament and the early church up to Augustine. It was brought to its radical form in orthodox Lutheranism. History is the place in which, after the Old Testament preparation, the Christ has appeared to save individuals within the church from bondage to sin and guilt and to enable them to participate in the heavenly realm after death. Historical action, especially in the decisive political realm, cannot be purged from the ambiguities of power, internally or externally. There is no relation between the justice of the Kingdom of God and the justice of power structures. The two worlds are separated by an unbridgeable gap. Sectarian utopian and Calvinistic theocratic interpretations of history are rejected. Revolutionary attempts to change a corrupt political system contradict God's will as expressed in his providential action. After history has become the scene of saving revelation, nothing essentially new can be expected from it. The attitude expressed in these ideas was quite adequate to the predicament of most people in the late feudal period of central and eastern Europe, and it contains an element which is relevant to the situation of innumerable individuals in all periods of history. In theology it is a necessary counterbalance to the danger of secular as well as religious utopianism. But it falls short of an adequate historical interpretation of history. Its most obvious shortcoming is the fact that it contrasts the salvation of the individual with the transformation of the historical group and the universe, thus separating the one from the other. This error was sharply criticized by Thomas Muenzer, who in his criticism of Luther's attitude pointed to the fact that the masses have

no time and strength left for a spiritual life, a judgment which was repeated by Religious Socialists in their analysis of the sociological and psychological situation of the proletariat in the industrial cities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Another shortcoming of the transcendental interpretation of history is the way in which it contrasts the realm of salvation with the realm of creation. Power in itself is created goodness and an element in the essential structure of life. If it is beyond salvation-however fragmentary the salvation may be-life itself is beyond salvation. In such consequences the Manichaean danger of the transcendental view of history becomes visible.

Finally, this view interprets the symbol of the Kingdom of God as a static supranatural order into which individuals enter after their death—instead of understanding the symbol, with the biblical writers, as a dynamic power on earth for the coming of which we pray in the Lord's Prayer and which, according to biblical thought, is struggling with the demonic forces which are powerful in churches as well as empires. The transcendental type of historical interpretation, consequently, is inadequate because it excludes culture as well as nature from the saving processes in history. It is ironical that this happened in that type of Protestantism which-following Luther himself-has had the most positive relation to nature and has made the greatest contribution to the artistic and cognitive functions of culture. But all this remained without decisive consequence for modern Christianity because of the transcendental attitude toward politics, social ethics, and history in Lutheranism.

It was the dissatisfaction with the progressivistic, utopian, and transcendental interpretations of history (and the rejection of the non-historical types) that induced the Religious Socialists of the early 1920's to try a solution which avoids their inadequacies and is based on biblical prophetism. This attempt was made in terms of a reinterpretation of the symbol of the Kingdom of God.

4. The Symbol "Kingdom of God" as the Answer to the Question of the Meaning of History

a) The characteristics of the symbol "Kingdom of God." *-In* the chapter on the three symbols of unambiguous life we have described the relationship of the symbol "Kingdom of God" to the symbols "Spiritual Presence" and "Eternal Life." We found that each of them includes the other two but that, because of the differences in the symbol materials, we are justified in using Spiritual Presence as the answer to the ambiguities of the human spirit and its functions, Kingdom of God as the answer to the ambiguities of history, and Eternal Life as the answer to the ambiguities of life universal. Nevertheless, the connotations of the symbol of the Kingdom of God are more embracing than those of the two others. This is a consequence of the double character of the Kingdom of God. It has an inner-historical and a transhistorical side. As inner-historical, it participates in the dynamics of history; as transhistorical, it answers the questions implied in the ambiguities of the dynamics of history. In the former quality it is manifest through the Spiritual Presence; in the latter it is identical with Eternal Life. This double quality of the Kingdom of God makes it a most important and most difficult symbol of Christian thought and-even more-one of the most critical for both political and ecclesiastical absolutism. Because it is so critical, the ecclesiastical development of Christianity and the sacramental emphasis of the two Catholic churches has pushed the symbol aside, and today, after its use (and partial secularization) by the social gospel movement and some forms of religious socialism, the symbol has again lost in power. This is remarkable in view of the fact that the preaching of Jesus started with the message of the "Kingdom of Heaven at hand" and that Christianity prays for its coming in every Lord's Prayer.

Its reinstatement as a living symbol may come from the encounter of Christianity with the Asiatic religions, especially Buddhism. Although the great India-born religions claim to be able to receive every religion as a partial truth within their self-transcending universality, it seems impossible that they can accept the symbol of the Kingdom of God in anything like its original meaning. The symbolic material is taken from spheres-the personal, social and political-which in the basic experience of Buddhism are radically transcended, whereas they are essential and never missing elements of the Christian experience. The consequences of this difference for religion and culture in East and West are world-historical, and it would seem that there is no other symbol in Christianity which points to the ultimate source of the differences as clearly as the symbol "Kingdom of God," especially when it is contrasted with the symbol "Nirvana."

The first connotation of the Kingdom of God is political. This agrees with the political sphere's predominance in the dynamics of history. In the Old Testament development of the symbol, the Kingdom of God is not so much a realm in which God rules as it is the controlling power itself which belongs to God and which he will assume after the victory over his enemies. But, although the kingdom as realm is not in the foreground, it is not altogether absent, and it is identical with Mount Zion, Israel, the nations, or the universe. Later in Judaism and in the New Testament the realm of the divine rule becomes more important: it is a transformed heaven and earth, a new reality in a new period of history. It results from a rebirth of the old in a new creation in which God is everything in everything. The political symbol is transformed into a cosmic symbol, without losing its political connotation. The word "king" in this and many other symbolizations of the divine majesty does not introduce a special constitutional form into the symbol material, against which other constitutional forms, such as that of a democracy, must react; for "king" (in contrast to other forms of rule) has since earliest times been a symbol in its own right for the highest and most consecrated center of political control. Its application to God, therefore, is a generally understandable double symbolization.

The second characteristic of the Kingdom of God is social. This characteristic includes the ideas of peace and justice-not in contrast to the political quality and, therefore, not in contrast to power. In this way the Kingdom of God fulfils the utopian expectation of a realm of peace and justice while liberating them from their utopian character by the addition "of God," for with this addition the impossibility of an earthly fulfilment is implicitly acknowledged. But even so the social element in the symbol is a permanent reminder that there is no holiness without the holy of what ought to be, the unconditional moral imperative of justice.

The third element implied in the Kingdom of God is the personalistic one. In contrast to symbols in which the return to the ultimate identity is the aim of existence, the Kingdom of God gives eternal meaning to the individual person. The transhistorical aim toward which history runs is not the extinction but the fulfilment of humanity in every human individual.

The fourth characteristic of the Kingdom of God is its universality.

It is a kingdom not only of men; it involves the fulfilment of life under all dimensions. This agrees with the multidimensional unity of life: fulfilment under one dimension implies fulfilment in all dimensions. This is the quality of the symbol "Kingdom of God" in which the individual-social element is transcended, though not denied. Paul expresses this in the symbols "God being all in all" and "the Christ surrendering the rule over history to God" when the dynamics of history have reached their end.

b) The immanent and the transcendent elements in the symbol "Kingdom of God."-The symbol "Kingdom of God," in order to be both a positive and an adequate answer to the question of the meaning of history, must be immanent and transcendent at the same time. Any one-sided interpretation deprives the symbol of its power. In the section on inadequate answers to the question of the meaning of history we discussed the utopian and transcendental interpretation, adducing examples for both of them from the Christian-Protestant tradition. This indicates that the mere use of the symbol "Kingdom of God" does not guarantee an adequate answer. Although its history gives all the elements of an answer, the same history shows that each of these elements can be suppressed and the meaning of the symbol distorted. Therefore it is important to point to the emergence of these elements in the basic development of the idea of the Kingdom of God.

The emphasis in the prophetic literature is inner-historical-political. The destiny of Israel is the revelatory medium for the prophetic understanding of Jahweh's character and actions, and Israel's future is seen as the victory of the God of Israel in the struggle with her enemies. Mount Zion will become the religious center of all nations, and although the "day of Jahweh" is first of all judgment, it is also fulfilment in a historical-political sense. But this is not the whole story. The visions about judgment and fulfilment include an element which could hardly be called inner-historical or immanent. It is Jahweh who wins the battle against enemies infinitely superior in numbers and power to Israel. It is God's holy mountain that, in spite of its geographical insignificance, will be the place to which all nations come to worship. The true God, the God of justice, conquers a concentration of partly political, partly demonic, forces. The Messiah, who will bring about the new eon, is a human being with superhuman traits. The peace between the nations

includes nature, so that the most hostile species of animals will live peacefully beside each other. These transcendent elements within the predominantly immanent-political interpretation of the idea of the Kingdom of God point to its double character. God's Kingdom cannot be produced by the inner-historical development alone. In the political upheavals of Judaism during the Roman period, this double character of the prophetic anticipation was almost forgotten-which led to the complete destruction of the national existence of Israel.

Experiences such as this, long before the Roman period, brought about a change in emphasis from the immanent-political to the transcendent-universal side in the idea of the Kingdom of God. This was most impressive in the so-called apocalyptic literature of the intertestamental period, with some predecessors in the latest parts of the Old Testament. The historical vision is enlarged upon and superceded by a cosmic vision. The earth has become old, and demonic powers have taken possession of it. Wars, disease, and natural catastrophes of a cosmic character will precede the rebirth of all things and the new eon in which God will finally become the ruler of the nations and in which the prophetic hopes will be fulfilled. This will not happen through historical developments but through divine interference and a new creation, leading to a new heaven and a new earth. Such visions are independent of any historical situation and are not conditioned by human activities. The divine mediator is no longer the historical Messiah, but the Son of Man, the Heavenly Man. This interpretation of history was decisive for the New Testament. Inner-historical-political aims within the Roman empire were beyond reach. The empire has to be accepted according to its elements of goodness (Paul), and it will be destroyed by God because of its demonic structure (Revelation). Obviously, this is far removed from any inner-historical progressivism or utopianism; nevertheless, it is not without immanent-political elements. The reference to the Roman empire-sometimes seen as the last and greatest in a series of empires-shows that the vision of the demonic powers is not merely imaginary. It is related to the historical powers of the period in which it is conceived. And the cosmic catastrophes include historical events within the world of nations. The final stages of human history are described with inner-historical colors. Again and again in later times people have found their own historical existence described in the mythical imagery of the apocalyptics. The New Testament adds a new element to these visions: the inner-historical appearance of Jesus as the Christ and the foundation of the church in the midst of the ambiguities of history. All this shows that the emphasis on transcendence in the symbol "Kingdom of God" does not exclude inner-historical features of decisive importance-just as the predominance of the immanent element does not exclude transcendent symbolism.

These developments show that the symbol "Kingdom of God" has the power to express both the immanent and the transcendent sides, though one side is normally predominant. With this in mind the reality of the Kingdom of God in and above history will be discussed in the remaining sections of the system.

II

THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITHIN HISTORY

A. THE DYNAMICS OF HISTORY AND THE NEW BEING

1. The Idea of "History of Salvation"

IN THE chapter, "The manifestation of the Spiritual Presence in historical mankind" (Part IV, Sec. II B), we related the doctrine of the Spirit to man's historical existence, but we did not consider the historical dimension as such. In discussing the Spiritual Presence and its relation to the human spirit we put history into brackets, not because it is not effective in every moment of the spiritual life, but because the different points of view can only be dealt with consecutively. We must now look at the Spiritual Presence and its manifestations from the point of view of their participation in the dynamics of history.

Theology has spoken of this problem under the originally German term *Heilsgeschichte* ("history of salvation"). Since this term connotes many unsolved problems, I am using it tentatively, subject to serious qualification. The first question refers to the relation of the history of salvation to the history of revelation. The basic answer has been given (Part I, Sec. IIB): Where there is revelation there is salvation! Turning this statement around we can also say: Where there is salvation there is revelation. Salvation embraces revelation, emphasizing the element of truth in the saving manifestation of the ground of being. Therefore, by speaking of universal (not "general") revelation, we have spoken implicitly of universal salvation. The second question refers to the relation of history as the result of human creativity to the history of salvation. They are not identical. Their identification was the error of classical idealism and some forms of theological liberalism, often in connection with a progressivistic interpretation of history. It is impossible to identify world history and the history of salvation because of the ambiguities of life in all its dimensions, including the historical. Salvation is the conquest of these ambiguities; it stands against them and cannot be identified with a realm in which they are effective. Later, we shall also see

that the history of salvation is not identical with the history of religion either, or even with the history of the churches, although the churches represent the Kingdom of God. Saving power breaks into history, works through history, but is not created by history.

The third question, therefore, is: How is the history of salvation manifest in world history? In the description of revelatory experiences (given in Part I, Sec. II, "The Reality of Revelation," which was an anticipation of some ideas belonging to this part), the manifestation of Spiritual Power was pictured with respect to its cognitive elements. And in the chapters dealing with the effects of the Spiritual Presence on individuals and communities (Part IV, Sec. III) the manifestation of the saving power was described in its totality. But we did not discuss the historical dimension of these manifestations, their dynamics in relation to the dynamics of world history.

If the term "history of salvation" is justified at all, it must point to a sequence of events in which saving power breaks into historical processes, prepared for by these processes so that it can be received, changing them to enable the saving power to be effective in history. Seen in this way, the history of salvation is a part of universal history. It can be identified in terms of measured time, historical causality, a definite space and a concrete situation. As an object of secular historiography, it must be subjected to the tests prescribed by a strict application of the methods of historical research. Simultaneously, however, although it is within history, it manifests something which is not from history. For this reason the history of salvation has also been called sacred history. It is sacred and secular in the same series of events. In it history shows its self-transcending character, its striving toward ultimate fulfilment. There is no reason to call the history of salvation "suprahistorical." The prefix "supra" indicates a higher level of reality in which divine actions take place without connection with world history. In this way the paradox of the ultimate appearing in history is replaced by a supranaturalism which disconnects world history from the history of salvation. But if they are disconnected, it is impossible to understand how the supranatural events can have saving power within the processes of world history.

Because of these misinterpretations to which the term "history of salvation" is exposed, it might be preferable to avoid the term altogether and to speak about the manifestations of the Kingdom of God in his-

tory. And of course, where there is manifestation of the Kingdom of God, there is revelation and salvation. However, the question remains as to whether there is a rhythm in these manifestations-a kind of progress, or an up and down, or a repetition of some structures-or no rhythm at all. This question cannot be answered in general terms. Its answer is an expression of the concrete revelatory experience of a religious group and is therefore determined by the character of the theological system within which the question is raised. The following answer is based on Christian symbolism and the central Christian assertion that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the final manifestation of the New Being in history.

2. The Central Manifestation of the Kingdom of God in History

Whatever the rhythm of manifestations of the Kingdom of God in history may be, Christianity claims to be based on its central manifestation. Therefore it considers the appearance of Jesus as the Christ as the center of history-if history is seen in its self-transcending character. The term "center of history" has nothing to do with quantitative measurements, which would understand it as the middle between an indefinite past and an indefinite future, nor does the term describe a historical moment in which the cultural process came to a point where the lines of the past were united and determined the future. There is no such point in history. And what is true of the relation of the center of history to culture is also true of its relation to religion. The metaphor "center" expresses a moment in history for which everything before and after is both preparation and reception. As such it is both criterion and source of the saving power in history. The third and fourth parts of the present system contain the full development of these assertions, but they do not consider the historical dimension.

