

the betrayal; so also was the history of the world, and the crisis was similarly a betrayal, the Donation of Constantine:

l'aguglia vidi scender giù ne l' arca
del carro e lasciar lei di sè pennuta:
e qual esce di cuor che si rammarca,
tal voce uscì del cielo e cotal disse:
"O navicella mia, com mal se' carca!"¹⁷⁸

(Here is suggested Christ's mourning over Jerusalem as he was to enter the city of his betrayal.) Yet strange as it may seem to modern thought both were comedies, since both, precipitated by evil, were to culminate in triumph and joy. This triumph was to be brought within the reach of each individual, under the aegis of church and empire, through the sacraments.

In the drama of betrayal a cord precipitates the Pyrrhic victory of evil. God had given into the hands of the empire such authority to govern rightly as could compass the destruction of the leopard. This authority was, instead, to compass the descent of God incarnate into the realm of darkness. The incarnate Logos, through his inclusion of Judas in the number of the disciples, gave into the hands of the empire the means by which he should suffer the perennial doom of the sun god. Even so Dante gave into the hands of Virgil the cord which was to summon the savage reptile with human head and scorpion tail,¹⁷⁹ on whose back Dante was to suffer the dread descent. The tail of Geryon, striking treacherously from behind, is a veritable Judas lance, and is appropriately concealed at his first appearance. Dante describes him as sitting on the ledge of the precipice, his fair and honorable countenance raised in greeting, his venomous tail hanging down, like that of the beaver of folklore, into the abyss. There was a legend well known in the Middle Ages and

178. "I saw the eagle descend down into the body of the car, and leave it feathered with his plumage. And as a voice comes from a heart that sorroweth, such voice came from heaven, and thus it spake: 'O my little bark, how ill art thou laden.'" *Purg.*, xxxii, 125-129.

179. The genealogy of Geryon has been traced as follows: Solinus, copying Pliny (*Historia naturalis*, 8, 30) describes an uncouth creature Mantichora. With Albertus Magnus it becomes Marintomorion (*De animalibus*, 22, 2, 1) and eats the men it beguiles. In Brunetto Latini's *Tresor* (5, 59) it appears as an Indian monster Manticore, with a man's face, a lion's body, and a scorpion's tail. It is a devourer of human flesh. Dante calls it Geryon and makes it a symbol of fraud. The smooth and gentle countenance may have been suggested by the comment of Thomas Aquinas on Rev. 9, 7-11.

indeed current in the fables of many northern peoples, that the beaver catches fish by sitting on the bank and allowing his tail to hang into the water as a bait. Thus the Judas Geryon sat waiting for Christ, $\iota\chi\theta\upsilon\varsigma$, the Fish,¹⁸⁰ plotting to bear him down to the realm of eternal impotence. Satan little dreamed that he himself would be the means for the triumph whereby *Ichthus* by his death provided the waters of baptism for the home of the little fishes who are his redeemed.¹⁸¹ In plotting, he angled for the *Ichthus* through the Geryon Judas, the sin of whose traitorous tail was a treason, the outgrowth of peculation in office,¹⁸² which declared his kinship with Geryon's other-self, the leopard.

Having looked upon the mild visage of the beast whose markings betrayed him as kin to the leopard, Dante was sent apart, that, in loneliness, his experience might be full, "Acciocche tutta piena esperienza." Christ, having looked upon the face of his betrayer and given him the sop, went apart to await the moment when, like Dante in the *Commedia*, he should be delivered over to fraud and treachery. At this moment of impending doom Dante, like Christ in the Garden, is definitely alone.

Even Virgil's protection of Dante from harm by the tail of the beast into whose power he was none the less given over is an appropriate symbolism. It was Roman authority which deprived the Jewish council of the right of inflicting the death sentence, and therefore insured that Christ should die, not under local Jewish authority, but under the authority of the empire. That is, in Dante's view, the Spirit of Empire, protecting Christ from the Jewish death penalty, enabled him so to suffer as to redeem all humanity.¹⁸³

The cord has been variously interpreted, especially by those interested in pointing a moral. Politically, it may represent legitimate self-seeking, which none the less attracted the demons of hypocrisy and kindred vices; or Dante's reliance in political

180. Cf. pp. 141 n. 117 and 235 n. 100.

181. Cf. pp. 140-141, also p. 435.

182. Since the love of financial reward which proved the undoing of Judas was nourished by the fact that he was the treasurer of the little company which followed Jesus during his ministry. Cf. John 12, 6 and 13, 29.

183. Cf. p. 46 n. 69, quoting from *Monarchia*, 2, 13.

difficulties on his own strength, which when on the brink of the malodorous chasm of Geryon¹⁸⁴ he cast from him. Morally, it has been thought to symbolize a vow of celibacy, cast away because Dante found in it no cure, but rather a source, for the temptations of the flesh. Such interpretations have their foundation in an age in which the monastic girdle was invested with many moral significations. Study of the symbolism of the cord in Dante's tradition, however, shows it to have a meaning much more deep-reaching.

Even the initiate in a modern secret order may know that the cable-tow symbolizes new birth,¹⁸⁵ for he, like the devotee of the mystery religions of old, is seeking initiation into all that leads upward to the Divine Sun. Through Judas was accomplished Christ's initiation into complete experience of the agony of the world's sin, with its outcome in the glorious victory of the Resurrection and the triumphal entry of the Ascension, the climax of the "comedy" of his earthly life. Again, this second order of levels in the *Divina Commedia* illumines the symbolism. Immediately evident is the appropriateness of Dante's choice of two stories bound up with the sun, through which to describe the downward plunge of the very Radiance of the Sun itself, into utter darkness and all that is the Sun's negation. Poignantly suggested in the fable of Phaeton,¹⁸⁶ the chariot of the Sun was indeed in an anomalous situation in the Passion of Christ.

184. Cf. pp. 200 n. 346, and 201 n. 352. Cf. also the identification of Geryon with Pope Boniface, dragging at his tail Corso Donati and Charles of Anjou. Of the latter his ancestor Hugh Capet remarks grimly that he had succeeded not in gain, but in "making better known himself and his," even as Judas, who returned ultimately even his thirty pieces of silver, retaining from his treachery only the infamy of the ages. (The presence of Judas in Satan's mouth does not militate against the acceptance of Geryon as his symbol, any more than the part he plays in the Gospel narrative invalidates his appearance in "type" in the Old Testament.)

185. A modern writer on Masonic symbolism states that in one sense the "cable-tow" of introduction into the Entered Apprentice Lodge symbolizes birth. This concept he derives from the Brahmanic sacred cord, the visible representation of the second birth of the Twice Born. He states that the "obvious literal meaning is the cable or cord by which something is towed or drawn. Hence with the greatest aptness it represents those forces and influences which have conducted not only the individual, but the human race, out of a condition of ignorance and darkness into one of light and knowledge. With symbolical meanings of this kind the cord seems to have been employed in many, if not all, of the ancient systems of initiation."

186. Although it is not a point to be stressed, the fact that Phaeton was killed by a thunderbolt from the king of the gods is consistent with the passage.

Dante was required to traverse the horrors of upper hell and of upper Dis before intrusting himself to the back of Geryon; so in the earthly life of Christ a period of temptation and of ministry preceded the Passion. As the candidate was prepared for initiation by a long period of instruction, humanity also, as Christ's mystical body, had gone through its period of preparation before the great betrayal. Whether or not Dante intended as much detail here as he has made clear on other levels, remains for further study to determine. Certainly he has blocked it in.^{187a} The Donation of Constantine was for Dante a stabbing of the

187a. A possible supplying of detail which would be consistent with Dante's tradition is as follows:

The comedy of human history was in the Middle Ages divided into six periods, extending from the Fall, and corresponding to the six days in the work of creation. These days, with the sabbath of God which forms the seventh, Dante may have intended to rehearse in the days of the week of his journey. In a narrower sense, however, the world-as-it-has-been is represented for Dante by the Inferno itself, Purgatory lying beyond, in the future. Thus association may be made with the six symbolic beasts which preside over circles in hell.

The first of the periods, which were sometimes counted as each of a thousand years ("One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" [II Pet. 3. 8]) extended from Adam to Noah. In its beginning it was an age of relative goodness, not an age of darkness, though no longer lighted directly by the Divine Sun of Eden; and hence it may well correspond to that circle within which Dante was set down by Charon, the ferryman about whose glowing eyes flashed circles of flame. Later, however, it was marked by that lust which the Bible states as the occasion of the Deluge (Cf. Gen. 6. 1-2), one great manifestation of the terror of God's judgment, of which the rainbow is the constant pledge that it shall never be repeated: "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8. 22). This may correspond to the circle in which Minos metes out the sole infernal judgment, and where is punished the sin of lust.

The second age, from Noah to Abraham, was marked by the luxury and gross self-indulgence which drove the great patriarch to the solitude of the desert. Of this age the circle presided over by Cerberus, of greedy jaws, is no unfitting sign.

The third age, from Abraham to David, was the age during most of which "there was no king over Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes"—the very condition for the overlordship of Plutus, the "cursed wolf," and the reign of avarice and prodigality.

The fourth age, from David to the Exile, was marked by violence, and that great act of violence which brings it to a close. The Captivity under Nebuchadnezzar might well correspond to the carrying across the bitter marsh by Phlegyas, and the entry into Dis accomplished only by divine intervention, thus indicating the ultimate overruling even of Babylon to God's ends.

Within the fifth age occurred the even worse violence of the attack on the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, which was brought to naught by the mounted angel who guarded the treasure—an attack perhaps suggested by the futile rage of the Minotaur.

The sixth age was the age of betrayal, not only of Christ, but of Humanity of which he is Head, and is appropriately indicated by the fraudulent Geryon. The cord thrown to Geryon suggests that temporal power, which had it been kept by the emperor, might indeed have bound the leopard, but which as it was used,

dual vicarate with the Judas lance of cupidity; the result was mutual eclipse of the two suns of Rome, solar eclipse as in the betrayal of Christ in his earthly Body. Comparison should be made here with the *résumé* of the drama of history given in the Pageant, where the plumes of temporal power are the sop, graciously given but evilly received. Dante in his struggle to bring victory out of this betrayal, through the establishment on earth

precipitated the downward plunge of church and state to the region of fraud, dissension, and treason.

The seventh age was to see victory and deliverance in preparation for the Sabbath of God. The suggestion has been made by Prof. J. B. Fletcher that Dante added a seventh earthly age by the symbolical means of his gaining of a day in passing through the center of the earth. Thus he means to indicate, Professor Fletcher maintains, that Christ has gained for man a day of grace, within which mankind may the better prepare for the eternal Sabbath. It is of interest that Bede in his *De tempore ratione* argued for eight ages instead of seven, thus Dante has basis for such a division. He suggests further, that, basing himself on the text above quoted, as to the equivalence of a thousand years and one day, Dante may have thought of seven ages of the world, each consisting of a thousand years. In this case the odd consequence would ensue, that the betrayal by Constantine would fall in the year 515 of the sixth age, while the year 515 of the seventh age would occur within Dante's own time, and would, on this hypothesis, be the year of the promised deliverer. (By most medieval chronologies, the birth of Christ was placed in the year 5200 of the world.) This gives a plausible explanation of Beatrice's mysterious prophecy in *Purg.*, xxxiii, 43.

If, however, Dante chanced to be acquainted with the chronicle of the ninth century Freculphus (Migne, *P.L.*, t. 106) another explanation of the 515 would be natural. Freculphus dates the birth of Christ as 5,129 years from Adam, 2,921 from the Flood, 2,011 from Abraham, 1,506 from Moses, 1,207 from Solomon's Temple, and 515 from the Second Temple. Concerning this Second Temple it was spoken that it should be filled with greater glory than the First, and that in it peace should be given (Hag. 2. 3, 6-9), a prophecy considered by Christians to have been fulfilled in Christ, the promised deliverer and desire of all nations, coming into it in the five hundred and fifteenth year, even as the deliverer prophesied by Beatrice was to come in the five hundred and fifteenth year of that seventh millennium especially prepared by Christ.

For the characteristic medieval division of ages of the world, cf.:

Ado of Vienna, ninth century, Migne, *P.L.*, t. 123.

Claudius of Turin, ninth century, *ibid.*, t. 104 (fragmentary).

Freculphus, ninth century, *ibid.*, t. 106.

Marianus Scotus, eleventh century, *ibid.*, t. 147.

Ekkehard, twelfth century, *ibid.*, t. 154. (For his dates, he cites Bede, Isidore, Abbas, Eusebius, and others.)

Honorius of Autun, twelfth century, *ibid.*, t. 172.

Nennius, in *Monumenta historica britannica*, ed. Petrie, Sharpe, and Hardy, and others.

The idea of an allegorical representation of the history of the world was not new in the Middle Ages. Cf. the passage in Dan. 2. 31 ff., and Dante's use of the same conception in his reference to the "Old Man of Crete." *Inf.*, xiv, 94 ff.