If we call the appearance of the Christ the center of history, we imply that the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history is not an incoherent series of manifestations, each with a relative validity and power. In the very term "center" a critique of relativism is expressed. Faith dares to assert its dependence on that event which is the criterion of all revelatory events. Faith has the courage to dare such an extraordinary assertion, and it takes the risk of error. But without this courage and without the risk, it would not be faith. The term "center of history"

also includes a critique of all forms of a progressivistic view of the manifestations of the Kingdom of God in history. Obviously, there can be no progress beyond that which is the center of history (except in the realms in which progress is essential). Everything succeeding it stands under its criterion and partakes of its power. Nor is the appearance of the center the result of a progressive development as discussed before under the heading "Historical Progress : Its Reality and Its Limits" (Part V, Sec. IA, 3c).

The only progressive element in the preparatory history of revelation and salvation is its movement from immaturity to maturity. Mankind had to mature to a point in which the center of history could appear and be received as the center. This maturing process is working in all history, but a particular development was necessary in order to prepare for Him in whom the final revelation would occur. This is the function of the development of which the Old Testament is the document. The Old Testament manifestations of the Kingdom of God produced the direct preconditions for its final manifestation in the Christ. The maturity was reached; the time was fulfilled. This happened once in the original revelatory and saving stretch of history, but it happens again wherever the center is received as center. Without the larger. basis of history of religion and the smaller basis of prophetic criticism and transformation of the larger basis, there is no possibility of accepting the center. Therefore all missionary activity inside and outside the Christian culture must use the religious consciousness that is present or can be evoked in all religions and cultures. And every missionary activity, inside and outside Christian culture, must follow the Old Testament's prophetic purification of the religious consciousness. Without the Old Testament, Christianity relapses into the immaturities of the universal history of religion-including the history of the Jewish religion (which was the main object of criticism and purification by the Old Testament prophets). The maturing or preparatory process toward the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history is, therefore, not restricted to the pre-Christian epoch; it continues after the center's appearance and is going on here and now. The theme of Israel's leaving Egypt is that of maturation toward the center, which is the theme of the East-West encounter in present-day Japan, and which was and still is the theme of the development of modern Western culture in the last five hundred years. In biblical and theological language, this has been

expressed as the symbol of the transtemporal presence of the Christ in every period.

Conversely, there is always a process of receiving from the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history. Of course, as there is an original history of preparation for the center, leading to its appearance in time and space, so is there an original history of reception from the center, derived from its appearance in time and space; and this is the history of the church. But the church does not exist in a simply manifest way, by receiving from what has happened in the past; it also exists latently, by anticipating what will happen in the future. In its latency the church is dependent, by anticipation, on what is to come as the center of history. This is the meaning of "prophecy" in the sense of announcing the future, and it is the meaning of such passages as those in which the Fourth Gospel points to the pre-existence of the Christ, passages that symbolize the potential presence of the center in all periods of history.

In view of these connotations of the term "center of history," we can say that human history, seen from the point of view of the self-transcendence of history, is not only a dynamic movement, running ahead, but also a structured whole in which one point is the center,

Where there is a central point, the question of the beginning and end of the movement of which it is the center arises. We are not here speaking of the beginning and end of the historical process as such. That was discussed in the chapter on prehistory and posthistory. The problem here is: When did that movement start of which the Christ's appearance is the center, and when will it come to an end? The answer, of course, cannot be given in terms of numbers. Whenever this has been done, it has been refuted by history itself with respect to the end and by historical knowledge with respect to the beginning. All calculations about the imminent end came to naught when the calculated day appeared, and all records about the beginning of historical time, including the biblical ones, have been infinitely surpassed by our knowledge of the origins of mankind on earth. Beginning and end in relation to the center of history can mean only the beginning and end of the manifestations of the Kingdom of God in history, and the answer to the question is determined by the character of the center itself. That history which is a history of revelation and salvation begins the moment man becomes aware of the ultimate question of his estranged predicament and of his destiny to overcome this predicament. This awareness has been expressed in myths and rites of earliest human record, but there is no possibility of marking a definite moment or a definite person or group. The end of history, in the same sense in which we spoke of its beginning, comes at the moment in which mankind ceases to ask the question of its predicament. This can happen by an external extinction of historical mankind through destruction caused cosmically or humanly, or it can happen by biological or psychological transformations which annihilate the dimension of the spirit or by an inner deterioration under the dimension of the spirit which deprives man of his freedom and consequently of the possibility of having a history.

When Christianity claims that the event on which it is based is the center of the history of revelation and salvation, it cannot overlook the fact that there are other interpretations of history which make the same claim for another central event. For the choice of a center of history is universal wherever history is taken seriously. The center of national interpretations of history-ften in an imperial sense-is the moment in which the nation's vocational consciousness arose, whether in an actual event or in a legendary tradition. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, the foundation of the city of Rome, and the revolutionary war in America are such centers of particular histories. They can be raised to universal significance, as in Judaism, or can become a motivation of imperial aspirations, as in Rome. For the followers of a world religion, the event of their foundation is the center of history. This is true not only of Christianity and Judaism but also of Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Manichaeism. In view of these analogies in political and religious history, the question is unavoidable as to how Christianity can justify its claim to be both rooted in time and based in the universal center of the manifestations of the Kingdom of God in history. The first answer, to which we already have referred, is a positivistic one: this claim is an expression of the daring courage of the Christian faith. But this is not sufficient for a theology which calls Jesus as the Christ the central manifestation of the divine Logos. The Christian claim must have a "logos," not an argument in addition to faith, but a logos-determined explanation of faith. Theology undertakes such an explanation by saying that questions implied in historical time and in the ambiguities of historical dynamics have been answered in none of the other assumed centers of history. The principle by which politically determined centers of history are chosen is particular and cannot lose its

particularity however much it tries imperialistically to become universal. This is even true of Judaism, in spite of the universalistic element in its prophetic self-criticism.

The prophetic and apocalyptic expectations of Judaism remain expectations and do not lead to an inner-historical fulfilment as in Christianity. Therefore no new center of history after the Exodus is seen, and the future, center is not center but end. At this point the fundamental and unbridgeable gap between Jewish and Christian interpretations of history appears. In spite of all the possible demonizations and sacramental distortions of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in actual Christianity, the message of the center which has appeared must be maintained if Christianity is not to become another preparatory religion of the Law. Islam (with the exception of Sufism) is a religion of the law and has, as such, a great function of educational progress toward maturity. But educational maturity in relation to the ultimate is ambiguous. The breakthrough of the law is most difficult in the religious life of individuals as well as of groups. Therefore Judaism from the beginning of Christianity on and Islam in a later period were the greatest barriers against the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ and as the center of history. These religions themselves, however, were not and are not able to give another center. The appearance of Mohammed as the prophet does not constitute an event in which history receives a meaning which is universally valid. Nor is a universal center of history provided by the foundation of a nation which, in the sense in which the prophets interpreted it, *is* the "elected" nation. And this is so because its universality has not yet been liberated from its particularity. It is not necessary to say much of Buddhism in this context, after our discussion of the non-historical interpretations of history. Buddha is not for the Buddhist a dividing line between before and after. He is the decisive example of an embodiment of the Spirit of Illumination which has happened and can happen at any time, but he is not seen in a historical movement which leads to him and is derived from him. This survey shows that the only historical event in which the universal center of the history of revelation and salvation can be seen-not only for daring faith but also for a rational interpretation of this faith-is the event on which Christianity is based. This event is not only the center of the history of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God; it is also the only event in which the historical dimension is fully and universally affirmed. The appearance of Jesus

as the Christ is the historical event in which history becomes aware of itself and its meaning. There is—even for an empirical and relativistic approach-no other event of which this ***could*** be asserted. But the ***actual*** assertion is and remains a matter of daring faith.

3. "KAIROS" AND "KAIROI"

We spoke of the moment at which history, in terms of a concrete situation, had matured to the point of being able to receive the breakthrough of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God. The New Testament has called this moment the "fulfilment of time," in Greek, *kairos.* This term has been frequently used since we introduced it into theological and philosophical discussion in connection with the religious socialist movement in Germany after the First World War. It was chosen to remind Christian theology of the fact that the biblical writers, not only of the Old but also of the New Testament, were aware of the self-transcending dynamics of history. And it was chosen to remind philosophy of the necessity of dealing with history, not in terms of its logical and categorical structure only, but also in terms of its dynamics. And, above all, *kairos* should express the feeling of many people in central Europe after the First World War that a moment of history had appeared which was pregnant with a new understanding of the meaning of history and life. Whether or not this feeling was empirically confirmed-in part it was, in part it was not-the concept itself retains its significance and belongs in the whole of systematic theology.

Its original meaning-the right time, the time in which something can be done-must be contrasted with *chronos,* measured time or clock time. The former is qualitative, the latter quantitative. In the English word "timing," something of the qualitative character of time is expressed, and if one would speak of Gods "timing" in his providential activity, this term would come near to the meaning of *kairos.* In ordinary Greek language, the word is used for any practical purpose in which a good occasion for some action is given. In the New Testament it is the translation of a word used by Jesus when he speaks of his time which has not yet come-the time of his suffering and death. It is used by both John the Baptist and Jesus when they announce the fulfilment of time with respect to the Kingdom of God, which is "at hand." Paul uses *kairos* when he speaks in a world-historical view of the moment of time in which God could send his Son, the moment which was

selected to become the center of history. In order to recognize this "great *kairos*," one must be able to see the "signs of the times," as Jesus says when he accuses his enemies of not seeing them. Paul, in his description of the *kairos*, looks at the situation both of paganism and of Judaism, and in the Deutero-Pauline literature the world-historical and cosmic view of the appearance of the Christ plays an increasingly important role. We have interpreted the fulfilment of time as the moment of maturity in a particular religious and cultural development-adding, however, the warning that maturity means not only the ability to receive the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God but also the greatest power to resist it. For maturity is the result of education by the law, and in some who take the law with radical seriousness, maturity becomes despair of the law, with the ensuing quest for that which breaks through the law as "good news."

The experience of a *kairos* has occurred again and again in the history of the churches, although the term was not used. Whenever the prophetic Spirit arose in the churches, the "third stage" was spoken of, the stage of the "rule of Christ" in the "one thousand-year" period. This stage was seen as immediately imminent and so became the basis for prophetic criticism of the churches in their distorted stage. When the churches rejected this criticism or accepted it in a partial, compromising way, the prophetic Spirit was forced into sectarian movements of an originally revolutionary character—until the sects became churches and the prophetic Spirit became latent. The fact that *kairos*-experiences belong to the history of the churches and that the "great *kairos*," *the* appearance of the center of history, is again and again reexperienced through relative "*kairoi*," in which the Kingdom of God manifests itself in a particular breakthrough, is decisive for our consideration. The relation of the one *kairos* to the *kairoi* is the relation of the criterion to that which stands under the criterion and the relation of the source of power to that which is nourished by the source of power. ***Kairoi*** have occurred and are occurring in all preparatory and receiving movements in the church latent and manifest. For although the prophetic Spirit is latent or even repressed over long stretches of history, it is never absent and breaks through the barriers of the law in a *kairos*.

Awareness of a *kairos* is a matter of vision. It is not an object of analysis and calculation such as could be given in psychological or sociological terms. It is not a matter of detached observation but of involved

experience. This, however, does not mean that observation and analysis are excluded; they serve to objectify the experience and to clarify and enrich the vision. But observation and analysis do not produce the experience of the *kairos*. The prophetic Spirit works creatively without any dependence on argumentation and good will. But every moment which claims to be Spiritual must be tested, and the criterion is the "great *kairos*." When the term *kairos* was used for the critical and creative situation after the First World War in central Europe, it was used not only by the religious socialist movement in obedience to the great *kairos*—at least in intention-but also by the nationalist movement, which, through the voice of naziism, attacked the great *kairos* and everything for which it stands. The latter use was a demonically distorted experience of a *kairos* and led inescapably to self-destruction. The Spirit naziism claimed was the spirit of the false prophets, prophets who spoke for an idolatrous nationalism and racialism. Against them the Cross of the Christ was and is the absolute criterion.

Two things must be said about *kairoi*: first, they can be demonically distorted, and second, they can be erroneous. And this latter characteristic is always the case to a certain extent, even in the "great *kairos*." The error lies not in the *kairos*-quality of the situation but rather in the judgment about its character in terms of physical time, space, and causality, and also in terms of human reaction and unknown elements in the historical constellation. In other words, the *kairos*-experience stands under the order of historical destiny, which makes foresight in any scientific-technical sense impossible. No date foretold in the experience of a *kairos* was ever correct; no situation envisaged as the result of a *kairos* ever came into being. But something happened to some people through the power of the Kingdom of God as it became manifest in history, and history has been changed ever since.

A last question arises as to whether there are periods in history in which no *kairos* is experienced. Obviously the Kingdom of God and the Spiritual Presence are never absent in any moment of time, and by the very nature of the historical processes, history is always self-transcendent. But the experience of the presence of the Kingdom of God as determining history is not always given. History does not move in an equal rhythm but is a dynamic force moving through cataracts and quiet stretches. History has its ups and downs, its periods of speed and of slowness, of extreme creativity and of conservative bondage to tradition.

The men of the late Old Testament period complained that there was a dearth of Spirit, and in the history of the churches this complaint has been reiterated. The Kingdom of God is always present, but the. experience of its history-shaking power is not. ***Kairoi*** are rare and the great *kairos* is unique, but together they determine the dynamics of history in its self-transcendence.

4. Historical Providence

We discussed the doctrine of providence under the title "God's directing creativity" (Part II, Sec. IIB, 5c). We have seen that providence must not be understood in a deterministic way, in the sense of a divine design decreed "before the creation of the world," which is now running its course and in which God sometimes interferes miraculously. Instead of such supranatural mechanism we applied the basic ontological polarity of freedom and destiny in the relation of God and the world and asserted that God's directing creativity works through the spontaneity of creatures and human freedom. Now that we are including the historical dimension we can say that the "new" toward which history runs, both the particularly new and the absolutely new, is the aim of historical providence. It is misleading to speak of a divine "design," even if it is not understood in a deterministic way. For the term "design" has the connotation of a preconceived pattern, including all the particulars which constitute a design. This restricts the element of contingency in the processes of history to the extent that destiny annihilates freedom. But the texture of history includes the contingent, the surprising, the underivably new. We must enlarge the symbol of divine providence to include the omnipresent element of contingency. There is an element of contingency in the spontaneity of the bird which contributes to its providential death here and now, and there is contingency in the rise of a tyrant who destroys individuals and nations under the divine providence.

The last example points to the question of historical providence and the powers of evil in history. The immensity of moral and physical evil and the overwhelming manifestation of the demonic and its tragic consequence in history have always been an existential as well as a theoretical argument against the acceptance of any belief in historical providence. And, indeed, only a theology which takes these aspects of reality into its concept of providence has a right to use this concept at all. A concept of providence which takes evil into account radically excludes

that teleological optimism which characterized the philosophy of the Enlightenment-with some important exceptions-and the progressivism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First of all, no future justice and happiness can annihilate the injustice and suffering of the past. The assumed well-being of a "last generation" does not justify the evil and the tragedy of all previous generations. And second, the progressivist-utopian assumption contradicts the elements of "freedom for good and evil" with which every individual is born. Where the power for good increases, the power for evil increases also. Historical providence includes all this and is creative through it toward the new, both in history and above history. This concept of historical providence also includes the rejection of reactionary and cynical pessimism. It provides the certainty that the negative in history (disintegration, destruction, profanization) can never prevail against the temporal and eternal aims of the historical process. This is the meaning of Paul's words about the conquest of the demonic powers by the love of God as manifest in the Christ (Romans, chapter 8). The demonic forces are not destroyed, but they cannot prevent the aim of history, which is reunion with the divine ground of being and meaning.

The way in which this happens is identical with the divine mystery and beyond calculation and description. Hegel made the mistake of claiming that he knew this way and that he was able to describe it by applying the dialectics of logic to the concrete events of recorded history. One cannot deny that his method opened his eyes for many important observations concerning the mythical and metaphysical background of different cultures. But he did not take into consideration unrecorded historical developments, the inner struggles in every great culture which limit any general interpretation, the openness of history toward the future which prevents a consistent design, the survival and rebirth of great cultures and religions which, according to the evolutionary scheme, should have lost their historical significance long ago, or the breakthrough of the Kingdom of God into the historical processes, creating the permanence of Judaism and the uniqueness of the Christian event. There have been other attempts to give a concrete design of historical providence, even if they do not speak of providence. None of them is as rich and concrete as that of Hegel, not even that of his positivistic counterpart, Comte. Most of them are more cautious, restricting themselves to certain regularities in the dynamics of history, as is illustrated, for

example, by Spengler's law of growth and decay or Toynbee's general categories, such as "withdrawal" and "return," "challenge" and "response." Such attempts give precious insights into concrete movements, but they do not provide a picture of historical providence. The Old Testament prophets were even less concrete than these men. The prophets dealt with many of the surrounding nations, not in order to show their world-historical significance, but to show the divine acting through them, in creation, judgment, destruction, and promise. The prophetic messages imply no concrete design; they imply only the universal rule of divine action in terms of historical creativity, judgment, and grace. The whole of the particular providential acts remains hidden in the mystery of the divine life.

This necessary foregoing of a concrete interpretation of world history does not exclude the understanding, from a special point of view, of particular developments in their creative sequences. We attempted this when discussing the idea of *kairos* and describing the situation of the "great *kairos*." From the Christian point of view, the providential character of Judaism is a lasting example of a particular interpretation of historical developments. The Danielic description of the sequence of world powers can be understood in this sense, and this also justifies the critical analysis of a contemporary situation in light of past developments. Awareness of a *kairos* actually includes an image of past developments and their meaning for the present. But any step beyond this must be countered by the arguments given against Hegel's grandiose attempt to "set himself on the chair of the divine providence."

B. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCHES

1. The Churches as the Representatives of the Kingdom of God in history

In our discussion of the Spiritual Community we called the churches the ambiguous embodiment of the Spiritual Community, and we spoke of the paradox that the churches reveal as well as hide the Spiritual Community. Now that we are considering the historical dimension and the symbols of its religious interpretation, we must say that the churches are the representatives of the Kingdom of God. This characterization does not contradict the other one. "Kingdom of God" embraces more than "Spiritual Community"; it includes all elements of reality, not only those, i.e., persons, who are able to enter into a Spiritual Community.

The Kingdom of God includes the Spiritual Community, but, just as the historical dimension embraces all other dimensions, the Kingdom of God embraces all realms of being under the perspective of their ultimate aim. The churches represent the Kingdom of God in this universal sense.

The representation of the Kingdom of God by the churches is as ambiguous as is the embodiment of the Spiritual Community in the churches. In both functions the churches are paradoxical : they reveal and hide. We have already indicated that the churches may even represent the demonic kingdom. But the demonic kingdom is a distortion of the divine Kingdom and it would have no being without that of which it is the distortion. The power of the representative, however much he misrepresents what he is supposed to represent, is rooted in his function of representing. The churches remain churches even if they are forces hiding the ultimate instead of revealing it. Just as man, the bearer of spirit, cannot cease to be such, so the churches, which represent the Kingdom of God in history, cannot forfeit this function even if they exercise it in contradiction to the Kingdom of God. Distorted spirit is still spirit; distorted holiness is still holiness.

Since we developed the doctrine of the church fully in the fourth part of the system, we have only to add, at this point, certain observations related to its historical dimension. As representatives of the Kingdom of God, the churches share actively both in the running of historical time toward the aim of history and in the inner-historical struggle of the Kingdom of God against the forces of demonization and profanization that fight against this aim. The Christian church in its original self-interpretation was well aware of this double task and expressed it quite conspicuously in its liturgical life. It asked the newly baptized to separate themselves publicly from the demonic forces to which they had been subjected in their pagan past. Many contemporary churches in the act of "confirmation" take the younger generation into the ranks of the fighting church. At the same time all churches in liturgy, hymns, and prayers speak of the coming of the Kingdom of God and the duty of everyone to be prepared for it. In spite of the reduction of these ideas to an individualistic idea of salvation, it is hard for hierarchical and orthodox conservativism to remove eschatological dynamics completely from the awareness of the churches. Wherever prophetic Spirit appears, it revives expectation of the coming Kingdom and awakens the churches to their task of witnessing to it and preparing for it. This causes the

ever repeated, eschatological movements in the history of the churches, which are often very powerful and often very absurd. The churches have been and always should be communities of expectation and preparation. They should point to the nature of historical time and the aim toward which history runs.

The struggle against demonization and profanization draws passion and power from this consciousness of the "end". In carrying on this struggle through all history the churches are tools of the Kingdom of God. They are able to serve as tools because they are based on the New Being in which the forces of estrangement are conquered. The demonic, according to popular symbolism, cannot stand the immediate presence of the holy if it appears in holy words, signs, names, or materials. But beyond this the churches believe that the power of the New Being, active in them, will conquer the demonic powers as well as the forces of profanization in history universally. They feel-or should feel-that they are fighting agents of the Kingdom of God, leading forces in the drive toward the fulfilment of history.

There were no manifest churches before the central manifestation of the New Being in the event on which the Christian church is based, but there was and is a latent church in all history, before and after this event: the Spiritual Community in the state of its latency. Without it and its preparatory work the churches would not be able to represent the Kingdom of God. The central manifestation of the holy itself would not have been possible without the preceding experience of the holy, both of being and of ought-to-be. Consequently, churches would not have been possible. Therefore, if we say that the churches are the leading forces in the drive toward the fulfihnent of history, we must include the latent church (not churches) in this judgment. And we may say that the Kingdom of God in history is represented by those groups and individuals in which the latent church is effective and through whose preparatory work in past and future the manifest church, and with it the Christian churches, could and can become vehicles of history's movement toward its aim. This is the first of several considerations which call the churches to humility in their function as representatives of the Kingdom of God in history.

At this point we must ask: What does it mean that the churches are not only embodiments of the Spiritual Community but also representatives of the Kingdom of God in its all-embracing character? The answer lies in the multidimensional unity of life and the consequences it has for the sacramental manifestation of the holy. To the degree in which a church emphasizes the sacramental presence of the divine, it draws the realms preceding spirit and history, the inorganic and organic universe, into itself. Strongly sacramental churches, such as the Greek Orthodox, have a profound understanding for the participation of life under all dimensions in the ultimate aim of history. The sacramental consecration of elements of all of life shows the presence of the ultimately sublime in everything and points to the unity of everything in its creative ground and its final fulfilment. It is one of the shortcomings of the churches of the "word," especially in their legalistic and exclusively personalistic form, that they exclude, along with the sacramental element, the universe outside man from consecration and fulfilment. But the Kingdom of God is not only a social symbol; it is a symbol which comprises the whole of reality. And if the churches claim to represent it, they must not reduce its meaning to one element alone.

This claim, however, raises another problem. The churches which represent the Kingdom of God in its fight against the forces of profanization and demonization are themselves subject to the ambiguities of religion and are open to profanization and demonization. How, then, can that which is itself demonized represent the fight against the demonic and that which is profanized represent the fight against the profane? The answer was given in the chapter on the paradox of the churches : they are profane and sublime, demonic and divine, in a paradoxical unity. The expression of this paradox is the prophetic criticism of the churches by the churches. Something in a church reacts against this distortion of the church as a whole. Its fight against the demonic and the profane is first directed against the demonic and the profane in the church itself. Such fights can lead to reformation movements, and it is the fact of such movements that gives the churches the right to consider themselves vehicles of the Kingdom of God, struggling in history, including the history of the churches.

2. The Kingdom of God and the History of the Churches

The history of the churches is the history in which the church is actual in time and space. The church is always actual in churches and that which is actual in churches is the one church. Therefore one can speak of the history of the church as well as of the history of the churches.

However, one should not claim that up to a certain time (A.D. 500 or 1500) there was the one church, actual in time and space, and that after this period splits occurred which produced the churches. A consequence of such an assertion is that one of the churches in one period or in all periods calls itself *the* church. The Anglican churches are inclined to elevate the first five hundred years of church history to superiority over the other periods and to elevate themselves because of their similarity to the early church to superiority over the other churches. The Roman church attributes unrestricted absoluteness to itself in all periods. The Greek Orthodox churches derive their claim to superiority from the first seven ecumenical councils with which they live in an essentially unbroken tradition. The Protestant churches could make similar claims if they considered the history between the apostolic age and the Reformation as a period in which the church was only latent (as it is in Judaism and paganism). And there are some theological and ecclesiastical radicals who, at least by implication, assert this. Each of these is erroneous, and as a consequence, demonic attitudes often result from disregard of the truth that the church, the Spiritual Community, *always* lives in the churches and that where there are churches confessing their foundation in the Christ as the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history there the church is.

If we look at church history in light of this two-way relationship between the church and the churches, we can say that church history is at no point identical with the Kingdom of God and at no point without manifestation of the Kingdom of God. With this in mind one should look at the many riddles of church history which express the paradoxical character of churches. It is impossible to avoid the question: How can the claim of the churches to be based on the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history be united with the reality of church history? In particular this means: Why are the churches overwhelmingly limited to one section of mankind, where they belong to a particular civilization, and why are they tied-up with the cultural creation of this civilization? And further: Why, for almost five hundred years, have secular movements arisen within Christian civilization which have radically changed human self-interpretation and have in many cases turned against Christianity, notably in scientific humanism and naturalistic communism? This is a question to which another must be added today:

Why do these two forms of secularism have such tremendous power in nations with a non-Christian civilization, such as those of the Far East? In spite of all Christian missionary efforts and successes in some parts of the world, the spread of these outgrowths of the Christian civilization is far more impressive. Such considerations are, of course, not arguments, but they are reactions to one of the riddles of church history. Other riddles appear in the inner development of the churches. The great splits among the churches are the most obvious, for each claims truth-even if not absolute and exclusive truth as the Roman church does. Certainly a Christian church which does not assert that Jesus is the Christ has ceased to be a manifest Christian church (though the latent church may remain in it). But if churches which acknowledge Jesus as the Christ differ in their interpretations of this event because of their exclusiveness, one must ask: How was it possible that the history of the church, embodied in the history of the churches, produced such contradictory interpretations of the one event to which they refer? One may even ask what divine providence intends by leading the churches (which are based on the central creation of historical providence) to a split which in the human view is without healing? A further question is: How could it happen that there is so much profanization of the holy in church history, in both of the senses of profanization, i.e., by ritualization and by secularization? The first distortion happens more often in Catholic, the second more often in Protestant, types of Christianity. One must ask, sometimes with prophetic wrath, how the name of Christ as the center of history can be identified with the enormous amount of superstitious devotion in some sections of the Catholic world, both Greek and Roman, in both national and social groups. One does not doubt the genuine piety of many of these people, however primitive it may be, but one does doubt that the rituals performed by them in devotional acts for the sake of the fulfilment of earthly or heavenly wishes has anything to do with the New Testament picture of the Christ. And one must add the serious question as to how it could happen that this ritualization of the Spiritual Presence was justified or at least condoned by a theology which knew better and was defended by a hierarchy which rejected the reformation of these conditions. If one turns to Protestantism, the other form of the profanization of the ultimately sublime appears-secularization. It appears under the heading of the Protestant principle, which makes of

the priest a layman, of the sacrament words, of the holy the secular. Of course, Protestantism does not intend to secularize priesthood, sacraments, and the holy, but rather it tries to show that the holy is not restricted to particular places, orders, and functions. In so doing, however, it does not escape the tendency to dissolve the holy into the secular and to pave the way for a total secularization of Christian culture, whether it is by moralism, intellectualism, or nationalism. Protestantism is less armed against secular trends on its soil than Catholicism. But Catholicism is more threatened by a direct onslaught of secularism against everything Christian, as the histories of France and Russia have shown.

The secular form of profanization of the ultimately sublime, which is now spreading all over the world, is a further great riddle of church history especially in the last centuries. It is probably the most puzzling and urgent problem of present-day church history. In any case, the question is: How can this development in the midst of Christian civilization be reconciled with the claim that Christianity has the message of that event which is the center of history? Early theology was able to absorb the secular creation of Hellenistic-Roman culture. Through the Stoic Logos-doctrine, it used the ancient civilization as material for building up the universal church, which in principle includes all positive elements in man's cultural creativity. The question then arises as to why a secular world broke away from this union in modern Western civilization. Was not and is not the power of the New Being in the Christ strong enough to subject the creations of modern autonomous culture to the Logos, who became personal presence in the center of history? This question, of course, should be a decisive motive in all contemporary theology, as it is in the present system.

The last question, and perhaps the most offensive riddle of church history, is the manifest power of the demonic in it. This is an offensive riddle in view of the fact that the highest claim of Christianity, as expressed in Paul's triumphant hymn in Romans, chapter 8, is the victory of the Christ over the demonic powers. In spite of the victory over the demonic, the presence of demonic elements in primitive and priest-condoned ritualizations of the holy can no more be denied than can that more basic demonization which occurs whenever Christian churches have confused their foundation with the buildings they erected on it and

have attributed the ultimacy of the former to the latter. There is one line of demonization in Christianity, from the first persecution of heretics immediately after the elevation of Christianity to the position of state religion of the Roman empire, through formulas of condemnation in the declarations of the great councils, through wars of extirpation against medieval sects and the principles of the inquisition, through the tyranny of Protestant orthodoxy, the fanaticism of its sects, and the stubbornness of fundamentalism, to the declaration of the infallibility of the pope. The event in which the Christ sacrificed all claims to a particular absoluteness into which the disciples wanted to force him occurred in vain for all these examples of demonization of the Christian message.