Human history, as far as detailed references are concerned, in the *Divina Commedia*, presents one of the most puzzling problems of interpretation. Richard Hooker, in the sixteenth century, speaking of the Incarnation, said: "Howbeit because this divine mystery is more true than plain, divers, having framed

of true pope and true emperor, was a type of Christ, through whose power alone the victory of evil is turned to its own destruction.

The initiation of the Christian into the sacramental life through the new birth of baptism contains within itself dedication to a share in the mission of the sun god. Upon this birth also, torment may be consequent, for although baptism frees the soul from the devil, the devil exerts his powers, not on those who are in his own safe-keeping, but on those whom through their turning to the light he fears to lose. Thus the cord of initiation and of the new birth, on every level, calls up the evil Geryon and precipitates the struggle and pain and darkness which are to end in triumph over evil.

In the ten pockets of the Malebolge,^{187b} much might be seen of the events of Christ's trial, and of the manner of shifting of responsibility as he was handed back and forth from Jew to Roman. The next clear symbolism is, however, the final commitment, in the close of this period, to the evil depths of all the universe.¹⁸⁸ This commitment is accomplished for Dante by the giant Antaeus,^{189a} as for Christ by Pilate, in a moment which Dante describes tersely as such as to make him wish to go by another road.^{189b} Antaeus, having delivered his charge in all gentleness into the pit of death at his feet, quickly straightened, raising his head high above the horrors of Cocytus, as if freed

the same to their own conceits and fancies, are found in their expositions thereof more plain than true," and such at the present is likely to be the case with any detailed interpretation of this aspect of the *Commedia*. The points which seem certain, however, are the events following upon Constantine's betrayal of trust, and the initiation of the drama in the sin of Adam, of which the consequence was dual judgment: Minos, discernor of sin, was type of the violence to redeem from which Christ, likewise a discernor of sin, came as the second Adam, the heavenly judge of quick and dead.

187b. Remembering that the most gruesome scene in the Malebolge is that in the pit of the thieves, it is of interest to note that the Barabbas whom the Jews demanded in *exchange* for Christ was a robber, and also that Christ is reported to have been crucified between two thieves.

188. *Inf.*, xxxii, 7.

189a. Note Dante's use of giant as a corrupt representative of empire (cf. p. 325) which is the exact character of Pilate. An interpretation of Antaeus on the level of human history is to be found in: Jefferson B. Fletcher, *The Crux of the Divine Comedy*. His interpretation in individual life can be filled in fairly readily by analogy.

189b. "If it be possible let this cup pass from me." Matt. 26. 39. Cf. also Mark 14. 36, etc.

from all responsibility, like Pilate who washed his hands of the matter. This identification is made the more appropriate by the fact that the giant performed his mission against his will, urged by words from Virgil, Spirit of Empire, as Pilate, driven by fear of imperial censure, acceded to the demand of the people.¹⁹⁰

CRUCIFIXION

There has been expressed much question as to why the *Vexilla regis* should be parodied at this point.¹⁹¹ However appropriate it may be on the personal level of Dante's symbolism, to indicate to him the nature of evil as a parody of good,¹⁹² it attains here a fuller significance as heralding the approach to Christ, of that Cross with its motto of mockery, which was to become his royal standard. The Crucifixion itself undoubtedly is represented by Dante's actual physical contact with Satan which was to become the means of his victory over the kingdom of evil, as the Crucifixion was the means of Christ's victory. It was humorously told in the Middle Ages¹⁹³ (in many a tale of the Harrowing) that had Satan only known with whom he was dealing, he would have done all in his power to prevent the Crucifixion, which was to free not only his supposed victim, but all humanity also, from his power.^{194, 195} In the words of the dead, recounted in the Gospel of Nicodemus,¹⁹⁶ in the dawning glory which announced to the imprisoned prophets the coming of Christ to Hades, Prince Satan in glee told Hades that at last

190. Another support for this reading is Dante's theory, already described, as to the necessity of Roman authority to validate the redemption. Cf. p. 46 n. 69, also p. 295.

191. An interesting comparison is the amazing parody, in the Mephistophelian finale of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, of the noble themes of the first movement.

192. Cf. p. 198.

193. It has been pointed out that Milton and Puritan thought were first to enoble the Devil, who in medieval fancy was made to play a ridiculous and grotesque rôle.

194. The idea was familiar that Satan planned the crucifixion to render impotent the intervention of God among men, ignorant that the intervening Savior was in fact God the Son. Cf. the grotesque image given by Gregory of Nyssa, who says that the Devil, as an evil fish, was caught by the hook of Christ's deity, baited with the flesh of his humanity. This poor taste, not the conception involved, was regretted by Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, and Augustine. *Cambridge Medieval History*, p. 587.

195. Cf. p. 201, for Dante's feeling of the paradox that evil tends to bring about its own destruction.

196. Cf. p. 180.

he had won the Christ, that most dangerous of men. Of a sudden all were startled by the shout of many voices, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates. . . ." ¹⁹⁷ Hades, shuddering, pushed Satan out to meet his victim, and shut and locked its doors. Again the thunderous cry resounded, after which "suddenly Hades trembled, and the gates of death and the bolts were shattered, and the iron bars were broken and fell to the ground, and everything was laid open." ^{198, 199} The Christ entered, so the story goes, delivering to Hades Satan, its quondam prince, now fast bound for its tortures, and rendered impotent as Dante beheld him in Cocytus. From this physical contact with Satan, as also by his means, for Satan was the author of the plot which had thus destroyed him, Christ turned to his task of redemption. Up the course of the rivulet which bears sin downward, Dante toiled, representative of Christ, who, having descended to the uttermost depths of evil, returned, bearing with him "again to see the stars," that human nature which he had made his own.

Similar is the progress in the second comedy belonging to this order of symbolism, Christ's life in his mystical Body. After the betrayal of church and state, organized humanity went through a period of trial vividly pictured as the second act of the Pageant in the Earthly Paradise.²⁰⁰ It was the mockery of the eastern schism and the increasingly blatant turning to evil of God's gifts, which made appropriate the blasphemy and the parody of the *Vexilla regis*. The outcome in Guelph-Ghibelline politics was indeed a crucifixion, yet out of it Dante hoped was to come salvation, even as he, through his apparently ruinous exile from Florence, had been placed in a position which seemed to make possible the fulfilment of his mission.

Finally, there is a third level of interpretation in the order relating to Christ and humanity. Through Christ's sacramental

197. Ps. 24. 7-10.

198. According to the second Latin version. See "Ante-Nicene Library," XVI.

199. Such was the earthquake in which, according to Dante, the universe felt love, and hell received its fourfold *ruina*: the breaking down of the outer gate, as just described (cf. *Inf.*, viii, 125-126); the breaking of part of the wall between Limbo and the circle of the unlawful lovers; the landslide guarded by the Minotaur, between the circle of the heretics and that of the violent (cf. *Inf.*, xii, lines 1-13 and 31-45); and the ruin in the *bolgia* of the hypocrites (cf. *Inf.*, xxi, 106-114, and xxiii, 133-141).

200. Cf. pp. 325 ff.

Body each individual may be assured that, like the drama of the life of Christ and of the development of humanity, the drama of his personal life is a comedy.²⁰¹ The sacramental Body, too, given to each member of the church, is betrayed whenever through fraud, that is, sophistries of the intellect, theology and philosophy²⁰² are made to dim each other as guides of the inner life. Geryon's rings reveal even more clearly the menace conveyed in the spots of the leopard, in their vivid portrayal of those circular arguments which have wrought such havoc in many a life. The pockets of the Malebolge may be found suggestive of the dilemma of theology and philosophy, when brought into conflict by such specious betrayal. Sharing of the experience of the race is brought to the individual soul through its union with Christ, with whom it must be crucified in order to obtain salvation. The pain thus brought on the soul is, however, one of the mysteries of mystic progress, and so belongs to the next order of symbolism.

PROMISE

After the Harrowing of Hell, it was necessary that men should be instructed further, before Christ might ascend to glory. Redemption is not accomplished by suffering merely; ascent as well as descent is required. To the forty days of Lent, succeed the greater forty days of Eastertide. Of this truth Dante is a representation in his passage through purgatory. Up the ascent over which preside the four cardinal virtues Dante moved, engaged in a formulation of ideas as to the organization of humanity and the goal of the individual soul, and able through his possession of life to bestow immortal fame upon the dead. Even so Christ moved, doubly living among the dead and empowered to bestow the supreme gift of immortality as he taught men concerning the organization of humanity,²⁰³ and concerning the principles of the active and contemplative life. Still in the jurisdiction of the empire, Christ, during the days of Eastertide, taught of that other sun, the church, through which his life was to be brought to man more intimately than ever had been pos-

201. Cf. pp. 285 ff.

202. Cf. pp. 51, 384.

203. Cf. Acts 1. 3. The term "Kingdom of God," to the mind of Catholic theologians, meant simply the church.

sible before. Christ was born under the Roman Empire that he might transform the metropolis of humanity at last into the heavenly city, the Dark Wood into the Rose.

Through a period of instruction, of progress from light to light, similar to the development of Dante indicated in the *Purgatorio*, humanity will move when it shall have been saved out of its experience of disunion, by passing through the center of all evil to peace under new leadership. The rank soil of mankind, left so long to grow weeds, will be cultivated and purged by the rightful authority "hitching the oxen of his counsel to the plow."

There is a sense in which, in his representation of Christ, Dante signifies not merely Christ in person, but Aeneas and Paul, progenitors of Christ's dual vicariate. Through them, likewise, comes his representation of humanity. Dante the *sylvanus*, commissioned to restore Rome, is not too distant in function from the Sylvius, literal son of Aeneas, who initiated the founding of Rome. As Aeneas, type and predecessor of Christ,²⁰⁴ had prepared for the foundation of the Eternal City, so Dante, type and successor of Christ, was to aid in the ultimate transformation of the Dark Wood to the Garden of Paradise. Dante shared in the expectation of his time that in this story of humanity there would be written a final chapter of which the theme would be the deliverance, to be brought, Dante thought, if not indeed by the dead lion Henry, then assuredly by the Dog who still lived.

Of this latest stage in the epic of Rome, Dante, made in Limbo the sixth among poets, is to write. Homer told of Troy,²⁰⁵ whose fall left Anchises and his group homeless, as mankind was left homeless by the fall of man. Virgil told the second stage, the story of Aeneas²⁰⁶ and the flight of the Trojan remnant to the Italian peninsula, there to multiply as did the sons of Noah saved in the ark. Horace pictured his own time and its need of moral reformation²⁰⁷ in terms suggesting the moral environment of Abraham, who sought to found a holy race. Ovid, telling of transmutations into beasts and into gods²⁰⁸ suggests

204. Dante makes his very life follow that of Aeneas. For example, each shows temperance, in leaving Dido and the Siren, respectively. Cf. *Convivio*, 4, 24-28. Cf. p. 179.

205. In the *Iliad*.

207. In his *Satires*.

206. In the *Aeneid*.

208. In his *Metamorphoses*.

the gradual transformation of the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon into that condition which necessitated the Captivity. In Babylon Israel suffered an evil metamorphosis into hybridism, while Judah was purified for closer approach to its God. Lucan relates the victory of Caesar over Pompey²⁰⁹ and the establishment of the Empire for which the Republic had prepared, suggesting the victorious return with its restoration of the Temple and the heroic preparation of the Maccabees for the Divine King to come. For Dante it remained to tell the story of the empire as vicarage of Christ, and of the way in which, having proved under Constantine false to its trust, it is once more to regain, under the predestined leader to come, its sacred position. Thus the true understanding of empire is embodied in Virgil interpreted by Dante,²¹⁰ and thus the history of the empire draws into itself the history of the world. These truths Dante is to see more perfectly at the close of the Pageant.

FULFILMENT

It is possible to understand as an added symbolism, in the order of the sins of the seven terraces, the ordering of the coming transformation of the Dark Wood. Although this order was fixed for Dante by his theological tradition, it is appropriate to his theme. After the long waiting in the valley of negligent princes²¹¹ must come the penitence of mankind at the Gate,²¹² and thorough humbling beneath the representative of the emperor, a true bowing beneath stones for the proud, till grace shall reign in their hearts and they shall stand upright. Then, as the first discipline and benefit of the rightly enthroned empire, is to come the freeing from envy, from that glance cast on other's happiness which (in itself as well as in its specific representation

209. In the *Pharsalia*.

210. Note that in Dis the demons would have been willing to admit Virgil if without Dante.—(According to Dante's view, it was possible to misread the *Aeneid*, as well as to misread the Bible.) Cf. the Catholic idea that true Christianity lies in the Bible as interpreted by the church, as against that of Protestants, who will accept the Bible, but refuse to admit the church as its interpreter.

211. The appropriateness of this symbolism needs no remark, since it is the negligence of their proper duty, on the part of the emperors, which has brought mankind to its present pass in the Dark Wood.