In view of this one must ask: What is the meaning of church history? One thing is obvious: one cannot call church history "sacred history" or a "history of salvation." Sacred history is in church history but is not limited to it, and sacred history is not only manifest in but also hidden by church history. Nevertheless, church history has one quality which no other history has: since it relates itself in all its periods and appearances to the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history, it has in itself the ultimate criterion against itself-the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. The presence of this criterion elevates the churches above any other religious group, not because they are "better" than others, but because they have a better criterion against themselves and, implicitly, also against other groups. The struggle of the Kingdom of God in history is, above all, this struggle within the life of its own representatives, the churches. We have related this struggle to the reformations which occur again and again in the churches. But the struggle of the Kingdom of God within them is not only manifest in the dramatic form of reformations; it also goes on in the daily life of individuals and communities. The consequences of the struggle are fragmentary and preliminary but are not devoid of actual victories of the Kingdom of God. However, neither dramatic reformations nor unnoticed transformations of individuals and communities are the ultimate test for the vocation of the churches and the uniqueness of church history. The ultimate test is the relation of the churches and their history to this foundation in the center of history, even in the most distorted stages of their development.

We said before that the history of the manifest church would not be possible without the preparatory work of the church in its latency. This

work is hidden in world history, and the second consideration of the struggle of the Kingdom of God in history deals with its effect in world history.

C. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND WORLD HISTORY

1. Church History and World History

The meaning of the term "world" in the context of this and the preceding chapters is determined by its contrast to the terms "church" and "the churches." It does not imply the belief that there is a world history which is a coherent and continuous history of the all-embracing historical group "mankind." As discussed before, there is no history of mankind in this sense. Mankind is the place on which historical developments occur. These developments are partly unconnected and partly interdependent, but they never have a united center of action. Even today, when a technical unity of mankind has been achieved, no centered action by mankind as such is being performed. And if, in an unforeseeable future, mankind as such were to perform centered actions particular histories would still be the main content of world history. Therefore we must look at these particular histories in our consideration of the relation of the Kingdom of God to world history. Whether they are connected or disconnected, the phenomena under discussion take place in each of them.

The first problem, in light of the preceding section, concerns the relation between church history and world history. The difficulty of this question stems from the fact that church history, as the representation of the Kingdom of God, is a part both of world history and of that which transcends world history and from the other fact that world history is both opposed to and dependent on church history (including the activities of the latent church which prepare for church history proper). This obviously is a highly dialectical relationship, including several mutual affirmations and negations. The following points must be considered.

The history of the churches shows all the characteristics of the history of the world, that is, all the ambiguities of social self-integration, self-creativity, and self-transcendence. The churches in these respects are the world. They would not exist without structures of power, of growth, of sublimation, and the ambiguities implied in these structures. Seen from this point of view the churches are nothing but a special section

of world history. But in spite of its truth, this point of view cannot claim exclusive validity. In the churches there is also unconquered resistance against the ambiguities of world history and fragmentary victories over them. World history is judged by the churches in their capacity as the embodiment of the Spiritual Community. The churches as representatives of the Kingdom of God judge that without which they themselves could not exist. But they do not merely judge it theoretically while accepting it practically. Their judgment consists not only in prophetic words but also in prophetic withdrawals from the ambiguous situations in which world history moves. Churches which resign from political power are more entitled to judge the ambiguities of political power than those which never saw the questionable character of their own power politics. The Catholic judgment against communism, however justified it may be in itself, necessarily evokes the suspicion that it is done as a struggle between two competing power groups, each making ultimate claims for its particular validity. Protestant criticism is not free of this deception but instead is open to the question whether the criticism is done in the name of man's ultimate concern or in the name of a particular political group which uses the religious judgment for its political-economical purposes (as in the alliance of fundamentalism and ultra-conservativism in America). The judgment of a Protestant group against communism may be equally as justified and equally as questionable as that of the Catholic group. But it can have undergone the test of its honesty, this test being that it has first brought judgment against the churches themselves, even in their basic structure; and this is a test which the Roman church would never be able to undergo. For her church history is sacred history without any restriction in principle, although, of course, restrictions may be invoked with respect to individual members and particular events.

Church history judges world history while judging itself because it is a part of world history. Church history has an impact on world history. The last two thousand years of world history in the Western part of mankind move under the transforming influence of the churches. For example, the climate of social relations is changed by the existence of the churches. This is a fact as well as a problem. It is a fact that Christianity has changed person-to-person relations in a fundamental way, wherever it has been accepted. This does not mean that the consequences

of this change have been practiced by a majority of people or even by many people. But it does mean that whoever does not practice the new way of human relations, although aware of them, is stricken by an uneasy conscience. Perhaps one can say that the main impact of church history on world history is that it produces an uneasy conscience in those who have received the impact of the New Being but follow the ways of the old being. Christian civilization is not the Kingdom of God, but it is a continuous reminder of it. Therefore one should never use changes in the state of the world as a basis for proving the validity of the Christian message. Such arguments do not convince because they miss the paradox of the churches and the ambiguities of every stage of world history. Often historical providence works through demonizations and profanizations of the churches toward the actualization of the Kingdom of God in history. Such providential developments do not excuse the churches in their distortion, but they show the independence of the Kingdom of God from its representatives in history.

Writing church history under these conditions requires a double viewpoint in the description of every particular development. First, church history must show facts and their relations with the best methods of historical research and must do so without bringing in divine providence as a particular cause in the general chain of causes and effects. The church historian is not supposed to write a history of divine interferences in world history when he writes the history of the Christian churches. Secondly, the church historian, as a theologian, must remain aware of the fact that he speaks about a historical reality in which the Spiritual Community is effective and by which the Kingdom of God is represented. The section of world history with which he deals has a providential vocation for all world history. Therefore he must not only look at world history as the large matrix within which church history moves but also from a threefold point of view: first, as that reality in which church history as the representation of the Kingdom of God has been and is being prepared; second, as that reality which is the object of the transforming activities of the Spiritual Community; and third, as that reality by which church history is judged while judging it. Church history, written in this manner, is a part of the history of the Kingdom of God, actualized in historical time. But there is another part to this history, and that is world history itself.

2. The Kingdom of God and the Ambiguities of Historical Self-integration

We have described the ambiguities of history as consequences of the ambiguities of life processes in general. The self-integration of life under the dimension of history shows the ambiguities implied in the drive toward centerdeness: the ambiguities of "empire" and of "control," the first appearing in the drive of expansion toward a universal historical unity, and the second, in the drive toward a centered unity in the particular history-bearing group. In each case the ambiguity of power lies behind the ambiguities of historical integration. So the question arises: What is the relation of the Kingdom of God to the ambiguities of power? The answer to this question is also the answer to the question of the relation of the churches to power.

The basic theological answer must be that, since God as *the* power of being is the source of all particular powers of being, power is divine in its essential nature. The symbols of power for God or the Christ or the church in biblical literature are abundant. And Spirit is the dynamic unity of power and meaning. The depreciation of power in most pacifist pronouncements is unbiblical as well as unrealistic. Power is the eternal possibility of resisting non-being. God and the Kingdom of God "exercise" this power eternally. But in the divine life-of which the divine kingdom is the creative self-manifestation-the ambiguities of power, empire, and control are conquered by unambiguous life.

Within historical existence this means that every victory of the Kingdom of God in history is a victory over the disintegrating consequences of the ambiguity of power. Since this ambiguity is based on the existential split between subject and object, its conquest involves a fragmentary reunion of subject and object. For the internal power structure of a history-bearing group, this means that the struggle of the Kingdom of God in history is actually victorious in institutions and attitudes and conquers, even if only fragmentarily, that compulsion which usually goes with power and transforms the objects of centered control into mere objects. In so far as democratization of political attitudes and institutions serves to resist the destructive implications of power, it is a manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history. But it would be completely wrong to identify democratic institutions with the Kingdom of God in history. This confusion, in the minds of many people, has ele-

vated the idea of democracy to the place of a direct religious symbol and has simply substituted it for the symbol "Kingdom of God." Those who argue against this confusion are right when they point to the fact that aristocratic hierarchical systems of power have for long periods prevented the total transformation of men into objects by the tyranny of the strongest. And beyond this they also correctly point out that by their community and personality-creating effects aristocratic systems have developed the democratic potential of leaders and masses, However, this consideration does not justify the glorification of authoritarian systems of power as expressions of the will of God. In so far as the centering and liberating elements in a structure of political power are balanced, the Kingdom of God in history has conquered fragmentarily the ambiguities of control. This is, at the same time, the criterion according to which churches must judge political actions and theories. Their judgment against power politics should not be a rejection of power but an affirmation of power and even of its compulsory element in cases where justice is violated ("justice" is used here in the sense of protection of the individual as a potential personality in a community). Therefore, although the fight against "objectivation" of the personal subject is a permanent task of the churches, to be carried out by prophetic witness and priestly initiation, it is not their function to control the political powers and force upon them particular solutions in the name of the Kingdom of God. The way in which the Kingdom of God works in history is not identical with the way the churches want to direct the course of history.

The ambiguity of self-integration of life under the historical dimensions is also effective in the trend toward the reunion of all human groups in an empire. Again it must be stated that the Kingdom of God in history does not imply the denial of power in the encounter of centered political groups, for example, nations. As in every encounter of living beings, including individual men, power of being meets power of being and decisions are made about the higher or lower degree of such power—so it is in the encounter of political power groups. And as it is in the particular group and its structure of control, so it is in the relations of particular groups to each other that decisions are made in every moment in which the significance of the particular group for the unity of the Kingdom of God in history is actualized. In these struggles it might happen that a complete political defeat becomes

the condition for the greatest significance a group gets in the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in history-as in Jewish history and, somehow analogously, in Indian and Greek history. But it also may be that a military defeat is the way in which the Kingdom of God, fighting in history, deprives national groups of a falsely claimed ultimate significance—as in the case of Hitler's Germany. Although this was done through the conquerors of naziism, their victory did not give them an unambiguous claim that they themselves were the bearers of the reunion of mankind. If they raised such a claim they would, by this very fact, show their inability to fulfil it. (See, for example, some hate propaganda in the United States and the absolutism of Communist Russia.)

For the Christian churches this means that they must try to find a way between a pacifism which overlooks or denies the necessity of power (including compulsion) in the relation of history-bearing groups and a militarism which believes in the possibility of achieving the unity of mankind through the conquest of the world by a particular historical group. The ambiguity of empire-building is fragmentarily conquered when higher political unities are created which, although they are not without the compulsory element of power, are nonetheless brought about in such a way that community between the united groups can develop and none of them is transformed into a mere object of centered control.

This basic solution of the problem of power in expansion toward larger unities should determine the attitude of the churches to empire-building and war. War is the name for the compulsory element in the creation of higher imperial unities. A "just" war is either a war in which arbitrary resistance against a higher unity has to be broken (for example, the American Civil War) or a war in which the attempt to create or maintain a higher unity by mere suppression is resisted (for example, the American Revolutionary War). There is no way of saying with more than daring faith whether a war was or is a just war in this sense. This incertitude, however, does not justify the cynical type of realism which surrenders all criteria and judgments, nor does it justify utopian idealism which believes in the possibility of removing the compulsory element of power from history. Rut the churches as representatives of the Kingdom of God can and must condemn a war which has only the appearance of a war but is in reality universal suicide. One never can start an atomic war with the claim that it is a just war, because

it cannot serve the unity which belongs to the Kingdom of God. But one must be ready to answer in kind, even with atomic weapons, if the other side uses them first. The threat itself could be a deterrent.

All this implies that the pacifist way is not the way of the Kingdom of God in history. But certainly it is the way of the churches as representatives of the Spiritual Community. They would lose their representative character if they used military or economic weapons as tools for spreading the message of the Christ. The church's valuation of pacifist movements, groups, and individuals follows from this situation. The churches must reject political pacifism but support groups and individuals who try symbolically to represent the "Peace of the Kingdom of God" by refusing to participate in the compulsory element of power struggles and who are willing to bear the unavoidable reactions by the political powers to which they belong and by which they are protected. This refers to such groups as the Quakers and to such individuals as conscientious objectors. They represent within the political group the resignation of power which is essential for the churches but cannot be made by them into a law to be imposed on the body politic.

3. The Kingdom of God and the Ambiguities of Historical Self-creativity

While the ambiguities of historical self-integration lead to problems of political power, the ambiguities of historical self-creativity lead to problems of social growth. It is the relation of the new to the old in history which gives rise to conflicts between revolution and tradition. The relations of the generations to each other is the typical example for the unavoidable element of unfairness on both sides in the process of growth. A victory of the Kingdom of God creates a unity of tradition and revolution in which the unfairness of social growth and its destructive consequences, "lies and murder," are overcome.

They are not overcome by rejection of revolution or tradition in the name of the transcendent side of the Kingdom of God. The principal antirevolutionary attitude of many Christian groups is fundamentally wrong, whether unbloody cultural or unbloody and bloody political revolutions are concerned. The chaos which follows any kind of revolution can be a creative chaos. If history-bearing groups are unwilling to take this risk and are successful in avoiding any revolution, even an unbloody one, the dynamics of history will leave them behind. And certainly they cannot claim that their historical obsolescence is a victory of the Kingdom of God. But neither can this be said of the attempt of revolutionary groups to destroy the given structures of the cultural and political life by revolutions which are intended to force the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God and its justice "on earth." It was against such ideas of a Christian revolution to end all revolutions that Paul wrote his words in Romans, chapter 13, about the duty of obedience to the authorities in power. One of the many politico-theological abuses of biblical statements is the understanding of Paul's words as justifying the anti-revolutionary bias of some churches, particularly the Lutheran. But neither these words nor any other New Testament statement deals with the methods of gaining political power. In Romans, Paul is addressing eschatological enthusiasts, not a revolutionary political movement.

The Kingdom of God is victorious over the ambiguities of historical growth only where it can be discerned that revolution is being built into tradition in such a way that, in spite of the tensions in every concrete situation and in relation to every particular problem, a creative solution in the direction of the ultimate aim of history is found.

It is the nature of democratic institutions, in relation to questions of political centeredness and of political growth, that they try to unite the truth of the two conflicting sides. The two sides here are the new and the old, represented by revolution and tradition. The possibility of removing a government by legal means is such an attempted union; and in so far as it succeeds it represents a victory of the Kingdom of God in history, because it overcomes the split. But this fact does not remove the ambiguities inherent in democratic institutions themselves. There have been other ways of uniting tradition and revolution within a political system, as is seen in federal, pre-absolutistic organizations of society. And we must not forget that democracy can produce a mass conformity which is more dangerous for the dynamic element in history and its revolutionary expression than is an openly working absolutism. The Kingdom of God is as hostile to established conformism as it is to negativistic non-conformism.

If we look at the history of the churches we find that religion, including Christianity, has stood overwhelmingly on the conservative-traditionalistic side. The great moments in the history of religion when the prophetic spirit challenged priestly doctrinal and ritual traditions are exceptions. These moments are comparatively rare (the Jewish prophets,

Jesus and the apostles, the reformers)-according to the general law that the normal growth of life is organic, slow, and without catastrophic interruptions. This law of growth is most effective in realms in which the given is vested with the taboo of sacredness and in which, consequently, every attack on the given is felt as a violation of a taboo. The history of Christianity up to the present is full of examples of this feeling and consequently of the traditionalist solution. But whenever the spiritual power produced a spiritual revolution, one stage of Christianity (and religion in general) was transformed into another. Much tradition-bound accumulation is needed before a prophetic attack on it is meaningful. This accounts for the quantitative predominance of religious tradition over religious revolution. But every revolution' in the power of the Spirit creates a new basis for priestly conservation and the growth of lasting traditions. This rhythm of the dynamics of history (which has analogies in the biological and psychological realms) is the way in which the Kingdom of God works in history.

4. The Kingdom of God and the Ambiguities of Historical Self-transcendence

The ambiguities of self-transcendence are caused by the tension between the Kingdom of God realized in history and the Kingdom as expected. Demonic consequences result from absolutizing the fragmentary fulfilment of the aim of history within history. On the other hand if the consciousness of realization is completely absent, utopianism alternates with the inescapable disappointments that are the seedbed of cynicism.

Therefore no victory of the Kingdom of God is given if either the consciousness of realized fulfilment or the expectation of fulfilment is denied. As we have seen, the symbol of the "third stage" can be used in both ways. But it also can be used in such a way as to unite the consciousness of the presence and the not-yet-presence of the Kingdom of God in history. This was the problem of the early church, and it remained a problem for all church history, as well as for the secularized forms of the self-transcending character of history. While it is comparatively easy to see the theoretical necessity of the union of the presence and not-yet-presence of the Kingdom of God, it is very difficult to keep the union in a state of living tension without letting it deteriorate into a

shallow "middle way" of ecclesiastical or secular satisfaction. In the case of either ecclesiastical or secular satisfaction, it is the influence of those social groups which are interested in the preservation of the status quo that is largely, though not exclusively, responsible for such a situation. And the reaction of the critics of the status quo leads in each case to a restatement of the "principle of hope" (Ernst Bloch) in utopian terms. In such movements of expectation, however unrealistic they may be, the fighting Kingdom of God scores a victory against the power of complacency in its different sociological and psychological forms. But of course, it is a precarious and fragmentary victory because the bearers of it tend to ignore the given, but fragmentary, presence of the Kingdom.

The implication of this for the churches as representatives of the Kingdom of God in history is that it is their task to keep alive the tension between the consciousness of presence and the expectation of the coming. The danger for the receptive (sacramental) churches is that they will emphasize the presence and neglect the expectation; and the danger for the activistic (prophetic) churches is that they will emphasize the expectation and neglect the consciousness of the presence. The most important expression of this difference is the contrast between the emphasis on individual salvation in the one group and on social transformation in the other. Therefore it is a victory of the Kingdom of God in history if a sacramental church takes the principle of social transformation into its aim or if an activistic church pronounces the Spiritual Presence under all social conditions, emphasizing the vertical line of salvation over against the horizontal line of historical activity. And since the vertical line is primarily the line from the individual to the ultimate, the question arises as to how the Kingdom of God, in its fight within history, conquers the ambiguities of the individual in his historical existence.

5. The Kingdom of God and the Ambiguities of the Individual in History

The phrase "individual in history" in this context means the individual in so far as he actively participates in the dynamics of history. Not only he who acts politically participates in history but so does everybody who in some realm of creativity contributes to the universal movement of history. And this is so in spite of the predominance of the politi-

cal in historical existence. Therefore everybody is subject to the ambiguities of this participation, the basic character of which is the ambiguity of historical sacrifice.

It is not a victory of the Kingdom of God in history if the individual tries to take himself out of participation in history in the name of the transcendent Kingdom of God. Not only is it impossible, but the attempt itself deprives the individual of full humanity by separating him from the historical group and its creative self-realization. One cannot reach the transcendent Kingdom of God without participating in the struggle of the inner-historical Kingdom of God. For the transcendent is actual within the inner-historical. Every individual is thrown into the tragic destiny of historical existence. He cannot escape it, whether he dies as an infant or as a great historical leader. Nobody's destiny is uninfluenced by historical conditions. But the more one's destiny is directly determined by one's active participation, the more historical sacrifice is demanded. Where such sacrifice is maturely accepted a victory of the Kingdom of God has occurred.

However, if there were no other answer to the question of the individual in history, man's historical existence would be meaningless and the symbol "Kingdom of God" would have no justification. This is obvious as soon as we ask the question: Sacrifice for what? A sacrifice the purpose of which bears no relation to him of whom it is demanded is not sacrifice but enforced self-annihilation. Genuine sacrifice fulfils rather than annihilates him who makes the sacrifice. Therefore historical sacrifice must be surrender to an aim in which more is achieved than just the power of a political structure or the life of a group or a progress in historical movement or the highest state of human history. Rather, it must be an aim the sacrifice for which produces also the personal fulfilment of him who surrenders himself. The personal aim, the *telos*, may be "glory," as in classical Greece; or it may be "honor," as in feudal cultures; or it may be a mystical identification with the nation, as in the era of nationalism, or with the party, as in the era of neo-collectivism; or it may be the establishment of truth, as in scientism; or the attainment of a new stage of human self-actualization, as in progressivism. It may be the glory of God, as in ethical types of religion; or union with the Ultimate One, as in mystical types of religious experience; or Eternal Life in the divine ground and aim of being, as in classical Christianity. Wherever historical sacrifice and the certainty of personal fulfilment are

united in this way, a victory of the Kingdom of God has taken place. The participation of the individual in historical existence has received an ultimate meaning.

If we now compare the manifold expressions of the ultimate meaning of the individual's participation in the dynamics of history, we may transcend them all-by the symbol of the Kingdom of God. For this symbol unites the cosmic, social, and personal elements. It unites the glory of God with the love of God and sees in the divine transcendence inexhaustible manifoldness of creative potentialities.

This consideration leads to the last section of this part and of the whole theological system: "The Kingdom of God as the End of History (or as Eternal Life)."

III

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THE END OF HISTORY

A. THE END OF HISTORY OR ETERNAL LIFE

1. The Double Meaning of "End of History" and the Permanent Presence of the End

THE FRAGMENTARY victories of the Kingdom of God in history point by their very character to the non-fragmentary side of the Kingdom of God "above" history. But even "above" history, the Kingdom of God is related to history; it is the "end" of history.

The English word "end" means both finish and aim; as such it is an excellent tool for the expression of the two sides of the Kingdom of God, the transcendent and the inner-historical. At some time in the development of the cosmos, human history, life on earth, the earth itself, and the stage of the universe to which it belongs will come to an end; they will cease to have existence in time and space. This event is a small one within the universal temporal process. But "end" also means aim, which the Latin ***finis*** and the Greek ***telos*** designate as that toward which the temporal process points as its goal. The first meaning of "end" has theological significance only because it demythologizes the dramatic-transcendent symbolism concerning the end of historical time, as given, for example, in apocalyptic literature and in some biblical ideas. But the end of the biological or physical possibility of history is not the end of history in the second sense of the word. The end of history in this sense is not a moment within the larger development of the universe (analogously called history) but transcends all moments of the temporal process; it is the end of time itself-it is eternity. The end of history in the sense of the inner aim or the ***telos*** of history is "eternal life."

The classical term for the doctrine of the "end of history" is "eschatology." The Greek word ***eschatos*** combines, as does the English "end," a spatio-temporal and a qualitative-valuating sense. It points both to the last, the most removed in space and time, and to the highest, the most

perfect, the most sublime-but sometimes also to the lowest in value, the extreme negative. These connotations are present, if the term "eschatology,)' the "doctrine of the last," or "last things," is used. Its most immediate as well as most primitive mythological connotation is "the last in the chain of all days." This day belongs to the whole of all days which constitute the temporal process; it is one of them, but after it there will be no other day. All the events that happen at that day are called "the last things" (***ta eschata***). Eschatology in this sense is the description of what will happen in the last of all days. Poetic, dramatic, and pictorial imagination has given such description in a rich way, from the apocalyptic literature to the paintings of the ultimate judgment and of heaven and hell.

But our question is: What is the theological meaning of all this imagery (which is by no means exclusively Jewish and Christian) ? In order to emphasize the qualitative connotation of ***eschatos*** I use the singular: the ***eschaton***. The theological problem of eschatology is not constituted by the many things which will happen but by the one "thing" which is not a thing but which is the symbolic expression of the relation of the temporal to the eternal. More specifically, it symbolizes the "transition" from the temporal to the eternal, and this is a metaphor similar to that of the transition from the eternal to the temporal in the doctrine of creation, from essence to existence in the doctrine of the fall, and from existence to essence in the doctrine of salvation.

The eschatological problem is given an immediate existential significance by this reduction of the ***eschata*** to the ***eschaton***. It ceases to be an imaginative matter about an indefinitely far (or near) catastrophe in time and space and becomes an expression of our standing in every moment in face of the eternal, though in a particular mode of time. The mode of future appears in all eschatological symbolism, just as the mode of past appears in all creational symbolism. God has created the world, and he ***will*** bring the world to its end. But although in both cases the relation of the temporal to the eternal is symbolized, the existential and therefore theological meaning of the symbols is different. If the mode of past is used for the relation of the temporal to the eternal, the dependence of creaturely existence is indicated; if the mode of future is used, the fulfilment of creaturely existence in the eternal is indicated.

Past and future meet in the present, and both are included in the eternal "now." But they are not swallowed by the present; they have

their independent and different functions. Theology's task is to analyze and describe these functions in unity with the total symbolism to which they belong. In this way the *eschaton* becomes a matter of present experience without losing its futuristic dimension: we stand *now* in face of the eternal, but we do so looking ahead toward the end of history and the end of all which is temporal in the eternal. This gives to the eschatological symbol its urgency and seriousness and makes it impossible for Christian preaching and theological thought to treat eschatology as an appendix to an otherwise finished system. This has never been done with respect to the end of the individual: the preaching of the memento *mori* was always important in the church, and the transcendent destiny of the individual was always a matter of high theological concern. But the question of the end of history and of the universe in the eternal was rarely asked, and if asked, not seriously answered. It is only the historical catastrophes of the first half of the twentieth century and the threat of man's self-annihilation since the middle of the century that have aroused an often passionate concern for the eschatological problem in its fullness. And it must be said here that without the consideration of the end of history and of the universe, even the problem of the eternal destiny of the individual cannot be answered.

2. The End of History as the Elevation of the Temporal into Eternity

History, we have seen, is creative of the qualitatively new and runs toward the ultimately new, which, however, it can never attain within itself because the ultimate transcends every temporal moment. The fulfilment of history lies in the permanently present end of history, which is the transcendent side of the Kingdom of God : the Eternal Life.

There are three possible answers to the question: What is the content of the life which is called eternal or what is the content of the kingdom which is ruled by God in transcendent fulfilment? The first is the refusal to answer, because it is considered an unapproachable mystery, the mystery of the divine glory. But religion has always trespassed, and theology should trespass, this restriction. For "life" and "kingdom" are concrete and particular symbols, distinguished from others that have appeared in the history of religion and in secular expressions of the ultimate. If concrete symbols are used at all, mere silence about their meaning is not permitted.

Another answer, that of popular imagination and theological supranaturalism (its conceptual ally), is quite opposite. Popular imagination and theological supranaturalism know very much about the transcendent kingdom, because they see in it an idealized reduplication of life as experienced within history and under the universal conditions of existence. It is characteristic of this reduplication that the negative characteristics of life as known to us, for example, finitude, evil, estrangement, and so on, are removed. All hopes, derived from the essential nature of man and his world, are fulfilled. In actuality the popular expressions of hope by far exceed the limits of essentially justified hope. They are projections of all the ambiguous materials of temporal life, and the desires they evoke, into the transcendent realms. Such a supranatural realm has no direct relation to history and the development of the universe. It is established in eternity, and the problem of human existence is whether and in what way individual men may enter the transcendent realm. History is valuated merely as an important element in man's earthly life; it is a finite texture within which the individual must make decisions, relevant to his own salvation but irrelevant for the Kingdom of God above history. This obviously deprives history of an ultimate meaning. History is, so to speak, the earthly realm out of which individuals are moved into the heavenly realm. Historical activity, however seriously and spiritually performed, does not contribute to the heavenly kingdom. Even the churches are institutions of salvation, that is, the salvation of individuals, but not actualizations of the New Being.

There is a third answer to the question of the relation of history to Eternal Life. It corresponds with the dynamic-creative interpretation of the symbol "Kingdom of God" as well as with the anti-supranaturalistic or paradoxical understanding of the relation of the temporal to the eternal. Its basic assertion is that the ever present end of history elevates the positive content of history into eternity at the same time that it excludes the negative from participation in it. Therefore nothing which has been created in history is lost, but it is liberated from the negative element with which it is entangled within existence. The positive becomes manifest as unambiguously positive and the negative becomes manifest as unambiguously negative in the elevation of history to eternity. Eternal Life, then, includes the positive content of history, liberated from its negative distortions and fulfilled in its potentialities. History in this statement is primarily human history. But since there is a his-

torical dimension in all realms of life, they are all included in the statement, though to different degrees. Life universal moves toward an end and is elevated into eternal life, its ultimate and ever present end.

In fully symbolic language one could say that life in the whole of creation and in a special way in human history contributes in every moment of time to the Kingdom of God and its eternal life. What happens in time and space, in the smallest particle of matter as well as in the greatest personality, is significant for the eternal life. And since eternal life is participation in the divine life, every finite happening is significant for God.

Creation is creation for the end: in the "ground," the "aim" is present. But between beginning and end, the new is created. For the divine ground of being we must say both that the created is ***not*** new, for it is potentially rooted in the ground, and that it ***is*** new, for its actuality is based on freedom in unity with destiny, and freedom is the precondition of all newness in existence. The necessarily consequent is not new; it is merely a transformation of the old. (But even the term "transformation" points to an element of newness; total determination would make even transformation impossible.)

3. The End of History as the Exposure of the Negative as Negative or the "Ultimate Judgment"

The elevation of the positive in existence into eternal life implies liberation of the positive from its ambiguous mixture with the negative, which characterizes life under the conditions of existence. The history of religion is full of symbols for this idea, such as the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic symbol of a final judgment or the Hindu and Buddhist symbol of reincarnation under the law of karma. In all these cases the judgment is not restricted to individuals but refers to the universe. The Greek and Persian symbol of the total burning of one cosmos and the birth of another expresses the universal character of the negation of the negative in the end. The Greek word for judging (*krinein*, 'to separate') points most adequately to the nature of the universal judgment: it is an act of separating the good from the bad, the true from the false, the accepted ones from the rejected ones.

In the light of our understanding of the end of history as ever present and as the permanent elevation of history into eternity the symbol of ultimate judgment receives the following meaning: here and now, in

the permanent transition of the temporal to the eternal, the negative is defeated in its claim to be positive, a claim it supports by using the positive and mixing ambiguously with it, In this way it produces the appearance of being positive itself (for example, illness, death, a lie, destructiveness, murder, and evil in general). The appearance of evil as positive vanishes in the face of the eternal. In this sense God in his eternal life is called a "burning fire," burning that which pretends to be positive but is not. Nothing positive is being burned. No fire of judgment could do it, not even the fire of the divine wrath. For God cannot deny himself, and everything positive is an expression of being-itself. And since there is nothing merely negative (the negative lives from the positive it distorts), nothing that has being can be ultimately annihilated. Nothing that is, in so far as it is, can be excluded from eternity; but it can be excluded in so far as it is mixed with non-being and not yet liberated from it.