212. The Gate of Peter, longed for by Dante (*Inf.*, i, 134), has three meanings: this gate of purgatory by which mankind enters the life of purification, the gate of Heaven itself, and a certain gate in the city of Florence.

in the florins which, deprived of their hypocritical brightness, are but dirt) constitutes the nourishment of the *lupa*.²¹³ Next, angry passions are to be checked, and sloth is to be replaced by zeal. Only then are the three sins connected with matter²¹⁴ to receive attention—wrong valuation of gold, of food, and of sex. At last with the establishment of the blessed state of innocence, the goal of government is achieved; the *selva selvaggia* has given place to the Garden. The stages of humanity's progress through this realm of the new leader where Cato presides,²¹⁵ since they belong to the future, Dante cannot, of course, describe definitely. Attention in consequence centers no longer in human history as it did in the *Inferno*, but on the purging of the individual, which is the real goal of the whole new state.²¹⁶

One at a time, carrying with them their limbs and branches in various evil acts, the seven root sins (mortal sins) are torn out of the nature first mercifully raised by Christ, the Eagle of Light, past all obstacles to the Gate of Purgatory. The tearing out of evil growths opens the Dark Wood to the rays of the sun, so that at last the world may become a garden, well ordered and beautiful because the sunlight has been let in. Then only may be seen within it, in true perspective, the pageant of human history, cupidity having been shorn of its *gravezza* under the double authority of the empire as guardian of all material possessions, and the papacy as possessed of none. In the *Inferno* is shown that which each soul must suffer in sacramental union with Christ, in other words, that which the sacramental Body of Christ suffers in its union with each individual soul. But it is

213. The checking of cupidity, in Dante's mind, was the one great function of government.

214. Captious criticism has been made that Dante places lust just below the Earthly Paradise, as if it were the least instead of the most disgusting of human sins. But to Dante the fleshly sins actually were of less deadly venom than the "spiritual" sins of pride and hatred and envy, wherefore it was necessary to cleanse human nature first from the ranker growth. In this regard, note the fact that Adam's sin was not gluttony, but disobedience springing from pride. Cf. St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 14, 12-14.

215. Note that in one sense it is necessary to regard Cato as foreshadowing God. Cf. Dante's earlier allegory of Cato and Marcia.

216. Cf. p. 55. The scholastic idea of the state is that it exists to help the individual to reach the highest good. The prime duty is to give to life a human value, and the state should help each of its members to reach the goal of moral and religious goodness. Cf. De Wulf, *Philosophy and Civilization in the Middle Ages*.

only in the *Purgatorio* that there are discussed the stages of purification under the direction of theology and philosophy.

The moral interpretation of the *Divina Commedia*, studying primarily virtues and vices, and usually concentrating attention on the *Purgatorio*, in which Dante is regarded as typical of the human soul climbing upward, ridding itself of each separate sin through complete experience of its inevitable consequences, and through meditation on the opposite virtue, is too familiar to need repetition. In the *Purgatorio*²¹⁷ the three bodies of Christ may be seen in the one mission of redemption: the Incarnate and Risen Christ teaches; Christ in his mystic Body, that is, all organized humanity, asserts the virtues; and Christ in his sacramental Body strengthens and develops the soul in its struggle toward the acquisition of virtues, through the gift of the bread of angels which is both the Eucharist²¹⁸ and knowledge in theology and philosophy.²¹⁹ Fruitful as this interpretation is, practical omission of it would seem to be required in order that it may be replaced in fitting proportion in the setting which Dante gave it. This setting consists of the truth of redemption symbolized with reference to Christ in the *Inferno*, the final truths of humankind revealed to Dante in Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Fixed Stars, of which Gemini, the twins, give the motif—where Dante understood finally the relationship of the individual to all humanity.²²⁰

III. CULMINATION: EPIPHANIA

At the end of the Forty Days Christ's life under the jurisdiction of the empire was definitely completed. His redemption perfected, and validated by the empire, he rose to his own place as king and high priest. Is not the difficulty many interpreters have felt with Virgil's mitering of Dante (as expressed in the ques-

217. For the relation of Beatrice to this interpretation, cf. pp. 319 ff.

218. Cf. *Par.*, xviii, 129, also the Eucharistic hymns of Thomas Aquinas. See pp. 75, 374.

219. Cf. *Par.*, ii, 11, with *Convivio*, 1, 1.

220. His sense of especial mission is emphasized also by his connection with Gemini, cf. p. 48. With regard to this constellation and the Virgin Mary Albertus Magnus says: "quod est aliena negotia curare ut propria, et non sibi, sed toti gentium se credere mundo. Et hoc maxime facit virtus charitatis, quae non quaerit quae sua sunt, sed communia negotia propriis ante ponit." *De laudibus*, 7, 1, 2.

tion: How could a pagan have made Dante a bishop?) really a result of confusion of symbolism belonging to the order of Dante's personal life with that belonging to the order of the allegory of Christ? By crowning and mitering Dante, Virgil no more made him bishop than he made him emperor. He simply indicated that Dante had reached that point where his will no longer needed the dictation of empire and church. On the other hand, Virgil, as Spirit of Empire, in his validation of the redemption, granted to Christ in very fact²²¹ his rightful rank of King and High Priest.

There was, however, an interval of waiting before Christ's representatives on earth were empowered by his Holy Spirit to carry on his mission—an interval occupied cogently by that which took place in the Earthly Paradise. Matilda has been the center of much work of interpretation, partly, it may be suspected, because she unifies in herself such multiplicity of symbolism. Whether she be primarily David the royal Forerunner,²²² or the spirit of the old (Jewish) church, or John the Baptist, forerunner of Christ, or Spring, the presage of new fruitfulness on earth through Christ as Radiance of the Sun—it is probably safe to declare her all of these and much more. In this context she is most dramatic as dawn, herald of the sun-storm god in all his glory.²²³ Drawn by the grifon—two-natured beast of gold and white mingled with vermilion, Christ himself appearing now under a veil—the chariot approaching outshines the chariot of the sun and is halted by a thunderclap.²²⁴

221. Cf. p. 295 and passage cited from the *Monarchia*, p. 46 n. 69. That critics have not recognized Dante in the *Divina Commedia* as a type of Christ is strange, not only in view of the inherence of typological interpretation in medieval thought and of Dante's paralleling of his comedy to scripture as elsewhere discussed (cf. p. 63), but also in view of the absolute necessity of such interpretation evidenced by passages like the above about which dispute and misunderstanding have been so intense.

222. Cf.: "The first is named Primavera solely for this coming today; for I moved the giver of the name to call her *Primavera*, which is to say *prima verra* (she will come first) on the day that Beatrice shall reveal herself after her liege's vision." *Vita Nuova*, 24, 53. Cf. with *Purg.*, xxviii, 51.

223. The Navajos have a ceremonial painting in which Sky Father is pictured as Night, with moon and stars accurately placed; Earth Mother appears as bearing four sacred plants, enfolded by Sky Father in glorious blue daylight; and Dawn is a strange ghostly white figure, wearing red moccasins. The Rainbow, not personified, but terminating in growing leaves, encircles the three figures.

224. Cf. *Purg.*, xxix, 117.

At this point Dante becomes a spectator, contemplating, as they pass before him, the mysteries of Christ and of the church. Such action is appropriate to Dante the statesman and citizen of Florence, having attained, through rigorous discipline of thought and emotion, to that point where, master of himself, in perfect obedience to God, he may behold the whole in a true perspective of its relationships in the universal pattern. For perfect comprehension of his mission in the history of the world represented in the pageant before him, it is appropriate and necessary that Dante should become conscious of his union with the divine will in its desire for the salvation of the world, accomplished perfectly in the Person of Christ. Nevertheless, in the order of symbolism thus created, in which Dante becomes a type of Christ, there seems to be presented here Christ in contemplation of himself. Is there, then, a break in the symbolism of the second order?

Two facts must be brought to mind: First, that expression through symbolism approaches truth as the number of symbols used in any one connection is multiplied that there may be correction of one by the other. Thus, the simultaneous presence of Dante, of the grifon, and of Beatrice, as types of Christ, occurs in the progress of the Pageant in accord with Dante's increasing clarity of vision. Further, the ultimate bliss lies in the Beatific Vision, which to the Trinity is self-contemplation.²²⁵ It is then only appropriate that with the accession to the Earthly Paradise whence the Divine Sun, no longer opposed by the *lupa*, may raise man to the heaven of vision, there should be a foreshadowing of that which is the joy both of God and of man in the mystery of the Rose. The further appropriateness in this order of symbolism of Christ's self-contemplation, becomes apparent with a study of the Pageant.

Taken as a whole the Pageant may represent the human authors of the Bible, as the usual interpretation runs, but more

225. One of the inevitable implicates of an intellectual conception of the ultimate nature of the Deity is the conception of the life of the Deity as essentially self-contemplation. Himself the ultimate Reality, if he has knowledge, it must be self-knowledge. Since, moreover, he is infinite Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, he must of necessity love himself. After this manner Thomas continues with the explanation that God is his own Beatitude.

deeply it represents the church, into which the whole of religious development is gathered up.²²⁶ The deepest meaning of the Pageant, however, lies in its representation of the Mass, that supreme drama of the church, perfect summary and extension of the mystery of the Incarnation. Resemblances in the Pageant, both to the Mass and to the Corpus Christi procession, have been suggested recently in a comparison²²⁷ of Beatrice's sudden appearance to the miracle of transubstantiation. Had these resemblances been considered in detail on the basis of William Durand's careful analysis of the symbolism of the Mass,²²⁸ however, they might have been set forth with still greater cogency.

The candlesticks,²²⁹ the slow ritual order of the vested procession, and the chant to a Blessed Lady, usher in the chariot, which, brighter than that of the sun, is the vehicle of him who is source of all light. The Logos is recognized as instrument at once of the creation and of the redemption of the finite. As St. Thomas remarked, while the motion of the Primum Mobile is one, its sole desire being for union with the Empyrean, in it are the roots of the tree of Time, and to the motion of the next

226. The church was described in the early centuries by Tertullian's follower, St. Cyprian, in similar imagery:

"As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams, although the multiplicity seems diffused in the liberality of an overflowing abundance, yet the unity is still preserved in the source. Separate a ray of the sun from its body of light, its unity does not allow a division of light; break a branch from a tree,—when broken, it will not be able to bud; cut off the stream from its fountain, and that which is cut off dries up. Thus also the church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. She broadly expands her rivers, liberally flowing, yet her head is one; her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of fruitfulness: from her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated." Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church* ("Ante-Nicene Library," VIII, 381).

227. By Dr. Lizette Fisher, in her *Mystic Vision in the Grail Legend and in the Divine Comedy*.

228. Gulielmus Durantis, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*. Mâle notes this as one of the ten books on the basis of which all medieval life could be understood. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states that it is standard on the symbolism of the medieval Mass. Cf. also Chap. VI, i.

229. The sevenfold candlestick suggests the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, said in the preparation for the Mass; also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and various other ecclesiastical sevens. The habitable part of the earth was divided into seven strips, or "climates," stretching east and west.

circling sphere it imparts the dual motion which as duality and multiplicity characterizes successively the lesser spheres of creation. Through the nature of the grifon was the unique unification of the dual nature of finite creation, symbolized in the two wheels of the car he drew.²³⁰ Such was the Introit of the medieval Mass. The eternal pairs, divine and human, church and empire, theology and philosophy, together with their fruit the mystic consummation in contemplation and action, are suggested in the two wheels of the car, and united in the two natures of the grifon, the white and vermilion signifying the elements of the Eucharist.

The Sun, greeted with hosannas, is the "Sol che, sviando, fu combusto per l'orazion de la Terra devota, quando fu Giove arcanamente giusto."²³¹ The ritual turning toward the car suggests the turning toward the altar of the ecclesiastical procession after its members have reached their appointed positions. Thus the drama of the redemption is to be reënacted. In the great cathedral the altar was hung with silken coverings of symbolic colors to represent the virtues, and was consecrated with oil as a symbol of the light which surrounded it unseen.²³² In the Pageant the chariot of the grifon is closely accompanied by ladies robed in the symbolic colors of the virtues,²³³ and the light, which in the cathedral is symbolized by the consecration with oil, glows dazzlingly around it.

The usual interpretation of the thirty-five figures in the procession as symbolizing the authors of the Bible, suggests in the Mass the scripture readings, entitled "Epistle" and "Gospel." The Epistle might be read not only from the books of the New Testament, exclusive of the Gospels, but also from any of the twenty-four books of the Old Testament. Thus Epistle and Gospel together cover the whole message of the thirty-five authors of scripture.²³⁴ This interpretation is also appropriate to the en-

230. Cf. pp. 244 ff., *et al.*

231. "Sun which, straying, was consumed at the devout prayer of the earth, when Jove was mysteriously just." *Purg.*, xxix, 118-120.

232. These and other details of the symbolisms of the Mass and of the mass furnishings are cited from Durantis, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*.