The question as to what this means for the individual person will be discussed later. At this point one naturally asks how the transition from the temporal to the eternal takes place? What happens to things and beings which are non-human in the transition from time to eternity? How, in this transition, is the negative exposed in its negativity and left to annihilation? What exactly is negated if nothing positive can be negated? Such questions can only be answered in the context of a whole system as implications of main concepts (being, non-being, essence, existence, finitude, estrangement, ambiguity, and so on) as well as of the central religious symbols (creation, the Fall, the demonic, salvation, agape, Kingdom of God, and so on). Otherwise, the answers would be mere opinions, flashes of insight, or mere poetry (with its revealing but non-conceptual power). In the context of the present system the following answers are possible: The transition from the temporal to the eternal, the "end" of the temporal, is not a temporal event-just as the creation is not a temporal event. Time is the form of the created finite (thus being created with it), and eternity is the inner aim, the ***telos*** of the created finite, permanently elevating the finite into itself. With a bold metaphor one could say that the temporal, in a continuous process, becomes "eternal memory." But ***eternal*** memory is living retention of the remembered thing. It is together past, present, and future in a transcendent unity of the three modes of time. More cannot be said-except in poetic imagery. But the little which can be said-mostly in negative

terms-has an important consequence for our understanding of time and eternity: The eternal is not a future state of things. It is always present, not only in man (who is aware of it), but also in everything that has being within the whole of being. And with respect to time we can say that its dynamics move not only forward but also upward and that the two movements are united in a curve which moves both forward and upward.

The second question asks for an explanation of the main assertion of this chapter-that in the transition from the temporal to the eternal the negative is negated. If we apply again the metaphor of "eternal memory," we can say that the negative is not an object of eternal memory in the sense of living retention. Neither is it forgotten, for forgetting presupposes at least a moment of remembering. The negative is not remembered at all. It is acknowledged for what it is, non-being. Nevertheless it is not without effect on that which is eternally remembered. It is present in the eternal memory as that which is conquered and thrown out into its naked nothingness (for example, a lie). This is the condemning side of what is symbolically called ultimate judgment. Again one must confess that beyond these predominantly negative statements nothing can be said about the judgment of the universe, except in poetic language. But something must be said about the saving side of the ultimate judgment. The statement that the positive in the universe is the object of eternal memory requires an explanation of the term "positive" in this context. Its immediate meaning is that it has true reality-as the created essence of a thing. This leads to the further question as to how the "positive" is related to essential being and, by contrast, to existential being. A first and somewhat Platonizing answer is that being, elevated into eternity, involves a return to what a thing essentially is; this is what Schelling has called "essentialization." This formulation can mean return to the state of mere essentiality or potentiality, including the removal of everything that is real under the conditions of existence. Such an understanding of essentialization would make it into a concept which is more adequate to the India-born religions than to any of the Israel-born ones. The whole world process would not produce anything new. It would have the character of falling away from and returning to essential being. But the term "essentialization" can also mean that the new which has been actualized in time and space adds something to essential being, uniting it with the positive which is created within existence, thus

producing the ultimately new, the "New Being," not fragmentarily as in temporal life, but wholly as a contribution to the Kingdom of God in its fulfilment. Such thought, however metaphorically and inadequately expressed, gives an infinite weight to every decision and creation in time and space and confirms the seriousness of what is meant in the symbol "ultimate judgment." Participation in the eternal life depends on a creative synthesis of a being's essential nature with what it has made of it in its temporal existence. In so far as the negative has maintained possession of it, it is exposed in its negativity and excluded from eternal memory. Whereas, in so far as the essential has conquered existential distortion its standing is higher in eternal life.

4. The End of History and the Final Conquest of the Ambiguities of Life

With the exposure and the exclusion of the negative in the ultimate judgment the ambiguities of life are conquered, not only fragmentarily as in the inner-historical victories of the Kingdom of God, but totally. Because the state of final perfection is the norm of fragmentary perfection and the criterion of the ambiguities of life, it is necessary to point to it, though in the negative metaphorical language which must be used in all attempts to conceptualize eschatological symbols.

With regard to the three polarities of being and the corresponding three functions of life we must ask for the meaning of self-integration, self-creativity and self-transcendence in the Eternal Life. Since Eternal Life is identical with the Kingdom of God in its fulfilment, it is the non-fragmentary, total, and complete conquest of the ambiguities of life—and this under all dimensions of life, or, to use another metaphor, in all degrees of being.

The first question then is: What do we mean by unambiguous self-integration as a characteristic of Eternal Life? The answer points to the first pair of polar elements in the structure of being: individualization and participation. In Eternal Life the two poles are in perfect balance. They are united in that which transcends their polar contrast: the divine centeredness, which includes the universe of powers of being without annihilating them into a dead identity. One can still speak of their self-integration, indicating that even within the centered unity of the divine life they have not lost self-relatedness. Eternal Life is still life, and the universal centeredness does not dissolve the individual centers. This is

the first answer to the question of the meaning of Eternal Life, an answer which also gives the first condition for characterizing the fulfilled Kingdom of God as the unambiguous and non-fragmentary life of love.

The second question is: What is the meaning of unambiguous self-creativity as a characteristic of Eternal Life? The answer points to the second pair of polar elements in the structure of being: dynamics and form. In Eternal Life these two poles are also in perfect balance. They are united in that which transcends their polar contrast: the divine creativity, which includes the finite creativity without making it into a technical tool of itself. The self in self-creativity is preserved in the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

The third question is: What is the meaning of unambiguous self-transcendence as a characteristic of Eternal Life? The answer points to the third pair of polar elements in the structure of being: freedom and destiny. In Eternal Life there is also perfect balance between these two poles. They are united in that which transcends their polar contrast-in divine freedom, which is identical with divine destiny. In the power of its freedom every finite being drives beyond itself toward fulfilment of its destiny in the ultimate unity of freedom and destiny.

The preceding metaphoric "descriptions" of Eternal Life referred to the three functions of life in all its dimensions, including that of the human spirit. However, it is also important to deal separately with the three functions of the spirit in their relation to Eternal Life.

The basic statement to be made is that in the end of history the three functions-morality, culture, and religion-come to their end as special functions. Eternal Life is the end of morality. For there is no ought-to-be in it which, at the same time, is not. There is no law where there is essentialization, because what the law demands is nothing but the essence, creatively enriched in existence. We assert the same when we call Eternal Life the life of universal and perfect love. For love does what law demands before it is demanded. To use another terminology, we can say that in Eternal Life the center of the individual person rests in the all-uniting divine center and through it is in communion with all other personal centers. Therefore the demand to acknowledge them as persons and to unite with them as estranged parts of the universal unity is not needed. Eternal Life is the end of morality because what morality demanded is fulfilled in it.

And Eternal Life is the end of culture. Culture was defined as the self-creativity of life under the dimension of the spirit, and it was divided into *theoria,* in which reality is received, and *praxis,* in which reality is shaped. We have already shown the limited validity of this division in connection with the doctrine of the Spiritual Presence. In Eternal Life there is no truth which is not also "done," in the sense of the Fourth Gospel, and there is no aesthetic expression which is not also a reality. Beyond this, culture as spiritual creativity becomes, at the same time, Spiritual creativity. The human spirit's creativity in Eternal Life is revelation by the divine Spirit-as it is fragmentarily already in the Spiritual Community. Man's creativity and divine self-manifestation are one in the fulfilled Kingdom of God. In so far as culture is an independent human enterprise, it comes to an end in the end of history. It becomes eternal divine self-manifestation through the finite bearers of the Spirit.

Finally, the end of history is the end of religion. In biblical terminology this is expressed in the description of the "Heavenly Jerusalem" as a city in which there is no temple because God lives there. Religion is the consequence of the estrangement of man from the ground of his being and of his attempts to return to it. This return has taken place in Eternal Life, and God is everything in and to everything. The gap between the secular and the religious is overcome. In Eternal Life there is no religion.

But now the question arises : How can the fulfilment of the eternal be united with the element of negation without which no life is thinkable? The question can best be answered by considering a concept which belongs to the emotional sphere but which contains the problem of Eternal Life in its relation to being and non-being-the concept of blessedness as applied to the Divine Life.

5. Eternal Blessedness as the Eternal Conquest of the Negative

The concept "blessed" (*makarios, beatus*) can be applied in a fragmentary way to those who are grasped by the divine Spirit. The word designates a state of mind in which Spiritual Presence produces a feeling of fulfilment which cannot be disturbed by negativities in other dimensions. Neither bodily nor psychological suffering can destroy the "transcendent happiness" of being blessed. In finite beings this positive experience is always united with the awareness of its contrary, the state of unhappiness, despair, condemnation. This "negation of the negative" gives blessedness its paradoxical character. But there is a question as to

whether this is also true of eternal blessedness. Without an element of negativity neither life nor blessedness can be imagined.

The term "eternal blessedness" is applied both to the Divine Life and to the life of those who participate in it. In the case of both God and man we must ask what the negativity is which makes possible a life of eternal blessedness. The problem has been seriously raised by the philosophers of becoming. If one speaks of the "becoming" of God, one has introduced the negative element; one raises the issue of the negation of what has been left behind in every moment of becoming. Life is most emphatically attributed to God in such a doctrine of God. But it is difficult on this basis to interpret the idea of eternal blessedness in God, for total fulfilment is implied in the concept of eternal blessedness. Fragmentary fulfilment can create temporal but not eternal blessedness; and every limitation of divine blessedness would be a restriction of the divinity of the divine. The philosophers of becoming can refer to biblical statements in which repentance, toil, patience, suffering, and sacrifice are attributed to God. Such expressions of the vision of a living God have led to ideas which were rejected by the church, the so-called patripassionist doctrine that God as father suffered in the suffering of the Christ. But such an assertion contradicts too obviously the fundamental theological doctrine of God's impassibility. In the judgment of the church it would have brought God down to the level of the passionate and suffering gods of Greek mythology. But the rejection of patripassionism does not solve the question of the negative in the blessedness of the Divine Life. Present-day theology tries-with very few exceptions—to avoid the problem altogether, either by ignoring it or by calling it an inscrutable divine mystery. But such escape is impossible in view of the question's significance for the most existential problem of theodicy. People in "boundary-situations" will not accept the escape into the divine mystery on this point if it is not used on other points, for example, in the teaching of the church about God's almighty power and his ever present love, teaching which demands interpretation in view of the daily experience of the negativity of existence. If theology refuses to answer such existential questions, it has neglected its task.

Theology must take the problems of the philosophers of becoming seriously. It must try to combine the doctrine of eternal blessedness with the negative element without which life is not possible and blessedness

ceases to be blessed. It is the nature of blessedness itself that requires a negative element in the eternity of the Divine Life.

This leads to the fundamental assertion: The Divine Life is the eternal conquest of the negative; this is its blessedness. Eternal blessedness is not a state of immovable perfection—the philosophers of becoming are right in rejecting such a concept. But the Divine Life is blessedness through fight and victory. If we ask how blessedness can be united with the risk and uncertainty which belong to the nature of serious fight, we may remember what was said about the seriousness of the temptations of the Christ. In this discussion the seriousness of the temptation and the certainty of the communion with God were described as compatible. This can be an analogy-and more than an analogy-of the eternal identity of God with himself, which does not contradict his going out from himself into the negativities of existence and the ambiguities of life. He does not lose his identity in his self-alteration; this is the basis for the dynamic idea of eternal blessedness.

Eternal blessedness is also attributed to those who participate in the Divine Life, not to man only, but to everything that is. The symbol of "a new heaven and a new earth" indicates the universality of the blessedness of the fulfilled Kingdom of God. The next chapter will discuss the relation of eternity to individual persons. At this point we must ask: What does the symbol of eternal blessedness mean for the universe besides man? There are indications in biblical literature of the idea that nature participates in showing and praising the divine glory; but there are other passages in which the animals are excluded from the divine care (Paul) and man's misery is seen in the fact that he is not better off than flowers and animals (Job). In the first group of expressions, nature somehow participates (symbolically expressed in the visions of the Apocalypse) in the divine blessedness, whereas in the second group, nature *and* man are excluded from eternity (most parts of the Old Testament). In line with what we have said before about "essentialization," a possible solution would be that all things-since they are good by creation-participate in the Divine Life according to their essence (compare this with the doctrine that the essences are eternal ideas in the divine mind, as in the later Platonic school).The conflicts and sufferings of nature under the conditions of existence and its longing for salvation, of which Paul speaks (Romans, chapter 8), serve the enrichment of essential being after

the negation of the negative in everything that has being. Such considerations, of course, are almost poetic-symbolic and should not be treated as if they were descriptions of objects or events in time and space.

B. THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON AND HIS ETERNAL DESTINY

1. Universal and Individual Fulfilment

Several statements of the preceding five sections have referred to the Kingdom of God "above" history or to Eternal Life in general. AH dimensions of life were included in the consideration of the ultimate *telos* of becoming. Now we must single out the dimension of the spirit and the individual persons who are its bearers. Individual persons always were in the center of eschatological imagination and thought, not only because we ourselves as human beings are persons, but also because the destiny of the person is determined by himself in a way in which it is not under the dimensions of life other than that of spirit. Man as finite freedom has a relation to Eternal Life which is different from that of beings under the predominance of necessity. Awareness of the element of "ought to be," and with it awareness of responsibility, guilt, despair, and hope, characterizes man's relation to the eternal. Everything temporal has a "teleological" relation to the eternal, but man alone is aware of it; and this awareness gives him the freedom to turn against it. The Christian assertion of the tragic universality of estrangement implies that every human being turns against his *telos*, against Eternal Life, at the same time that he aspires to it. This makes the concept of "essentialization" profoundly dialectical. The *telos* of man as an individual is determined by the decisions he makes in existence on the basis of the potentialities given to him by destiny. He can waste his potentialities, though not completely, and he can fulfil them, though not totally. Thus, the symbol of ultimate judgment receives a particular seriousness. The exposure of the negative as negative in a person may not leave much positive for Eternal Life. It can be a reduction to smallness; but it also can be an elevation to greatness. It can mean an extreme poverty with respect to fulfilled potentialities, but it can also mean an extreme richness of them. Small and great, poor and rich, are relative valuations. Because they are relative they contradict the absolute judgments that appear in religious symbolism, such as "losing or winning," "being lost or being saved," "hell or heaven," "eternal death" or "eternal life," The

idea of degrees of essentialization undercuts the absoluteness of these symbols and concepts.

Absolute judgments over finite beings or happenings are impossible, because they make the finite infinite. This is the truth in theological universalism and the doctrine of the "restitution of everything" in eternity. But the word "restitution" is inadequate: essentialization can be both more and less than restitution. The church rejected Origen's doctrine of the *apokatastasis panton* (the restitution of everything) because this expectation seemed to remove the seriousness implied in such absolute threats and hopes as "being lost" or "being saved." A solution of this conflict must combine the absolute seriousness of the threat to "lose one's life" with the relativity of finite existence. The conceptual symbol of "essentialization" is capable of fulfilling this postulate, for it emphasizes the despair of having wasted one's potentialities yet also assures the elevation of the positive within existence (even in the most unfulfilled life) into eternity.

This solution rejects the mechanistic idea of a necessary salvation without falling into the contradictions of the traditional solution which described the eternal destiny of the individual either as being everlastingly condemned or as being everlastingly saved. The most questionable form of this idea, the doctrine of double predestination, has demonic implications: it introduces an eternal split into God himself. But even without predestination the doctrine of an absolutely opposite eternal destiny of individuals cannot be defended in view of both the self-manifestation of God and the nature of man.

The background of the imagery of a twofold eternal destiny lies in the radical separation of person from person and of the personal from the subpersonal as a consequence of biblical personalism. When individualization under the dimension of the spirit conquers participation, strongly centered selves are created who, through ascetic self-control and acceptance of sole responsibility for their eternal destiny, separate themselves from the creaturely unity of creation. But Christianity, in spite of its personalistic emphasis, also has ideas of universal participation in the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. These ideas received more emphasis the less Christianity was indirectly influenced by the strong dualistic tendencies in the later period of Hellenism.

From the point of view of the divine self-manifestation the doctrine of twofold eternal destiny contradicts the idea of God's permanent cre-

ation of the finite as something "very good" (Genesis, chapter 1). If being as being is good-the great anti-dualistic statement of Augustine—nothing that is can become completely evil. If something is, if it has being, it is included in the creative divine love. The doctrine of the unity of everything in divine love and in the Kingdom of God deprives the symbol of hell of its character as "eternal damnation." This doctrine does not take away the seriousness of the condemning side of the divine judgment, the despair in which the exposure of the negative is experienced. But it does take away the absurdities of a literal understanding of hell and heaven and also refuses to permit the confusion of eternal destiny with an everlasting state of pain or pleasure.

From the point of view of human nature, the doctrine of a twofold eternal destiny contradicts the fact that no human being is unambiguously on one or the other side of divine judgment. Even the saint remains a sinner and needs forgiveness and even the sinner is a saint in so far as he stands under divine forgiveness. If the saint receives forgiveness, his reception of it remains ambiguous. If the sinner rejects forgiveness, his rejection of it remains ambiguous. The Spiritual Presence is also effective in pushing us into the experience of despair. The qualitative contrast between the good and evil ones, as it appears in the symbolic language of both Testaments, means the contrasting quality of good and evil as such (for example, truth and lie, compassion and cruelty, union with God and separation from God). But this qualitative contrast does not describe the thoroughly good or thoroughly evil character of individual persons. The doctrine of the ambiguity of all human goodness and of the dependence of salvation on the divine grace alone either leads us back to the doctrine of double predestination or leads us forward to the doctrine of universal essentialization.

There is another side to human nature which contradicts the idea of the isolation of person from person and of the personal from the sub-personal that is presupposed in the doctrine of twofold eternal destiny. The total being, including the conscious and unconscious sides of every individual, is largely determined by the social conditions which he is influenced by upon entering existence. The individual grows only in interdependence with social situations. And the functions of man's spirit, according to the mutual immanence of all dimensions of being, are in structural unity with the physical and biological factors of life. Freedom and destiny in every individual are united in such a way that it is as

impossible to separate one from the other as it is, consequently, to separate the eternal destiny of any individual from the destiny of the whole race and of being in all its manifestations.

This finally answers the question of the meaning of distorted forms of life-forms which, because of physical, biological, psychological, or sociological conditions, are unable to reach a fulfilment of their essential *telos* even to a small degree, as in the case of premature destruction, the death of infants, biological and psychological disease, morally and Spiritually destructive environments. From the point of view which assumes separate individual destinies, there is no answer at all. The question and the answer are possible only if one understands essentialization or elevation of the positive into Eternal Life as a matter of universal participation: in the essence of the least actualized individual, the essences of other individuals and, indirectly, of all beings are present. Whoever condemns anyone to eternal death condemns himself, because his essence and that of the other cannot be absolutely separated. And he who is estranged from his own essential being and experiences the despair of total self-rejection must be told that his essence participates in the essences of all those who have reached a high degree of fulfilment and that through this participation his being is eternally affirmed. This idea of the essentialization of the individual in unity with all beings makes the concept of vicarious fulfilment understandable. It also gives a new content to the concept of Spiritual Community; and finally, it gives a basis for the view that such groups as nations and churches participate in their essential being in the unity of the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

2. Immortality as Symbol and as Concept

For the individual participation in Eternal Life, Christianity uses the two terms "immortality" and "resurrection" (besides "Eternal Life" itself). Of the two, only "resurrection" is biblical. But "immortality," in the sense of the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul, was used very early in Christian theology, and in large sections of Protestant thought, it has replaced the symbol of resurrection. In some Protestant countries it has become the last remnant of the whole Christian message, but it has done so in the non-Christian pseudo-Platonic form of a continuation of the temporal life of an individual after death without a body. Where the symbol of immortality is used to express this popular

superstitution, it must be radically rejected by Christianity; for participation in eternity is not "life hereafter". Neither is it a natural quality of the human soul. It is rather the creative act of God, who lets the temporal separate itself from and return to the eternal. It is understandable that Christian theologians who are aware of these difficulties reject the term "immortality" altogether, not only in its form in popular superstitions but also in its genuine Platonic form. But this is not justified. If the term is used in the way in which I Timothy 6:16 applies it to God, it expresses negatively what the term eternity expresses positively: it does not mean a continuation of temporal life after death, but it means a quality which transcends temporality.

Immortality in this sense does not contradict the symbol of Eternal Life. But the term is traditionally used in the phrase "immortality of the soul." This produces a further problem for its use in Christian thought: it introduces a dualism between soul and body, contradicting the Christian concept of Spirit, which includes all dimensions of being; and it is incompatible with the symbol "resurrection of the body." But here again we should ask whether the meaning of the term cannot be understood in a non-dualistic way. Aristotle has shown this possibility in his ontology of form and matter. If the soul is the form of the life process, its immortality includes all elements which constitute this process, though it includes them as essences. The meaning of the "immortality of the soul" then would involve the power of essentialization. And in Plato's late doctrine of the world-soul, the idea of immortality in the sense of universal essentialization seems to be implied.

In most of the discussions of immortality the question of evidence preceded in interest the question of content. The question was asked whether there is any evidence for belief in the immortality of the soul, and it was answered with the Platonist arguments that were never satisfactory but were never given up. This situation (which is analogous to that concerning the arguments for the existence of God) is rooted in the transformation of "immortality" from a symbol to a concept. As a symbol "immortality" has been used of the gods and of God, expressing the experience of ultimacy in being and meaning. As such it has the certainty of man's immediate awareness that he is finite and that he transcends finitude exactly in this awareness. The "immortal gods" are symbolic-mythical representations of that infinity from which men as mortals are excluded but which they are able to receive from the gods.

This structure remains valid even after the prophetic demythologization of the sphere of the gods into the reality of the One who is ground and aim of everything that is. He can "clothe our mortality with immortality" (I Corinthians 15 :33). Our finitude does not cease to be finitude, but it is "taken into" the infinite, the eternal.

The cognitive situation is totally changed when the conceptual use of the term immortality replaces its symbolic use. In this moment immortality becomes characteristic of the part of man called soul, and the question of the experiential ground for certainty of eternal life is changed into an inquiry into the nature of the soul as a particular object. No doubt Plato's dialogues are largely responsible for this development. But it must be emphasized that in Plato himself there are breaks against the objectifying ("reifying") understanding of immortality : his arguments are arguments "ad hominem" (in present terminology, existential arguments); they can be grasped only by those who participate in the good and the beautiful and the true and who are aware of their transtemporal validity. As arguments in the objective sense, "you cannot be altogether confident of them" (Plato's *Phaidon*). Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic idea of immortality could be understood as an attempt to resist its inescapable primitivization and to take Plato's thought into his own symbol of highest fulfilment, which is man's participation in the eternal self-intuition of the divine *nous*. From here the way is not long to Plotinus' mystical union of the one with the One in the experience of ecstasy. Christian theology could not go this way because of its emphasis on the individual person and his eternal destiny. Instead, Christian theology returned to Plato, using his concept of the immortal soul as the basis for the whole eschatological imagery, unafraid of the unavoidable primitivistic and superstitious consequences. The natural theology of both Catholics and Protestants used old and new arguments for the immortality of the soul, and both demanded acceptance of this concept in the name of faith. They gave official standing to the confusion of symbol and concept, thus provoking the theoretical reaction of the philosophical critics of metaphysical psychology, of whom Locke, Hume, and Kant are examples. Christian theology should not consider their criticism as an attack on the ***symbol*** "immortality" but on the concept of a naturally immortal substance, the soul. If understood in this way, the certainty of Eternal Life has been liberated from its dangerous connection with the concept of an immortal soul.

In view of this situation it would be wise in teaching and preaching to use the term "Eternal Life" and to speak of "immortality" only if superstitious connotations can be prevented.

3. THE MEANING OF RESURRECTION.

Man's participation in eternal life beyond death is more adequately expressed by the highly symbolic phrase "resurrection of the body." The churches recognized the latter as a particularly Christian expression. The phrase in the Apostles' Creed is "resurrection of the flesh," that is, of that which characterizes the body in contrast to the spirit, the body in its perishable character. But the phrase is so misleading that in any liturgical form it should be replaced by "resurrection of the body" and interpreted by the Pauline symbol "Spiritual body." Of course, this phrase also requires interpretation; it should be understood as a double negation, expressed by a paradoxical combination of words. First, it negates the "nakedness" of a merely spiritual existence, thus contradicting the assertion in the dualistic traditions of the East as well as in the Platonic and Neo-Platonic schools. The term "body" stands against these traditions as a token of the prophetic faith in the goodness of creation. The antidualistic bias of the Old Testament is powerfully expressed in the idea that the body belongs to Eternal Life. But Paul realizes—better than the Apostles' Creed-the difficulty of this symbol, the danger that it may be understood in the sense of a participation of "flesh and blood" in the Kingdom of God: He insists that they cannot "inherit" it. And against this "materialistic" danger he calls the resurrection body "Spiritual." Spirit-this central concept of Paul's theology-is God present to man's spirit, invading it, transforming and elevating it beyond itself. A Spiritual body then is a body which expresses the Spiritually transformed total personality of man. One can speak about the symbol "Spiritual body" up to this point; concepts cannot go beyond this, but poetic and artistic imagination can. And even the limited statement which is made here points more to the positive implication of the double negation than it does to something directly positive. If we forget this highly symbolic character of the symbol of resurrection, a host of absurdities appears and conceals the true and immensely significant meaning of resurrection.

Resurrection says mainly that the Kingdom of God includes all dimensions of being. The whole personality participates in Eternal Life. If we use the term "essentialization," we can say that man's psychological, spiritual, and social being is implied in his bodily being-and this in unity with the essences of everything else that has being.

The Christian emphasis on the "body of resurrection" also includes a strong affirmation of the eternal significance of the individual person's uniqueness. The individuality of a person is expressed in every cell of his body, especially in his face. The art of portrait-painting continually calls to mind the astonishing fact that molecules and cells can express the functions and movements of man's spirit which are determined by his personal center and determine it in mutual dependence. Beyond this, portraits, if they are authentic works of art, mirror what we have called "essentialization" in artistic anticipation. It is not one particular moment in the life process of an individual that they reproduce but a condensation of all these moments in an image of what this individual essentially has become on the basis of his potentialities and through the experiences and decisions of his life process. This idea can explain the Greek-Orthodox doctrine of icons, the essentialized portraits of the Christ, the apostles, and saints, and in particular the idea that the icons participate mystically in the heavenly reality of those whom they represent. The history-minded Western churches have lost this doctrine, and icons have been replaced by religious pictures which are supposed to remind one of particular traits in the temporal existence of holy persons. This was still done in the line of the older tradition, but the classical forms of expression were slowly replaced by idealistic ones, which were later replaced by naturalistic forms lacking religious transparency. This development in visual arts can be helpful for an understanding of individual essentialization in all dimensions of human nature.

The question most often raised with respect to the eternal destiny of the individual has to do with the presence of the self-conscious self in Eternal Life. The only meaningful answer here, as in the assertion of a Spiritual body, is in the form of two negative statements. The first is that the self-conscious self cannot be excluded from Eternal Life. Since Eternal Life is life and not undifferentiated identity and since the Kingdom of God is the universal actualization of love, the element of individualization cannot be eliminated or the element of participation

would also disappear. There is no participation if there are no individual centers to participate; the two poles condition each other. And where there are individual centers of participation, the subject-object structure of existence is the condition of consciousness and—if there is a personal subject-of self-consciousness. This leads to the statement that the centered, self-conscious self cannot be excluded from Eternal Life. The dimension of the spirit which in all its functions presupposes self-consciousness cannot be denied eternal fulfilment, just as eternal fulfilment cannot be denied to the biological dimension and therefore to the body. More than this cannot be said.

But now the opposite negation must be expressed with equal strength: As the participation of bodily being in Eternal Life is not the endless continuation of a constellation of old or new physical particles, so the participation of the centered self is not the endless continuation of a particular stream of consciousness in memory and anticipation. Self-consciousness, in our experience, depends on temporal changes both of the perceiving subject and of the perceived object in the process of self-awareness. But eternity transcends temporality and with it the experienced character of self-consciousness. Without time and change in time, subject and object would merge into each other; the same would perceive the same indefinitely. It would be similar to a state of stupor in which the perceiving subject was unable to reflect on its perceiving and therefore lacked self-consciousness. These psychological analogies are not intended to describe self-consciousness in Eternal Life, but they are supposed to support the second negative statement, which is that the self-conscious self in Eternal Life is not what it is in temporal life (which would include the ambiguities of objectivation) . Everything said which exceeds these two negative statements is not theological conceptualization but poetic imagination.

The symbol of resurrection is often used in a more general sense to express the certainty of Eternal Life rising out of the death of temporal life. In this sense it is a symbolic way of expressing the central theological concept of the New Being. As the New Being is not another being, but the transformation of the old being, so resurrection is not the creation of another reality over against the old reality but is the transformation of the old reality, arising out of its death. In this sense the term "resurrection" (without particular reference to the resurrection of the body) has become a universal symbol for the eschatological hope.

4. Eternal Life and Eternal Death

In biblical symbolism the two main concepts which express the negative judgment against a being in relation to its eternal destiny are everlasting punishment and eternal death. The second can be considered as a demythologization of the first, as Eternal Life is a demythologization of everlasting happiness. The theological significance of the second is due to the fact that it takes into consideration the transtemporal character of man's eternal destiny. It also needs interpretation, for it combines two concepts which, if taken at their face value, are completely contradictory-eternity and death. This combination of words means death "away" from eternity, a failure to reach eternity, being left to the transitoriness of temporality. As such eternal death is a personal threat against everyone who is bound to temporality and unable to transcend it. For him Eternal Life is a meaningless symbol because he is lacking in anticipatory experience of the eternal. In the symbolism of resurrection, one could say that he dies but does not participate in resurrection.