233. Cf. *Purg.*, xxix, 121-132; xxxi, 103-111.

234. In the Middle Ages, when there were no printed books, and education was comparatively unavailable to the masses, the only knowledge of the scripture message transmitted to the people was perforce through the Epistle and

trance or Introit of the procession. The Introit of the Mass, according to Albertus Magnus, represents the Fathers of the Old Testament sighing for the advent of the True Light which the apostles of the New Testament announce. In this connection Albertus quotes many²³⁵ scriptural expressions of longing for Divine Light. "Et ideo suspirans anima Isaiae et sanctorum, Christum lucem veram, qui tenebras fugaret, desideravit. Et hoc est quod dicit: Anima mea desideravit te in nocte."²³⁶ Again, the song thrice shouted, *Veni sponsa de Libano*, is suggestive of the rubric in accord with which the priest three times kisses the altar, in reverence to the two natures of Christ, and to his marriage with that church in which are united Jew and Gentile.²³⁷

After the singing of *Veni sponsa, Benedictus qui venis* (the hymn sung or recited before the consecration) and *Manibus o date lilia plenis*, there appears in the car Beatrice, and her appearance is as sudden as is the appearance of Christ under the "accidents" of bread and wine in the miracle of transubstantiation.²³⁸ Moreover, even as he, the Sun of Righteousness, is there veiled under the appearance of bread, lest his glory vanquish his worshipers, so Beatrice as the Sun appears veiled within a cloud of flowers, her glory tempered to man's vision:

Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
la parte oriental tutta rosata,
e l'altro ciel di bel sereno adorno;
e la faccia del sol nascere ombrata,
sì che, per temperanza di vapori,
l'occhio la sostenea lunga fiata:

Gospel in the Mass (exception being made of the message often conveyed through the static arts. Cf. pp. 398-403).

235. "Sol iustitiae" (Mal. 4), "hac catena tenebrarum conclusi" (Wisd. 17), "lux vera" (John 1), "Custos quid de nocte?" (Isa. 21), "induamur opera lucis" (Rom. 13), "ignis quidem nulla vis poterat illis lumen praebere" (Wisd. 17), and others.

236. Albertus Magnus, *De sacrificio Missae*, cap. 1, on the Introit.

237. Much more could be said in regard to the details of this imagery, but it belongs to the realm of mysticism. Cf. Chap. V.

238. According to this doctrine, which Dante shared with all the churchmen of his time, at the "words of consecration" (*Hoc est corpus meum: hoc est sanguinis meum*) in the Mass, the reality present under the appearance of bread and wine ceases to be the reality of bread and wine, and becomes the reality of the Person of Christ. The term transubstantiation means literally change of substance, but the word "substance" is used not in the modern sense of chemical make-up, but in the philosophic sense of underlying truth.

così dentro una nuvola di fiori
 che da le mani angeliche saliva
 e ricadeva in giù dentro e di fuori,
 sovra candido vel cinta d'uliva
 donna m'apparve, sotto verde manto
 vestita di color di fiamma viva.²³⁹

Appropriately, the procession comes from the east and returns into it. Its source is the sun. Completed within the canonical times for the Mass, before noon the whole drama of the Pageant had passed.

As it is in response to Dante's seeking that Beatrice appears at last so it is in the Mass in response to the priest who stands before the people, like Dante a type of Christ, that Christ himself appears under the form of the elements. Beatrice's appearance here, crowned with the leaves of Minerva, makes definite her identification with Divine Wisdom,²⁴⁰ rather than with Divine Love, her usual character.²⁴¹ And, like the Christ,²⁴² she is about to appear in the sternness of judgment.

239. "Ere now have I seen, at dawn of day, the eastern part all rosy red, and the rest of heaven adorned with fair clear sky, and the face of the sun rise shadowed, so that by the tempering of the mists the eye long time endured him; so within a cloud of flowers, which rose from the angelic hands and fell down again within and without, olive-crowned over a white veil, a lady appeared to me, clad, under a green mantle, with hue of living flame." *Purg.*, xxx, 22-33.

240. The identification is borne out in her whole action at this point. Immediately after the Pageant, including her transfiguration in the chariot, Beatrice deliberately spoke to Dante in parables, at which he, failing to understand, protested and asked for explanation just as did the disciples. Although this instance is consonant primarily with Christ in his literal, earthly Body, no one familiar with Catholic devotions can be forgetful of the fact that Christ in his Sacramental Body is thought of as taking toward the soul that receives him, the attitudes he might have been expected to take to such a soul had he met it in Jerusalem or Galilee. For example, the communicant is frequently advised to think that he hears the Sacramental Christ addressing to him the words of consolation, of reproach, or of counsel, which Christ on earth addressed to those who came to him.

241. No contradiction lies between Beatrice as the Host and Beatrice primarily as Love, the Holy Spirit, since it is through the action of the Holy Spirit that all sacraments are accomplished.

Further, while the Father is named as Power, the Son as Wisdom, and the Holy Ghost as Love, actually each is Eternal Power, Wisdom, and Love. As Augustine had stated, each of the Divine Persons is what he *has*. Cf. Appendix, pp. 503-504, especially n. 6.

242. In the medieval tradition, the office of Judge of living and dead was considered as exercised by the Second Person of the Trinity, who as himself possessing human nature (as well as divine) was thought of as having a special sympathy and understanding in human affairs. He was, nevertheless, conceived as a Judge in no way lacking in strictness and sternness. The doctrine is based primarily on the saying in the Fourth Gospel: "And hath given him power to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." John 5. 27.

With more detailed analysis of this order of the symbolism, a further appropriateness is apparent for the simultaneous presence in the pageant of the three representations of Christ—Dante, the grifon, and Beatrice.²⁴³ Dante here is representative of Christ who in his earthly body himself received the sacred elements at his institution of the Eucharist,²⁴⁴ while the grifon, drawing the car, is representative of Christ as the head of his mystical body, humanity,²⁴⁵ in the midst of which the incarnate Logos appeared as at once victim and priest, offering his body and blood for men. Ever conscious of the dual vicariate thus instituted on earth, Dante included at the supreme moment in the greatest of all dramas, the Jewish welcome (springing from the pre-Christian church), *Veni sponsa de Libano*; the Virgilian or preimperial *Manibus o date lilia plenis*, spoken in grateful veneration of him whom, yet unborn and destined to premature death, Anchises revealed to Aeneas as hope of the Empire;²⁴⁶ together with the fulfilment of the hope of both in the hymn of the Incarnation, *Benedictus qui venis*. Finally, Beatrice is representative of Christ in his sacramental body, appearing with the brightness of the sun under the veiling of the elements. Thus completely in the Pageant of the Mass is revealed the function of the Logos in God's seeking of men and in men's seeking of God. This, the full message of Beatrice's eyes is revealed, however, only after the crisis in which is borne the bitter burden of evil.

Immediately with the miracle by which the presence of the Divine Sun is effected, as in the Mass, the corporate action becomes tremendously personal. God and the soul speak to each other; God in rebuke, the soul in trembling awe issuing in confession.

The shock of Beatrice's first words to Dante, spoken in accusation startlingly harsh, impresses the necessity of confession

243. Cf. p. 316.

244. Augustine points out that in the Eucharist Christ is both the Priest and the Sacrifice. The development of Eucharistic doctrine in medieval times rendered this conclusion inevitable, since the Bread contains Christ himself, and the priest acts only in his Name.

245. Note that it is the transformations of the car which in the second act of the Pageant unroll to Dante human history since the Incarnation.

246. Of Marcellus as a type of Christ, cf. the medieval interpretation of Virgil's famous prophecy in the Fourth Eclogue.

before communion. For wasted talents and all misspent life God rebukes the individual, and also the corporate body. In spite of the intensely personal nature of the scene (there is not another so personal described in the *Divina Commedia*, as there is nothing more intimate in the sacramental life of the Catholic soul) the intercourse is actually corporate. Further, at this point in the Mass, angels and saints add their voices to the cry of the sinner's whole discipline in virtue, interceding in his behalf, that communion may issue in beatitude.²⁴⁷ That the contemning of divine love in the turning to lesser goods from the one great Good²⁴⁸ may not sever the soul from the power of divine attraction, there must be penitence and the absolution that is in Lethe. With Beatrice's rebuke, the ice, which as the last trace of *gravezza* had gathered about Dante's heart, became breath and water;²⁴⁹ and in Lethe was washed away all consciousness of the *gravezza* of the *lupa*.

247. "Rogo ergo immensae largitatis Tuae abundantiam quatenus meam curare digneris infirmitatem, lavare forditatem, illuminare caecitatem, ditare paupertatem, vestire nuditatem, ut panem angelorum, Regem regum et Dominum dominantium tanta suscipiam reverentia et humilitate, tanta contritione et devotione, tanta puritate et fide, tali proposito et intentionem sicut expedit salutem animae meae . . . O amantissime Pater, concede mihi dilectum Filium Tuum, Quem nunc velatum in via suscipere propono, revelata tandem facie perpetuo contemplari. . . ."—"I implore therefore the abundance of Thine infinite Majesty, that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to heal my sickness, to wash my foulness, to enlighten my darkness, to enrich my poverty, and to clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of angels, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with such reverence and fear, such contrition and love, such faith and purity, such devotion and humility, as is expedient for the welfare of my soul . . . O most loving Father, grant me that Whom I now purpose to receive under a veil I may at length behold with open face, even Thy beloved Son. . . ." From a communion prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas.

248.

"E se 'l sommo piacer si ti fallio
per la mia morte, qual cosa mortale
dovea poi trarre te nel suo disio?"
Purg., xxxi, 52-54.

"And if the highest pleasure thus
failed thee by my death, what mortal
thing ought then to have drawn thee
to desire it?"

249.

"Lo gel che m'era intorno al cor ris-
tretto,
spirito e acqua fessi, e con angoscia
de la bocca e de li occhi uscì del
petto."

"The ice which had closed about my
heart became breath and water, and
with anguish through mouth and eyes
issued from my breast."

Purg., xxx, 97-99.

Both breath and water are symbols of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, in Italian, as in Latin and Greek, the same word may be used for spirit, breath, and wind. Cf. the play on the words in John 3. 5-8, where also water is associated with the spirit-wind.

That absolution is given by Matilda, Beatrice's messenger, but not until Beatrice has turned to the grifon to reflect in her eyes his dual being as man's judge and advocate, "as a sun in a mirror, not otherwise."²⁵⁰ Thus is won divine forgiveness. Thus only may the soul "filled with wonderment and glad" taste that "food which satisfying of itself, causes thirst of itself" thus permitting no static satiety. The soul dazzled and bereft of self-expression gazes into the face of veiled Deity for one of those moments which Dante described, as the sinking of the intellect so deep into its desire that even the memory has no power to follow back over the track—"appressando sè al suo disire, nostro intelletto si profonda tanto, che dietro la memoria non può ire."²⁵¹ It comes to itself only to find the Mass over and the recessional begun.

Prominent as is the symbolism of the first order, relating to Dante's personal experience, Dante is truly a type of Christ, who in his entrance into earthly life accepted the burden of the sin of all the world. In the narrowest sense it was upon the cross that Christ bore the sins of Adam's race, symbolized no doubt by the physical contact with Satan at the central point of all wickedness. Nevertheless, to medieval devotion the bearing of sin, the sacrifice before God, is in a larger sense coterminous with his life, and therefore is *in toto* represented in the Mass, in the action of which is set forth the whole of his life, from the Hebrew prophecies and the mysterious Annunciation on through the Childhood and Ministry and Passion to the Resurrection and Ascension.²⁵² Thus in the Pageant, representing the Mass, the Incarnate Life of Christ is as it were retold, and at the supreme moment Dante as type of the human Christ presents before God the sacrifice of agony for the sins of the world.²⁵³ Christ in the Pageant is Christ in heaven and on the

250. *Purg.*, xxxi, 121.

251. Cf. *Par.*, i, 7-9; xiv, 79-81; xxxiii, 59; Epistle XIII (X), 530; also pp. 99-100.

252. Cf. almost any Catholic book of devotions for the Mass. Children's mass books frequently picture mass scenes and Bible scenes together, to form in the child's mind the association as to the parts of Christ's life represented by the different moments of the Mass.

253. Thus in the culminating point of the Mass the priest as type and representative of Christ re-presents before God the One Sacrifice of Calvary. Cf. also p. 321 n. 244.

altar, one and the same, pleading before the Father, eternally and in connection with the Mass, his propitiation for the sins of the whole world; and ideally all humanity joins, in the Mass, in the pleading of the sacrifice and the agony over sin. Beatrice's rebuke, if read as the rebuke of the Divine Spirit to all humanity, voluntarily and legally represented by Christ, is not without poignancy. The sole value of human penitence and the possibility of the gift of absolution²⁵⁴ spring only from the sacrifice of the Mass, Christ's earthly sacrificial life rendered eternal, and the consequent communion. These are the two pillars of medieval theology, and the two pillars give form to the Earthly Paradise.

Illumined to share further in the divine self-contemplation through the experience of the Mass, Dante in meditation, given form in the remainder of the Pageant, looks back over the centuries. The car of the grifon is bound to the tree (humanity) which immediately bursts into leaf and flower. The church is given over into humanity's keeping, even as once was the garden of Eden to Adam. In this comparison is presage of the betrayal of the ideal in history. Yet Beatrice, surrounded by the seven nymphs, is left to guard the car, appearing now as the Holy Spirit who with his gifts and his writers is left to guide the church. The fitness of this transition has been expressed by many a writer in Dante's tradition. St. Ambrose for example states that:

Sicut ergo Dominus Christus et Verbum, et virtus, et sapientia et justitia et margarita et lux et via et resurrectio et caetera quae de eo scripta sunt, appellatur; ita et Spiritus sanctus sapientiae, intellectus, consilii, fortitudinis, scientiae, pietatis ac timoris, ut jam dictum est, nuncupatur. . . . Isti sunt septem oculi, qui in Zacharia propheta in uno lapide, id est, Domino Christo dicuntur inesse.²⁵⁵

As humanity prepares for its eternal citizenship the Holy Spirit gives instruction as to each personal mission.²⁵⁶ So with Dante

254. Absolution, or sacramental forgiveness of sins, following upon detailed confession of sin, confers nothing so negative as a removal of divine indignation, but a removal of that which separates the soul from God. Absolution is then the renewal of union, in which God with man bears the burden of *gravezza* which, though increased by sin, is in absolution bereft of its power to conquer.

255. Ambrose, "De xlii mansionibus filiorum Israel," cap. v (Migne, *P.L.*, 17, col. 542).

256. Cf. *Purg.*, xxxii, 100 ff.

as an individual and as type in Christ of humanity revealed at last to its own vision. That history of humanity, known first by the soul in suffering through the sacramental union with Christ in his Passion, is now reviewed under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The betrayal is reënacted: One sun of Rome, the Eagle of the empire, in the persecutions despoils the other, represented by the effulgent car. Heresy, the fox, close relative of the *lupa*, thus invited, attempts to take possession of the car, but is driven thence by Beatrice, for it is only the Holy Spirit who preserves the church in true understanding. The Eagle returns in the Donation of Constantine to feather the car and thus inaugurate the fateful triumph of Circe, over which Christ mourns: "O navicella mia, com mal se' carca!"²⁵⁷ The spiritual integrity of the church thus destroyed, a dragon severs the car in two (East-West schism) and the western remainder is left a prey to the merciless wand of Circe, who, usurping Beatrice's rightful place, intrigues with the lustful giant (House of Valois, the corrupt empire, the violence by which the *lupa* seeks its ends). This giant binds entirely to his own ends the harlot and her prey, the car of humanity horribly transformed (very likely the transfer of the papacy to Avignon)²⁵⁸ while the attendant virtues mourn over Circe's victory.

Beatrice, comforting those with her in the words of Christ, "Modicum, et non videbitis me; et iterum, sorelle mie dilette, modicum, et vos videbitis me," in the very number of her queenly steps recalls the infinite truth of reality, recollection of which in its ultimate stability brings new strength and vision out of every tragedy, however heart-rending or futile it may appear to be. Again in the nine steps of Beatrice who is a nine, is

257. "O my little bark, how ill art thou laden!" *Purg.*, xxxii, 129.

258. The harlot's mysterious glance at Dante may represent on the political level the attempt of the Guelph party to hold him in its ranks, the jealous giant representing the equally corrupt Ghibelline party. If Dante is taken as representative of Christ, however, the symbolism is plain. When the corrupt papacy turned its attention for the slightest moment to Christ, his will for men, and the needs of his individual members, the giant of the corrupt temporal power jealously dragged it to a location where the appeal of conscience would not be heard.

In some medieval illustrations for the Apocalypse is seen a figure much like the harlot of Dante's vision (cf. Rev. 17). Clothed in purple and gold, she rides a strange beast and holds a chalice within which coils a serpent.

recalled the structure of the universe upborne by the solar Trinity; in the tenth step about to be completed as she speaks to Dante, is suggested the salvation and completion of creation through twoness and fourness in the ultimate ten.²⁵⁹ Beatrice speaks to prophesy the coming of the Deliverer, who is soon to take his place in the actualization of Christ's redemption. The destruction of the giant and Circe is to be accomplished by the mysterious five-hundred-ten-and-five.²⁶⁰

Unfortunately, one can say little of the "hard riddle" without devoting a monograph to the subject. That which is important here is the aspect in which it gives ultimate significance to Dante's mission. Five-hundred-ten-and-five is rightly symbol of him who, as solar radiance, brings unity out of the duality of creation, the two fives, which united make up the ten of ultimate reality. At the same time, allegorically, five-hundred-ten-and-five is especially a symbol of Christ, and of the leader²⁶¹ who is to come in the five hundred fifteenth year of that age, especially given to men that they may at last prepare for the Sabbath of the Lord.²⁶²

In the Logos is practical solution of all problems of the *Commedia*. Christ as Deliverer stands as one and power of union between the two human families of Jew and Gentile.²⁶³ Through him is the unification of all warring pairs, not only those sinfully at enmity—church and empire, theology and philosophy—but those whose discordance seems rooted in the nature of

259. Cf. p. 339. On other levels of symbolism her steps have undoubtedly also their appropriate significance. That they represent a review of the history of the church has been suggested by Professor Fletcher. He suggests that the three movements of the procession represent the three centuries of the true church, while the steps of Beatrice represent the centuries which must elapse before its restoration. Professor Grandgent gives a different interpretation.

260. Cf., e.g., p. 306 n. 187a.

261. For attempted solutions of the "hard riddle" the reader is referred to all the Dante commentaries, for in practically every one he will find a different suggestion. The consensus of opinion is that on the level of allegory reference is intended to Dante's chosen hero, Henry or Can Grande. Cf. p. 29 n. 10.

In this connection Professor Fletcher's ingenuous interpretation of the DXV as Dominus Kanis Victoriosissimus, the superscription of the letter of dedication, seems worthy of special mention. As he himself would be the first to recognize, however, this in no way precludes interpretation on a deeper level with definite reference to Christ, such as could scarcely have been absent from Dante's mind. Cf. p. 470. For justification of more intricate interpretations, cf. Appendix V, Pt. I, ii (2).

262. Cf. p. 306, footnote.

263. Five is peculiarly the number of man.

things—good and evil, pleasure and pain. In Christ's dual nature is the fourfold solution of duality on earth. For him in the realm of scripture expression of duality is fourfold, even as in the realm of nature the action of the Trinity is ninefold. Both these symbolisms were necessary to Dante's understanding of his mission, scripture giving fuller revelation of nature. Perhaps in this connection the action of the Trinity is thought of as expressed through Beatrice, herself a nine,^{264a} and guide of Dante also a nine, that he may become star of philosophy to the true emperor, and monitor to Can Grande similarly a nine. It is of interest that Dante measures his own age by the solar cycle, thus suggesting a special association with the redemptive mission of the Divine Sun; while the association of Can Grande is with the cycle of Sirius the Dogstar, the Deliverer to come. The age of Beatrice Dante measures by the Great Cycle of the motion of the fixed stars, thus suggesting her governance of his mission even as the great cycle governs the precession of the solar equinoxes. This symbolism too, then, has its place on the level wherein Dante signifies Christ.

Up to this point in the symbolism, that which stands out is the Way. The Way on earth was opened up by Christ through his union in himself of the most fundamental of all conflicting pairs, and was illumined through the fourfold method. The Way which church and empire failed to keep straight is to be restored by the prophesied leader. Such symbolism looks forward to the symbolism of the mystic way, to be discussed in the next chapter, even as Dante's personal life and mission looked forward to the larger setting of the present chapter, with its relation to all humanity. The nine of the circumference is rendered comprehensible by the division into four wrought by the Cross of the Sun God. This second order of symbolism is but

264a. A significant fact in relation to Beatrice would appear to be the ninefold division of the "fruits of the Holy Ghost" based on Gal. 5. 22. Since the fruits of the Spirit are the supernatural effects of the action of the Divine Trinity in the souls of men, this "nine" may be said to be a "miracle whose sole root is the Trinity" even as Dante said the same of Beatrice. Herein is a further corroboration of the office of Beatrice in the *Divina Commedia* as that of a surrogate for the Third Person of the Trinity. Of further interest in view of the fact that Beatrice is in a sense the "star" Dante is to follow (*Inf.*, xv, 55), is the symbolizing of the nine fruits of the Holy Ghost by a nine-pointed star. Cf., e.g., F. R. Webber, *Church Symbolism*, p. 150. Cf. pp. 40 n. 48, 99 n. 251, 237 n. 514.

another tercet, necessitated by the first, and in its turn necessitating the third.

Dante at last, having added to understanding of himself an understanding of Christ and of all humanity, is prepared for the supreme sacramental union, through which alone comes revelation of his mission—to report “to those who live” words “concerning that life which is a race unto death.” Personally, even here an allegory of the Christ, Dante is about to ascend to heaven to perfect vision, and thereafter, paralleling the “mission of the Holy Ghost”^{264b} to return to earth as guide and mediator of the divine attraction to humanity, borne down under the betrayal to *gravezza*.²⁶⁵

As in the symbolism relating to Dante's personal story there was a gradual shift in emphasis from the situation of Dante Alighieri to the situation of humanity, so in the symbolism relating to Christ, there is a gradual shift of emphasis from his earthly to his mystical and then to his sacramental life, of which the implication is inevitably the mystic way. Whereas the divine grace of baptism²⁶⁶ was administered at the foot of the mount, where was washed away all mist of hell which could estrange from God, the full power of the sacraments was brought to Dante only in the Terrestrial Paradise. It seems probable that his confirmation²⁶⁷ (in Catholic theology the ordination of the layman), implicit in Virgil's crowning and mitering of him, is given its full meaning only in Beatrice's revelation to him of his mission, after his absolution²⁶⁸ in Lethe, and his communion²⁶⁹

264b. Cf. John 14. 16-18, 26; also 15. 26.

265. The tree that is rent, in the moral signification, is God's justice. *Purg.*, xxxiii, 71-72. It is also the Cross, with its fruit thus rent away, and also humanity. Cf. the words of the grifon, when he ties to it the car.

266. The first of the seven sacraments of the Catholic church, without which the others are invalid. Based on Matt. 28. 19, and John 3. 5.

267. *Confirmation*, the strengthening for the life of the Christian, based on Acts 8. 12-19; 19. 1-7; Heb. 6. 1. *Ordination*, the strengthening for and the gift of sharing in the divine priesthood of Christ; derived from various implications in the New Testament, interpreted by tradition of the church. It is a bar to *matrimony*, as matrimony is to it. For matrimony as a sacrament, cf. Matt. 19. 3-6, and Mark 10. 6-9.

268. Absolution is granted in the sacrament of *penance*. Cf. p. 324 n. 254.

269. *Communion*, the sacrament in which, through the body and blood of Christ, actual union with God is granted. See John 6, also accounts of Last Supper, etc.

in the Pageant of the Mass.²⁷⁰ The last anointing before death, purifying soul and body that it may rise to God, is symbolized in Eunoe.²⁷¹

In the Earthly Paradise glory is rendered to the unique power of the bread of angels²⁷² to work in man the transformation which shall rescue him eternally from the menace of Circe pasturage, and render him capable of the vision of eternity. In a sense, the whole of the *Paradiso* is but the necessarily sequential narrative of that revealed to Dante in the blinding vision of the moment of communion “la disposizion, ch' a veder e negli occhi pur teste dal sol percossi, senza la vista alquanto esser mi fee.”²⁷³ From that moment to the close of the *Commedia*, which for Dante occupies no lapse of time,²⁷⁴ Dante's conscious com-

270. Cf. p. 322.

271. *Unction*, normally the last of the seven sacraments, preparing for death. Under certain circumstances it may be repeated, as may matrimony. Jas. 5. 14-16. Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination are non-repeatable if validly administered. Penance and Communion normally are frequently repeated. The name Eunoe was formed by Dante from *évoia* or from *eu* (well) and *nois* or *nois* (mind). Cf. Dante's references to mind in the *Inferno*. Cf. pp. 183-186, 195, etc.

272. Those interested in the matter of the development of the Catholic theory of the Sacraments, and particularly of the Eucharist, will find a good survey in Miss Elizabeth F. Rogers' *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*. Justin Martyr pictures Christianity as a sacramental cult, but has no special term for sacraments. Tertullian used the term “sacramentum” (originally a solemn oath or obligation). Cyprian, like Tertullian, used the word loosely, to include Old Testament “types.” Hilary of Poitiers takes for granted the sacramental system, and considers that those who evaluate the union between Christians and God in terms of obedience and will solely, are heretics. Ambrose, in the first entire treatise devoted in the West to the sacraments, offers no definition, but gives a “very clear exposition of the sacramental idea.” Augustine attempts to define the term, but uses the word in a large and vague sense. Isidore derives the name from the secret operation of sacramental grace. His source for this is unknown. The doctrine of transubstantiation, at least in explicit form, dates from Paschasius Radbertus, ninth century. He was challenged by Rabanus Maurus and others. Ratramnus and Berengar of Tours were condemned for their opposition to this doctrine. Anselm of Lucca names only three sacraments, baptism, confirmation, communion. Gratian is vague as to number. Hugh of St. Victor begins the final formulation of the definition of sacrament (“A sacrament is a corporeal or material element sensibly presented from without, representing from its likeness, signifying from its institution, and containing from sanctification, some invisible and spiritual grace”). Nevertheless, his use of the term is vague. Peter Lombard is positive but cautious. His hesitating treatment of penance and ordination shows that it is still a novelty to call them sacraments. But he definitely enumerates the orthodox seven. All later discussion is based on the foundation laid by Peter Lombard. (Dante's authority in all probability was Thomas Aquinas.)

273. “That condition of the sight, which is in eyes but just smitten by the sun, made me remain a while without vision.” *Purg.*, xxxii, 10-12.

274. It is true that time is running onward while Dante is in Paradise. Nevertheless, when the blessed are thought of as being in eternity and not in time, un-

munion was unbroken, as his vision never wavering from the Sun, was strengthened to penetrate more and more deeply into its mystery.

affected by the continual progression of time in the lower universe, it is regarded as possible for a living person, under exceptional circumstances, to be transported into the eternal realm, where he experiences no time, though leaving and returning to the earthly world at different points of time. Many tales built on such a theme are known (cf. p. 426 n. 77, for a folk tale on this order). It would seem that Dante wished his experience in Paradise to be regarded in this light, though perforce narrating it sequentially.

CHAPTER V. SCHEMA

PART I

I. Motif of Dante's symbolism formed from the study of inner experience as the tendency flowered in the thirteenth century. Basis is distinction between *Infinitas* and *Unendlichkeit*. Eternal Unity, like the Sun, creates from Nothing as a *quartum quid* the continuing universe. Mystic quest concerned with the relation of the *quartum quid* to infinite Tri-unity. Its initiation in the recognition of evil as the absolute negation of the solar Trinity, hence as impotent, lacking in life, light, and heat. The first phase of the quest is purgation (but the phases are inseparable).

II. Essential to the seeker for knowledge is not only sane discipline of the emotions, in which is maintained harmony between discipline and grace, but also discipline of the intellect in which is maintained harmony between the rational and the suprarational. Augustine, although the means of triumphant union of theology and philosophy, nevertheless, left to posterity an evil gift. The Augustinian tradition in Dante's time maintained the supremacy of the light of faith and inner experience over that of reason. The Averroists made similar claim for reason over faith. Dante, following Thomas Aquinas and the more balanced mystics of his time, maintained their mutual autonomies. For him as for Neoplatonism, the suprarational was a terminus found by reason at its highest.

III. Perils of the way of union. Met through comprehension of the relation of permanence to change. Reconciliation of opposites truly accomplished only in eternity. Mystic's life of necessity in cycles like the sun's career. Progression in the way of union from light to brighter light, through which as preparation the eye of man is strengthened to behold unharmed the ultimate glory of the light faintly symbolized in the Sun.

PART II

The third order of Dante's symbolism consists of the application of the fourfold method to the materials of symbolism as they relate to the third of man's four sources of knowledge—reason, given focus in the fourfold Sun. This order leads directly to the anagoge which is dependent on grace, the last of the four sources of knowledge. Even as the second order of symbol-

ism was demanded by the first, so the third is demanded by the second, upon which it follows as the trope. In it, the levels of letter, allegory, and trope refer to the three phases of progress in the Way to ultimate vision of things as a whole. The pattern of interpretation which appears in harmony with the tradition to which Dante fell heir, is that given on p. 372, *q.v.*

CHAPTER V. SYMBOLISM IN MEDIEVAL THOUGHT: RELATION TO MYSTICISM

Ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne;
se non che la mia mente fu percossa
da un fulgore in che sua voglia
venne.
A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e il
velle,
sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

But not for this were my proper wings,
save that my mind was smitten by a
flash wherein its will came to it. To
the high fantasy here power failed;
but already my desire and will were
rolled—even as a wheel that moveth
equally—by the Love that moves the
sun and the other stars.

THUS far the Divine Sun has appeared as a focus of life, maintaining in its oneness and threeness the structure of the universe, and in its twoness and fourness determining the relationship of the universe to itself. That Dante is to write of these things he gives warning in the first tercets of the *Paradiso*: he has been in that brightest of heavens wherein is taken up most perfectly the all-pervading glory of him who moves all things.¹ The interest roused by these lines has frequently turned to annoyance as the second tercet is completed: "And I have seen things which one who descends therefrom has neither power nor knowledge to relate."² Probably, after all, he has seen nothing, and therefore, of course, cannot tell of it. Such is the natural reaction of him who has seen less to him who, having seen more, finds difficulty in making himself understood. In this critical conjecture there is a truth not often realized.

More incomprehensible even than the mystery of the Tri-unity was the mystery of the Incarnation; and the flash wherein this was revealed carried Dante beyond the realm of symbols to the accomplishment of the mystic quest³ ("già volgeva il mio disio e il velle, sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa, l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle"). The deep mystery of the Incarnation lies less in its duality than in its quaternity,⁴ wherein is contained the mystery of Infinite Tri-unity in relationship to nothingness. Within oneness and threeness perceived through study

1. "La gloria di colui che tutto move per l'universo penetra e risplende in una parte più e meno altrove. Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende fu' io." *Par.*, i, 1-5.

2. "E vidi cose che ridire nè sa nè può chi di là su discende." *Par.*, i, 5-6.

3. That is, complete motivation of desire and will by the love that moves the sun and the other stars.

4. Cf. pp. 248, 281-282, etc.

of the natural universe is contained the metaphysics of Dante's tradition. Within twoness and fourness illustrated in scripture is contained its epistemology. Of these the necessary complement is that known now as "theory of values," but in the Middle Ages as the "Way."⁵ The secret of the Way is determined by the relationship to Nothing of Infinite Tri-unity, and so brings in the four, not primarily as a power of two (in which sense it applies to method), but as the sum of the Tri-unity and that on which it acts, the Nothing.⁶ However strangely such language may fall upon modern ears, it contains in reality nothing of the occult. It is natural to minds that ponder on the finite and on the infinite.⁷

The metaphysics and the epistemology were the subject matter of the two preceding chapters; that which is to be considered here is their complement. The concern is then not the solution of the problem of man's personal relationship to God through the universe of nature and humanity, nor even of the mutual seeking of God for man and man for God in the drama of history, but it is the Way which each must follow in his solitary Quest.

The Logos, Creator and Redeemer, his earthly mission completed, sent forth his Spirit, that the Way of knowledge might be made manifest to men. Augustine speaks in his *Confessions*, of the Platonists, who "saw whither they were to go, but knew nothing of the way" and of the Christians, to whom had been revealed "that path which leads unto that blessed country."⁸ This

5. As De Wulf has pointed out, the difference between philosophy and theology in the Middle Ages lay not in their subject matter, which was identical, but in their point of view and approach. The same might be said of medieval epistemology and its belief in revelation through the Divine Word; as also of the theory of values and the devotional life of the soul (mysticism).

6. This as the complete expression of reality becomes the sum of one, two, three, and four in ten. Ten is also the sum of the One and the Nine, the Divine Unity and the Miracle whose root is the Trinity. Cf. p. 30 and Appendix V, Pt. I, i.

7. It is to be hoped that some time the historical development of the concept of infinity may be given thorough treatment. Here it is possible only to suggest the age-long struggle in man's thinking, between the concept of *Unendlichkeit*—limitless extension in time or space—and the concept of Infinity, given definition by Boethius to become classical in later thought for the inspiration of Thomas of Aquino and of Dante Alighieri.

8. Augustine distinguishes "inter videntes, quo eundem sit, nec videntes qua; et viam ducentem ad beatificam patriam." *Confessions*, 7, 20.

phase of the study leads inevitably into the realm of mysticism: that is, the attempt so to live in all phases of the personality⁹ that through increasing penetration into the mystery of reality the mind may be prepared to gaze at last upon the whole. The Way is studied against the background of the inner life, in its response to God's self-revelation through the two external sources of knowledge, nature and scripture, in their illumination by the two internal sources, reason and grace. Yet complete vision of the Way such as to include its goal lies beyond the realm of expression. Dante had seen the Nothing which is the base of finite creation, in its relationship to Infinity; and could not tell of it because language and symbols themselves are but a product of this relationship.

PART I. THE SUN IN MEDIEVAL TRADITION (INNER EXPERIENCE)

I. THE INFINITE FOCUS OF CREATION

It was in reality not so much the relationship of the Son to the Father, as the Infinity of Deity itself, that was given definition in the *Symbolum* which resulted from the Athanasian controversy and ever after distinguished initiates of the Way from those who knew merely whither they were to go. The One and the Logos were as much Generator and Generated, whether the relationship were expressed through the symbol of parenthood or through the symbol of sun and radiance. The necessity for correcting symbol by symbol is evident; for the symbol of parental relationship used alone presupposes, as Arius justly pointed out, the finitude of the Son.¹⁰ The sun and radiance symbolism makes comprehensible at the same time with the sonship, the infinite nature. It was the infinity and eternity, alike of God as Father and of God as Son, which solar symbolism clarified for those who followed the Athanasian tradition.

9. This conception of mysticism was held not only in the Middle Ages. It has been expressed by a modern analytic student as: "la mise en oeuvre de cette croyance par l'intermédiaire du cerveau des croyants, à l'aide de certaines pratiques adjuvantes (prieres, ascétisme, contemplation, initiations, méditations, contagion mentale, intoxications, etc.)." Marie, *Mysticisme et Folie*, p. 19.

10. Because of generation in time.

ETERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Infinity, according to mathematical definition a whole of which its every fraction¹¹ is equal to itself, necessarily is assumed in a definition of tri-unity. Dionysius meditated on that peculiar unity without a share in which nothing exists in the world, on the existence of which all depends—the One which "is not one of the many things in the world, but is before all Unity and Multiplicity and gives to all Unity and Multiplicity their definite bounds." He adds, "if all things be conceived as being ultimately unified with each other, then all things taken as a whole are One."¹² Such was the one simple Light of the *Paradiso*.¹³ The reason for this character of the unity¹⁴ is its infinity. Infinity acting on zero, as shown in the simple process of multiplication, produces the finites. Thus in creation, God, the Tri-unity, acting on that nothingness which constitutes the *quantum quid*, eternally gives being to the continuing finite universe. Thus truly without God all creation is nothing.

In Deity is bound up the mystery of number.¹⁵ God in three

11. Produced by division by a finite number.

12. "For there is nothing in the world without a share in the One; and, just as all number participates in unity (and we speak of *one* couple, *one* dozen, *one* half, *one* third, or *one* tenth) even so everything and each part of everything participates in the One, and on the existence of the One all other existences are based, and the One Cause of all things is not one of the many things in the world, but is before all Unity and Multiplicity and gives to all Unity and Multiplicity their definite bounds. For no multiplicity can exist except by some participation in the One: that which is many in its accidental qualities is one in its substance; that which is many in number of faculties is one in species; that which is many in its emanating activities is one in its originating essence. . . . And without the One there can be no Multiplicity; yet contrariwise the One can exist without the Multiplicity just as the Unit exists before all multiplied Number. And if all things be conceived as being ultimately unified with each other, then all things taken as a whole are One." Dionysius the Areopagite, *On Divine Names*, tr. C. E. Rolt, chap. 13, par. 2.

13. For God as the perfect Unit, cf. also Thomas Aquinas, *S.Th.*, 1, Q. 4, art. 2. Cf. also *Par.*, xxviii, 16-21, and xxxiii, 89-90. From this perfect Unit comes all multiplicity, a fact expressed by Cacciaguada in the Heaven of Mars: "Tu credi che a me tuo pensier mei da quel che è primo, così come raia da l'un, se si conosce, il cinque e 'l sei"—"Thou deemest that to me thy thought hath way e'en from the primal Thought, as ray forth from the monad, rightly known, the pentad and the hexad." *Par.*, xv, 55-57.

14. Dionysius prefaced the passage just quoted with the statement, "And the title 'One' implies that it is all things under the form of Unity through the Transcendence of its single Oneness, and is the Cause of all things without departing from that Unity." *Loc. cit.*

15. He who is surprised or baffled by the prominence of number symbolism in medieval thought and expression should remind himself constantly that in such

aspects as the first cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause, is Alpha and Omega, with all that lies between. He is given appropriate expression in the number three, early chosen as sacred among numbers because unique in its outlining of beginning, middle, and end. To his unity, the solar unity from which radiates forth all number,¹³ his very name bears witness through its initial letter.¹⁶ God is Three and God is One; yet with four also there exists a peculiar relationship. The cross of the solar deity, on which suffered God the Son in his human nature as the Second Adam, divides the disk of the sun into four quadrants by its four arms, directing to the four cardinal points of the compass.¹⁷ (On Calvary it was inscribed with four words: Iesus Nazar. Rex Iudaeorum.) Essentially a triple cross, into it enter four circles—equator, zodiac, equinoctial colure, and horizon.^{18a} The message of the Logos was carried by four evangelists, even as the cortege of the solar god is represented by the four "fixed" signs of the zodiac.^{18b} The very name of God tends always to appear

symbolism the aim was then the expression of deeper truths than those of mathematics as now generally conceived. The significance of One in religion and in philosophy is clear, in the persistent strivings of the human mind for monotheism and for monism. Two expresses the fundamental dualities of the universe, which make monism and monotheism alike seem so beset with contradictions. Three (to give one among innumerable instances of its presentation in the world of thought) expresses the great problem of modern philosophy, the knowledge relation, with its factors of the known, the knower, and the relationship between them; and Four, as Philo justly pointed out, is the mathematical number of extended matter.

16. For a further discussion of Dante's ideas as to the Divine Name, cf. D. Guerri, "Il nome adamitico di Dio," in *Di alcuni versi dotti della Divina Commedia*, 1908.

17. The east represented the head of the cross, the origin of light. The west represented the foot of the cross, the country to which salvation goes. The north represented the left arm of the cross, the realm of sin. The south represented the right arm of the cross, the seat of grace. The initials of the four corresponding winds, Anatole, Dysis, Arctos, and Mesembria, spell ADAM.

18a. Cf. *Par.*, i, 39, and p. 161. Cf. also Howard Candler, *On the Symbolic Use of Number in the Divina Commedia and Elsewhere*.

18b. There is almost a correspondence between the symbolic animal forms of the evangelists, and those of the four fixed signs of the zodiac, the four points of the cosmic cross. Taurus, the Bull, suggests the second beast of Rev. 4. 7, while Leo, the lion, recalls the first. Aquarius, the Water-Carrier, is human, even as the third beast has a face as a man. St. John, however, is represented, not by Scorpio, but by a flying eagle. It is interesting that the animals corresponding to the four types of "elemental" spirits, in popular pneumatology of the time and later, are those of the evangelists, rather than those of the zodiac. (There is also an association of the four rivers with the four evangelists. Cf. p. 267 n. 82.)

The four beasts characteristically associated with the sun god were interpreted by Irenaeus (second century) as referring to the human nature, royal character,

as composed of four letters— $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$,^{19a} Deus, Dieu, Alla, Jove, JHVH—the sacred Tetragrammaton.

priestly office, and divine grace of Christ. In consequence they represented also the four evangelists, whose descriptions of Christ stress four different aspects of his character. There was some fumbling, nevertheless, before there could be well established the medieval association of the man with St. Matthew, the lion with St. Mark, the ox with St. Luke, and the eagle with St. John.

Table of the Four Winged Beasts of Ezek. 1 and Rev. 4, as interpreted in various symbolic schemes.

	WINGED LION	WINGED OX (CALF)	WINGED MAN	FLYING EAGLE
Primary Meaning (Irenaeus, 2d cent.)	Royal character of Christ	Priestly office of Christ	Human nature of Christ	Divine grace of Christ
Secondary Meaning (Irenaeus)	St. John	St. Luke	St. Matthew	St. Mark
Secondary Meaning (Athanasius)	St. Luke	St. Mark	St. Matthew	St. John
Secondary Meaning (Augustine: Bede)	St. Matthew	St. Luke	St. Mark	St. John
Secondary Meaning (later medieval tradition, with reason assigned)	St. Mark, opens gospel with "one crying in the wilderness"	St. Luke, gives full account of the sacrificial death of Christ	St. Matthew, traces the human lineage of Christ	St. John, his gospel soars on eagles' wings to heaven

With reference to Christ Jerome said:

"Homo nascendo,
Vitus moriendo,
Leo resurgendo,
Aquila ascendo."

Adam of St. Victor wrote:

"Man—of woman generated;
Ox—in offering dedicated;
Lion—having death defeated;
Eagle—mounting to the sky."

There are discussions in Gourmont, *Le Latin mystique*, p. 289, and in F. R. Webber, *Church Symbolism*, pp. 185 ff.

19a. John of Damascus, in his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 9, derives the Greek term for God, $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, alternatively from $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega$, to run (Plato's etymology), "because he courses through all things," from $\alpha\theta\epsilon\omega$, to burn, because he "is a fire consuming all evil," and from $\theta\epsilon\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$, because he is all-seeing. It is to be noted that all-seeingness, fiery consumption of evil, and "coursing through all things" are the time-honored characteristics of the sun god. Cf. pp. 108 ff.

Fundamental to this symbolism of Tri-unity and four is the truth that the Infinite Tri-unity *creates*.

Verily the light passeth over many . . . substances and enlightens those which are beyond them, and there is no visible thing unto which the light reacheth not in the exceeding greatness of its proper radiance. Yea, and it contributes to the birth of material bodies and brings them unto life, and nourishes them that they may grow, and perfects and purifies and renews them.^{19b}

Thus is brought in the nine to express the creation of the triune light in relation with the fourth:^{19c} that produced by the symbolic meaning of a number is represented by the number's square. Nine representing the circumference of all that is,^{20a} given meaning by the central point, is summarized by the all-pervasive one and ten. The eternal relationships of the Godhead lie within itself, relationships between Father and Son, between each and the Holy Ghost. Then in exuberant love creation is brought forth, the finite universe in the place of nothing. Thus are established external relationships of the Godhead—of the Divine Three to a *quartum quid*. Such relationship by necessity implies duality, and the maintenance of this duality within the unity brought upon Deity itself the shadow of the Cross. Finally, from the summation of the one, the two, the three, and the four springs the sacred ten within which is contained God

19b. Dionysius, *op. cit.*, iv, 4.

19c. It is of interest that in the Kabalah, that subtle, elusive, and esoteric power which shared in the molding of medieval quests, there was a harmonization in ten of the four with the nine. Within each of the four realms brooded over by Macroprosopus are three trinities (intellectual, moral, and material) making up the nine, to which is added the tenth, Malkuth, the Queen and Bride of Microprosopus, which in the lowest realm is the earth, and in other realms becomes increasingly spiritualized as the material on which Deity acts. (In the Tetragrammaton, "J" may be interpreted as the Father, "H" the Mother, "V" the Son, and the final "H" the Son's Bride.)

All the emanations are as it were veils to hide the Trinity of the unknowable (the Negative "One" or Ain, the Ain Soph or Limitless, and the Ain Soph Aur or Limitless Light). Moreover, in the diagrammatic arrangement of the ten, emanations or Sephiroth, each becomes a part of the symbolic body, and through the ninth, the ninefold mystery is united after sexual analogy to the tenth, representing the created universe, the womb of which is in Jerusalem. Upon the continuance of union of God and the universe localized in Jerusalem, therefore, depends the joy and well-being of the universe. For Jewish mysticism accepted at last in full literalness the sex symbolism of Reality, in connection with the solar symbolism of the Limitless Light which surrounds and flows out from the Ineffable.

20a. Cf. p. 237 n. 514.

and his creation together with all their interrelationships.^{20b} This minimum of number symbolism is plain even to the novice in solar worship: The unity of the Light which pervades all things; the duality in the radiance which unites the sun and the earth; the trinity of life, light, and heat;²¹ and the quaternity of the triune sun and the earthly life which it brings into being. The world—the soul—is finite. It was brought forth by the infinite from nothing, as time and space themselves were brought forth.

ETERNAL VERSUS CONTINUAL

Even after Ambrose's revelation of the symbolic method, it was the inability to conceive of an infinity not extended in time or space, that formed a last intellectual barrier to Augustine's acceptance of Christianity.²² Only after attainment to this concept,²³ however, was his mind freed for the solution of the mystic's question which pagan philosophy had left unsolved: How can the individual soul, Nothing made finite, place itself in such relation to that Infinite that his will may be moved by "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle." On such matters as these Boe-

20b. It is from the summation of the One of Deity, the Two of the Female or Creative Principle (the Logos is feminine, for instance, in the Book of Proverbs. Cf. p. 135 n. 97), the Three of creation in the Realm of Ideas, and the Four of creation in the universe of time, space, and matter, that the sacred Ten is reached, which therefore signifies God and his creation together, with all their interrelationships. Cf. Appendices V, Pt. I, i, and V, Pt. I, ii, also pp. 465 ff.

21. It is interesting that in Philo's presentation are involved the same elements as in any solar development, with at the same time the omission of the conscious use of trinity for the Divine.

22. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. V, cap. 10-11.

23. His expression of which was to become basic: "Summus enim es et non mutaris, neque peragitur in te hodiernus dies, et tamen in te peragitur, quia in te sunt et ista omnia; non enim haberent vias transeundi, nisi contineres ea. Et quoniam anni tui non deficiunt, anni tui hodiernus dies: et quam multi iam dies nostri et patrum nostrorum per hodiernum tuum transierunt, et ex illo acceperunt modos, et utcumque extiterunt, et transibunt adhuc alii et accipient et utcumque existent. Tu autem idem ipse es, et omnia crastina atque ultra omniaque hesternae et retro hodie facies, hodie fecisti." *Confessions*, Bk. I, cap. 6.

This classical expression of infinity, given support by the clearer definition of Boethius, wove itself into the very fabric of medieval intellectual life. Cf. for example the statement of Anselm: "In this way dost thou transcend all things, even the eternal, because thy eternity and theirs is present as a whole with thee; while they have not yet that part of their eternity which is to come, just as they no longer have that part which is past. For so thou dost ever transcend them since thou art ever present with thyself, and since that to which they have not yet come is ever present with thee." *Proslogion*, cap. 20.

thius pondered during the disintegration of the Roman Empire while in long unjust imprisonment he awaited torture and death. He, too, found solution in the perfecting of his conception of infinity.

Although the infinity fundamental in the systems of Plotinus and Augustine had been given implicit definition at Nicaea, it was Boethius who gave the supreme definition for the Middle Ages, a definition to be quoted by "The Philosopher" himself who in the *Paradiso* is made by Dante to point out its formulator as

l'anima santa che 'l mondo fallace
fa manifesto a chi di lei ben ode.
Lo corpo ond' ella fu cacciata giace
giuso in Cieldauro; ed essa da martiro
e da essilio venne a questa pace.²⁴

In this bitter exile Boethius was consoled by Lady Philosophy, Divine Wisdom, who later, after the death of Beatrice, was to console Dante in his own eventful exile. Eternity, the Lady defined for Boethius as "the simultaneous and complete possession of infinite life." She explained:

This will appear more clearly if we compare it with temporal things. All that lives under the conditions of time moves through the present from the past to the future; there is nothing set in time which can at one moment grasp the whole space of its lifetime. It cannot yet comprehend tomorrow: yesterday it has already lost. And in this life of today your life is no more than a changing, passing moment.²⁵

The distinction between eternity and *Unendlichkeit* is brought out unmistakably in the words which follow: "As Aristotle said of the universe, so it is of all that is subject to time; though it never began to be nor will ever cease, and its life is co-extensive with the infinity of time [*Unendlichkeit*] yet it is not such as can be held to be eternal. For though it apprehends and grasps a space of infinite lifetime, it does not embrace the whole simultaneously; it has not yet experienced the future."²⁶

24. "The sainted soul, which unmasketh the deceitful world to whoso giveth it good hearing. The body whence it was chased forth, lieth down below in Cieldauro, and itself from martyrdom and exile came unto this peace." *Par.*, x, 125-129.

25. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, tr. W. V. Cooper, Bk. V, prose vi.
26. *Ibid.*

What we should rightly call eternal is that which grasps and possesses wholly and simultaneously the fullness of unending life, which lacks naught of the future, and has lost naught of the fleeting past; and such an existence must be ever present in itself to control and aid itself, and also must keep present with itself the infinity of changing time. Therefore, people who hear that Plato thought that this universe had no beginning of time and will have no end, are not right in thinking that in this way the created world is co-eternal with its creator.²⁷

Thus, "to pass through unending life, the attribute which Plato ascribes to the universe, is one thing; but it is another thing to grasp simultaneously the whole of unending life in the present."²⁸

God is older than his creations, not "by any period of time, but rather by the peculiar property of his own single nature. For the infinite changing of temporal things . . . falls from the single directness of the present, into an infinite space of future and past. . . . Thus if we would apply proper epithets to those subjects, we can say, following Plato, that God is eternal, but the universe is continual. . . ."²⁹ Moreover, "God has a condition of ever-present eternity, His knowledge . . . views in its own direct comprehension everything as though it were taking place in the present."³⁰ This same idea was expressed later among the schoolmen, also through the simile of God as the timeless, spaceless center present in the same manner to every point of the time-space circumference.³¹ So excellent, however,

27. Boethius, *loc. cit.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. "If you would weigh the foreknowledge by which God distinguished all things, you will more rightly hold it to be a knowledge of a never-failing constancy in the present, than a foreknowledge of the future. Whence Providence is more rightly to be understood as a looking forth than a looking forward, because it is set far from low matters and looks forth upon all things as from a lofty mountain top above all." *Ibid.*

Boethius points out that this seeing by God of "all things in his eternal present" exerts no compulsion on events of man's future. "You can change your purpose, but since the truth of Providence knows in its present that you can do so, and whether you do so, and in what direction you may change it, therefore you cannot escape that divine foreknowledge: just as you cannot avoid the glance of a present eye, though you may by your free will turn yourself to all kinds of different actions. . . . The ever-present eternity of His sight moves in harmony with the future nature of our actions." *Ibid.*

This concept is well pictured in the circle simile noted above. Cf. with the statement by Augustine that by Anselm, quoted p. 340 n. 23.

31. Dante has a vision of Love weeping, in the *Vita Nuova* (cap. 12). In response to Dante's question as to the cause of his weeping, he replies: "Ego tamquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentiae partes; tu

did "The Philosopher of the Middle Ages" consider this work of Boethius to be, that with no restatement and little expansion, he simply quotes the older formulation in his compendium of Catholic theology.

It is this eternity, true infinity, of the Tri-unity, that makes possible that inversion of the world of appearances which marks the entrance of the mystic on his quest. It is, moreover, the direct taking up of finite nature into infinity through the duality of the Incarnation, that renders this experience possible to man,³² in defining eternally the relation to the Tri-unity of the *quartum quid*. As this at-one-ment of finite and infinite was accomplished by God through the Logos, so for man it must be accomplished through a recognition of symbolism in experience and language.³³ Discipline, illumination, and union are the three strands of the Way.

INVERSION OF THE NOTHING

Only with the turning toward the Divine Sun as the infinite focus of creation does the mystic enter seriously upon his quest, and for this turning, in which is involved inversion of the world of appearance, there is demanded the utmost of discipline. Abhorrence of evil becomes recognition of its impotence, as the Worm is dethroned from the center of the universe. So completely does Dionysius reverse the world of appearance that for him even devils, in so far as they exist, are not naturally evil. In other words, evil, from the point of view of eternity, is lacking

autem non sic." Cf. also the discussion in Thomas Aquinas, *Summae contra gentiles*, Bk. 1, cap. 66, 6.

32. This infinity which could take up finity into itself was the model for the solution of all Dante's problems. Cf. pp. 465 ff. and diagram p. 98.

33. Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite, whose works, as translated by Erigena, are basic in all of western mysticism, has laid stress on the ease with which man, clinging to the familiar notion of his senses, is led astray by the superficial meaning of the ultimate truth: "As I have said elsewhere, we misinterpret things above us by our own conceits and cling to the familiar notions of our senses, and measuring Divine things by our human standards, we are led astray by the superficial meaning of the Divine and Ineffable Truth. Rather should we then consider that while the human intellect hath a faculty of intelligence, whereby it perceives intellectual truths, yet the act whereby the Intellect communes with the things that are beyond it transcends its intellectual nature. This transcendent sense, therefore, must be given to our language about God, and not our human sense." Dionysius, *op. cit.*, viii, 1. Cf. the discussion of functional and literal truth, Appendix IV, Pt. I, i.

in both power and life, as Dante, from the point of view of time, beheld it in Cocytus in the process of becoming. The real meaning of Plato's allegory of the Cave is just this reversal: "The man in Plato's allegory of the Cave . . . knew that his chief task was to turn the prisoners round so that they could face in the direction of the sun."³⁴ True as it is that "the sun will do the rest," it will do it only if man responds to it perfectly; and that he may be capable of such response, long discipline is necessary. Dionysius has given the summary:

This great, all-bright and ever-shining sun, which is the visible image of the Divine Goodness, faintly reëchoing the activity of the Good, illumines all things that can receive its light, while retaining the utter simplicity of light, and expands above and below throughout the visible world the beams of its own radiance. And if there is aught that does not share them, this is not due to any weakness or deficiency in its distribution of the light, but is due to the unreceptiveness of those creatures which do not attain sufficient singleness to participate therein.³⁵

The attainment of this "singleness" is that which the mystic describes as the "purgative way,"³⁶ the first labor of him who has set out on the mystic quest.

Gradually all that distracts, and so subjects to *gravezza* as opposed to the upward drawing of the Divine Sun, infinite focus of creation, is not only eradicated, but, after repentance and its sacrament, given over to oblivion as deep as that produced by Lethe. Even the memory of *gravezza* must not remain to oppose its shadow to the redeeming Light. In this purgative phase of the mystic progress the body is necessarily subjected to discipline, not in punishment, but as a sort of military training, that it may remain subject to the intellect, and sensitive, even in crises, to each faintest sign which would indicate the way.³⁷

34. C. A. Bennett, *Philosophical Study of Mysticism*, p. 168.

35. Dionysius, *op. cit.*, iv, 4.

36. Whereas this particular term, together with the terms "illuminative way" and "unitive way," did not become current till after Dante's time, the stages of progress which they signify are a permanent characteristic of the mystical life. Mystical life is not an arbitrary attempt to go through a mapped-out scheme, but a development from a certain point of origin according to a natural psychological process. It is true that many of the pioneers in analyzing mystic stages listed four, or seven, or nine such stages; but this does not alter the fact that the stages listed are but subdivisions, each of which can be subsumed under one of the three natural major divisions of mystic progress.

37. It is only through the harmonious functioning of desire as perfectly or-

Mysticism was not then, as it is so often considered nowadays, a vague dreaminess or even such perception of the infinite in all things as Wordsworth expressed in connection with his primrose. It was rather the tedious and perilous adventure of a lifetime, the least swerving from which placed the pilgrim in the environment of Dante's *Inferno*, and involved in the fulfilment of which was crucifixion. Mystics of all times have pointed out that man may not love God with impunity.³⁸

The discipline of the mystic way must be, moreover, not only physical and moral, but also, and obviously, intellectual, since its aim is the Vision. Pourrat explains, paraphrasing Dionysius:

This needful purification is at once moral and intellectual. The soul must separate itself from creatures and be preserved from voluptuousness, like Moses, who, before going up Mount Sinai and entering the mysterious cloud, separated himself from his people in order to sanctify himself. It must finally strip itself of the imagination of sense and of imperfect ideas which can only hinder it in its desire to reach contemplation. The soul thus prepared will enter into the divine light and become united to God in contemplation.^{39a}

Thomas à Kempis says later: "And hence we find but few contemplatives, because there are but few who can wholly disengage themselves from perishable and created things."^{39b} Thus the constant tendency in man's nature to worship the symbol rather than the thing symbolized is simply evidence of insufficient discipline in the mystic way, but at the same time right use of symbol⁴⁰ is man's only means of progress in that way, until at last his vision be bathed in the river of light. This aspect of the mystic progress has been termed the illuminative way.

Through such purgation and illumination man, setting forth

dered by intellect that the intellect is given its greatest power to know. Thus one must be holy to know, even as through knowledge one may increase in holiness.

38. E.g., "The soul instinctively knows that God cannot be loved with impunity." E. Hermann, *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, p. 134.

39a. Pourrat, P., *Christian Spirituality*, p. 219.

39b. A Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Bk. IV, 31, 1.

40. "I say not (as was feigned by the ancient myth) that the Sun is the God and Creator of this universe, and therefore takes the visible world under his special care; but I say that the 'invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'" Dionysius, *op. cit.*, iv, 4.

The translator, after giving the reference to Rom. 1. 20, adds as footnote, "The sun is not personal or supra-personal, but its impersonal activity is an emblem, as it were, of God's supra-personal activity."

a living ghost from nothingness with eternity around him,⁴¹ is prepared for the fulfilment of the promise in his initiation, wherein he is *renatus in aeternum*. Medieval literature is filled with a sense that that which alone is desired by all creation is the sun, source of life, light, and heat. Dionysius, venerated by Dante as "that taper's light, which, in the flesh below, saw deepest into the angelic nature and its ministry,"⁴² states:

and like as after the Good all things do yearn—those that have mind and reason seeking It by knowledge, those that have perception seeking It by perception, those that have no perception seeking It by the natural movement of their vital instinct, and those that are without life and have mere existence seeking It by their aptitude for that bare participation whence this mere existence is theirs. . . . All material things desire the sun, for they desire either to see or to move and to receive light and warmth and to be maintained in existence by the light.⁴³

The price of the threefold detriment in man is the long discipline which must precede the fulfilment of his desire.

Occasionally the soul is vouchsafed a moment of clear sight as with Dante in the *Primum Mobile* when, without effort, as the fruit of perfect control, the inversion of the universe is seen as inevitable and permanent. This, which is in reality experience of the unitive way, may by the mercy of God occur at any stage of the soul's progress,⁴⁴ and it is the soul's response to this vision that bursts forth in those love ardors which seem so closely akin to the love rhapsodies of the troubadours. It is a love that can be free and youthful and joyous because the fruit of discipline has been attained; and it finds expression in the love songs of the court of heaven rather than of the courts of earth. As a modern scholar has said, commenting on a mystic poem:⁴⁵

41. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.

42. "Il lume di quel cero che, giù, in carne, più adentro vide l'angelica natura e 'l ministero." *Par.*, x, 115-117.

43. Dionysius, *loc. cit.*

44. As Dante seems to claim in his own case. He writes: "But if they yelp against the assignment of so great exaltation, because of the sin of the speaker, let them read Daniel, where they will find that Nabuchodonosor, too, was divinely enabled to see certain things against sinners, and then dropped them into oblivion; for he, 'who makes his sun to rise upon the good and the evil, and sends his rain upon the just and the unjust,' sometimes in compassion, for their conversion, sometimes in wrath, for their punishment, reveals his glory, in greater or less measure, as he wills, to those who live never so evilly." *Epistle to Can Grande*, 28.

45. *The Dark Night of the Soul*, by St. John of the Cross.

In the poem before us, the passion flames forth unchecked by any limitation because it is perfectly pure—and purity is essentially freedom from limits. . . . Good people differ from saints and sinners alike in this, that they are afraid of passion, and therefore afraid of life. . . . I do not blame this attitude of the good. It is often their only safeguard. They lack the capacity to purify and spiritualize passion, and therefore must avoid it entirely. . . . Unlike these good people, the saints have not fled from passion, they have transformed it and raised it to a higher level where it is freed from the limitations of sense.⁴⁶

Guido Guinicelli, whose art Dante perfected, reconciled in his mystical ode, *Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore*, the two conceptions of love regarded as antagonistic⁴⁷ by all but the disciplined mystic. The mystic, as Dante knew, goes a step farther, and while accepting this pure love of Woman as a symbol through which he may reach God, refuses ever to worship the symbol for itself. As with his progress he perceives more and more of ultimate reality through the symbol, at the same time the symbol occupies less and less of his attention, until ultimately it takes its place among all created things on a petal of the rose, while he gazes beyond it into the full glory of the sun.⁴⁸

II. LAW OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPRESSION

OF the medieval theory of knowledge, basis of illumination in the Way, the underlying philosophy is that of insight symbolism, already described as depending on the existence of an infinite unity self-expressed in all the discrete. With the gradual attainment of that singleness which permits ever more constant turning toward the Divine Sun, infinite focus of creation, the seeker is freed more and more for progress in illumination. In the *via purgativa*, desire is permanently centered on supreme reality, and thus the soul is delivered over to the divine attraction of the sun, through which it may ascend, as Dante climbed in purgatory, with ever increasing freedom from the *gravezza* of

46. E. I. Watkin, *Philosophy of Mysticism*, pp. 398-400.

47. "On the one hand we find reconciled two conceptions of love hitherto regarded as antagonistic." Snell, *The Fourteenth Century*. Cf. pp. 36-37, 168-171, 226, 386-390, and especially 427-430.

48. *Par.*, xxxi, 64-93.

evil, until at last from the top of the mountain, even without his knowledge, he ascended to the spheres. The secret of the *via illuminativa* is progress in understanding founded on the discipline of purgation, leading to the ordering of the self-contradictions of experience in the world. As the response to divine attraction becomes perfect, the soul is given that illumination through which Dante beheld, "bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe."⁴⁹

Those mystics who, like Blake, have named implicitly or actually, Urizon (Your Reason) as the eternal villain in the drama of life, have added to misconceptions already too thick in the mists which becloud the threefold Way. More than this, they have been responsible for the development of a false mysticism. The basis of the *via illuminativa* is in the theory of knowledge. So strong has been the suspicion on the part of observers that the mystic is in possession of a source of knowledge mysteriously claiming no kinship with reason and sense, that some mystics in all ages have succumbed to the lure of this belief. Body and mind have been starved in the production of strange experiences. Disastrous has been misunderstanding of the purgative way, through loss of contact with the stream of mystical thought. Such loss is exemplified preëminently in Luther, Bunyan, and Loyola, whose exaggerated sense of wickedness and desire for purgation would have been counted deadly sin in the medieval tradition.⁵⁰ Yet even more subversive has been misconception of the *via illuminativa*, responsible in very fact for the controversies which formed so large a part of the intellectual history of the Middle Ages, with their outcome in the benighting eclipse of theology and philosophy, in the intellectual realm, the two suns of Rome.

49. "Even so doth the light (being as it were Its visible image