However, this contradicts the truth that everything as created is rooted in the eternal ground of being. In this respect non-being cannot prevail against it. Therefore, the question arises as to how the two considerations can be united: How can we reconcile the seriousness of the threat of death "away" from eternal life with the truth that everything comes from eternity and must return to it? If we look at the history of Christian thought we find that both sides of the contradiction are powerfully represented: the threat of "death away from eternity" is predominant in the practical teaching and preaching of most churches and in many of them is asserted and defended as official doctrine. The certainty of being rooted in eternity and therefore of belonging to it, even if turning against it, is the predominant attitude in mystical and humanistic movements within churches and sects. The first type of thought is represented by Augustine, Thomas, and Calvin, while the second type is represented by Origen, Socinus, and Schleiermacher. The theological concept around which the discussion has centered is the "restitution of all things," the *apokatastasis panton* of Origen. This notion means that everything temporal returns to the eternal from which it comes. In the struggles between the beliefs in the particularity and in the universality of salvation, the contradicting ideas showed their lasting tension and their practical importance. However primitive the symbolic

framework of these controversies was and to some extent still is, the point of discussion is of great theological and perhaps even greater psychological significance. Presuppositions about the nature of God, man, and their relation are implied. Ultimate despair and ultimate hope or superficial indifference and profound seriousness can be produced by this controversy. Despite its speculative dress, it is one of the most existential problems of Christian thought.

In order to give even a very preliminary answer, it is necessary to look at the motives underlying one or the other attitude. The threat of "death away from eternity" belongs to the ethical-educational type of thinking which, quite naturally, is the basic attitude of the churches. They are (in the case of Origen and of Unitarian Universalism) afraid that the teaching of *apokatastasis* would destroy the seriousness of religious and ethical decisions. This fear is not unfounded, for it has sometimes been recommended that one preach the threat of eternal death (or even of everlasting punishment) but hold, at the same time, to the truth of the doctrine of *apokatastasis.* Probably most Christians have a similar solution for others who die and for themselves when they anticipate their own death. No one can stand the threat of eternal death either for himself or for others; yet the threat cannot be dismissed on the basis of this impossibility. Mythologically speaking, no one can affirm hell as his own or anyone else's eternal destiny. The incertitude about our ultimate destiny cannot be removed, but above this incertitude, there are moments in which we are paradoxically certain of the return to the eternal from which we come. Doctrinally, this leads to a double statement, which is analogous to the other double statements in all cases in which the relation of the temporal to the eternal is expressed: both have to be denied-the threat of eternal death and the security of the return.

Attempts have been made to overcome the sharpness of this polarity both outside and inside Christianity. Three of them are important: the ideas of "reincarnation," of an "intermediary state," and of "purgatory." All three express the feeling that one cannot make the moment of death decisive for man's ultimate destiny. In the case of infants, children, and undeveloped adults, for example, this would be a complete absurdity. In the case of mature people it disregards innumerable elements which enter every mature personal life and cause its profound ambiguity. The whole life process, rather than a particular moment, is decisive for the

degree of essentialization. The idea of the reincarnation of individual life had, and, to some extent still has, great power over billions of Asiatic peoples. There, however, the assertion of "life after death" is not a consoling idea. On the contrary, the negative character of all life leads to reincarnation, the painful way of returning to the eternal. Some people, notably the great German poet and philosopher Lessing, in the eighteenth century, accepted this doctrine instead of the orthodox belief that the final decision about one's ultimate destiny is made in the moment of death. But the difficulty of every doctrine of reincarnation is that there is no way to experience the subject's identity in the different incarnations. Therefore reincarnation must be understood-similarly to immortality-as a symbol and not as a concept. It points to higher or lower forces which are present in every being and which fight with each other to determine the individual's essentialization on a higher or lower level of fulfilment. One does not *become* an animal in the next incarnation, but unhumanized qualities may prevail in a human being's personal character and determine the quality of his essentialization. This interpretation, however, does not answer the question of the possible development of the self after death. It is probably impossible to answer the question at all on the'basis of the negative attitude that Hinduism and Buddhism take toward the individual self. But if the question is answered at all, the answer presupposes a doctrine which is not far removed from the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory is a state. in which the soul is "purged" from the distorting elements of temporal existence. In Catholic doctrine, mere suffering does the purging. Besides the psychological impossibility of imagining uninterrupted periods of mere suffering, it is a theological mistake to derive transformation from pain alone instead of from grace which gives blessedness within pain. In any case, a development after death is guaranteed for many beings (though not for all).

Protestantism abolished the doctrine of purgatory because of the severe abuses to which clerical greed and popular superstition subjected it. But Protestantism was not able to answer satisfactorily the problems which originally led to the symbol of purgatory. Only one attempt, and that a rather weak one, was made to solve the problem of individual development after death (except for rare ideas of reincarnation); that attempt was the doctrine of the intermediary state between death and resurrection (in the day of consummation). The main weakness of this

doctrine is the idea of a bodiless intermediary state which contradicts the truth of the multidimensional unity of life and involves an unsymbolic application of measurable time to life beyond death.

None of the three symbols for the individual's development after death is able to fulfil the function for which it was created: that is, to combine the vision of an eternal positive destiny of every man with the lack of physical, social, and psychological conditions for attaining this destiny in most or, in some way, in all men. Only a strictly predestinarian doctrine could give a simple answer, and it did this by asserting that God does not care for the large majority of beings who were born as men but never reached the age or state of maturity. But if this is asserted, God becomes a demon, contradicting the God who creates the world for the sake of fulfilment of all created potentialities.

A more adequate answer must deal with the relation of eternity and time or of transtemporal fulfilment in relation to temporal development. If transtemporal fulfilment has the quality of life, temporality is included in it. As in some previous cases, we need two polar assertions above which lies the truth, which, however, we are unable to express positively and directly: eternity is neither timeless identity nor permanent change, as the latter occurs in .the temporal process. Time and change are present in the depth of Eternal Life, but they are contained within the eternal unity of the Divine Life.

If we combine this solution with the idea that no individual destiny is separated from the destiny of the universe, we have a framework within which the great question of the development of the individual in Eternal Life can at least find a limited theological answer.

The Catholic doctrine which recommends prayer and sacrifice for the deceased is a powerful expression of belief in the unity of individual and universal destiny in Eternal Life. This element of truth should not be forgotten because of the many superstitions and abuses in the practical carrying-out of the idea. It is hardly necessary, after all that has been said, to refer to the symbols "heaven" and "hell." First of all, they are symbols and not descriptions of localities; second, they express states of blessedness and despair. Third, they point to the objective basis of blessedness and despair, that is, the amount of fulfilment or non-fulfilment which goes into the individual's essentialization. The symbols "heaven" and "hell" must be taken seriously in this threefold sense and can be used as metaphors for the polar ultimates in the experience of

the divine. The frequently evil psychological effects of a literal use of "heaven" and "hell" are not sufficient reason for removing them completely. They provide vivid expression for the threat of "death away from eternity," and for its contrast, the "promise of eternal life." One cannot "psychologize away" basic experiences of threat and despair about the ultimate meaning of existence, as one cannot psychologize away moments of blessedness in anticipated fulfilment. Psychology can only dissolve the neurotic consequences of the literalistic distortion of the two symbols, and there is ample reason for it to do so. There would be less reason if not only theology but also preaching and teaching would remove the superstitious implications of a literal use of these symbols.

C. THE KINGDOM OF GOD: TIME AND ETERNITY

1. Eternity and the Movement of Time

We have rejected the understanding of eternity as timelessness and as endless time. Neither the denial nor the continuation of temporality constitutes the eternal. On this basis we have been able to discuss the question of the individual's possible development in Eternal Life. Now we must face the question of time and eternity in a formalized way.

In order to do so it is useful to call upon the help of a spatial image and see the movement of time in relation to eternity with the aid of a diagram. This has been done since the Pythagoreans used circular movement as the spatial analogy to time's coming back to itself in eternal return. Because of its circular character Plato called time the "moving image of eternity." It is an open question as to whether Plato attributed some kind of temporality to the eternal. This seems to be logically unavoidable if the word "image" is taken seriously. For there must be in the original something of that which is in the image-otherwise the image would lack the character of similarity which makes it an image. It also seems that in his later dialogues Plato points to a dialectical movement within the realm of essences. But all this remained ineffectual in classical Greek thought. Because there was no aim toward which time is now supposed to run, there was, consequently, a lack of symbols for the beginning and end of time. Augustine took a tremendous step when he rejected the analogy of the circle for the movement of time and replaced it by a straight line, beginning with the creation of the temporal and ending with the transformation of everything temporal. This idea not only was possible in the Christian view of the Kingdom of God as

the aim of history but was demanded by it. Time not only mirrors eternity; it contributes to Eternal Life in each of its moments. However, the diagram of the straight line does not indicate the character of time as coming from and going to the eternal. And its failure to do so made it possible for modern progressivism, naturalistic or idealistic, to prolong the temporal line indefinitely in both directions, denying a beginning and an end, thus radically cutting off the temporal process from eternity. This drives us to the question as to whether we can imagine a diagram which in some way unites the qualities of "coming from," "going ahead,' and "rising to." I would suggest a curve which comes from above, moves down as well as ahead, reaches the deepest point which is the *nunc existentiale, the* "existential now," and returns in an analogous way to that from which it came, going ahead as well as going up. This curve can be drawn in every moment of experienced time, and it can also be seen as the diagram for temporality as a whole. It implies the creation of the temporal, the beginning of time, and the return of the temporal to the eternal, the end of time. But the end of time is not conceived in terms of a definite moment either in the past or in the future. Beginning from and ending in the eternal are not matters of a determinable moment in physical time but rather a process going on in every moment, as does the divine creation. There is always creation and consummation, beginning and end.

2. Eternal Life and Divine Life

God is eternal; this is the decisive characteristic of those qualities which make him God. He is subjected neither to the temporal process nor with it to the structure of finitude. God, as eternal, has neither the timelessness of absolute identity nor the endlessness of mere process. He is "living," which means that he has in himself the unity of identity and alteration which characterizes life and which is fulfilled in Eternal Life.

This leads immediately to the question: How is the eternal God, who is also the living God, related to Eternal Life, which is the inner aim of all creatures? There cannot be two eternal life processes parallel to each other, and the New Testament excludes this idea directly by calling God alone the "eternal One." The only possible answer is that Eternal Life is life in the eternal, life in God. This corresponds to the assertion that everything temporal comes from the eternal and returns to the

eternal, and it agrees with the Pauline vision that in ultimate fulfilment God shall be everything in (or for) everything. One could call this symbol "eschatological pan-en-theism."

There are some problems, however, which arise from the place of this solution within the whole system of theological thought; and it is appropriate to deal with them in the last section of the theological system. The first problem is the meaning of "in," when we say that Eternal Life is life "in" God.

The first meaning of "in" in the phrase "in God" is that it is the "in" of creative origin. It points to the presence of everything that has being in the divine ground of being,. a presence that is in the form of potentiality (in a classical formulation, this is understood as the presence of the essences or eternal images or ideas of everything created in the divine mind). The second meaning of "in" is that it is the "in" of ontological dependence. Here, the "in" points to the inability of anything finite to be without the supporting power of the permanent divine creativity-even in the state of estrangement and despair. The third meaning of "in" is that it is the "in" of ultimate fulfilment, the state of essentialization of all creatures.

This threefold "in-ness" of the temporal in the eternal indicates the rhythm both of the Divine Life and of life universal. One could refer to this rhythm as the way from essence through existential estrangement to essentialization. It is the way from the merely potential through actual separation and reunion to fulfilment beyond the separation of potentiality and actuality. Inasmuch as we have been pushed by the consistency of thought as well as by the religious expression in which fulfilment is anticipated to the identification of Life Eternal with the Divine Life it is appropriate to ask about the relation of the Divine Life to the life of the creature in the state of essentialization or in Eternal Life. Such a question is both unavoidable, as the history of Christian thought shows, and impossible to answer except in terms of the highest religious-poetic symbolism. We have touched upon the question at several points, particularly in the discussions of trinitarian symbolism and of the divine blessedness. There is no blessedness where there is no conquest of the opposite possibility, and there is no life where there is no "otherness." The trinitarian symbol of the Logos as the principle of divine self-manifestation in creation and salvation introduces the element of otherness into the Divine Life without which it would not be life. With the

Logos, the universe of essence is given, the "immanence of creative potentiality" in the divine ground of being. Creation into time produces the possibility of self-realization, estrangement, and reconciliation of the creature, which, in eschatological terminology, is the way from essence through existence to essentialization.

In this view the world process means something for God. He is not a separated self-sufficient entity who, driven by a whim, creates what he wants and saves whom he wants. Rather, the eternal act of creation is driven by a love which finds fulfilment only through the other one who has the freedom to reject and to accept love. God, so to speak, drives toward the actualization and essentialization of everything that has being. For the eternal dimension of what happens in the universe is the Divine Life itself. It is the content of the divine blessedness.

Such formulations concerning the Divine Life and its relation to the life of the universe seem to transcend the possibility of human assertions even within the "theological circle." They seem to violate the mystery of the divine "abyss." Theology must answer such a criticism by pointing out, first, that the language used is symbolic; it avoids the danger of subjecting the ultimate mystery to the subject-object scheme, which would distort God into an object to be analyzed and described. Second, theology must answer that, in the all-embracing symbolism, a genuine religious interest is preserved, that is, the affirmation of the ultimate seriousness of life in the light of the eternal; for a world which is only external to God and not also internal to Him, in the last consideration, is a divine play of no essential concern for God. This is certainly not the biblical view which emphasizes in many ways God's infinite concern for his creation. If we elaborate the conceptual implication of this religious certainty (which is the function of theology) then we are driven to formulations similar to those given here. And there may be a third answer to the criticism of the universal theology that embraces both God and the world, the answer that it sharply transcends a merely anthropocentric as well as a merely cosmocentric theology and expresses a theocentric vision of the meaning of existence. Although most considerations given within the theological circle deal with man and his world in their relation to God, our final consideration points in the opposite direction and speaks of God in his relation to man and his world.

Although this can only be done in terms of the symbols which have been interpreted as answers to the questions implied in human existence, it both can and must be done in a theology which starts with an analysis of the human condition. For in such a theology religious symbols can easily be misunderstood as products of man's wishful imagination. This is especially true of such eschatological symbols as "life hereafter." Therefore it is adequate to use the eschatological symbols that turn us from man to God, thereby considering man in his significance for the Divine Life and its eternal glory and blessedness.

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"Certainly, these three books would not have been written without my conviction that the event in which Christianity is born has central significance for all mankind whether before or after the event. But the way in which this event can be understood and received changes with the changing conditions in all periods of history. On the other hand, the books would not have come into existence either, if I had not tried during the larger part of my life to penetrate into the meaning of the Christian symbols which have become increasingly problematic within the cultural context of our time. Since the split between a faith unacceptable to culture and a culture unacceptable to faith was not possible for me, the only alternative was to attempt to interpret the symbols of faith through expressions of our own culture. The result of this attempt is the three volumes of Systematic *Theology*."

FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME III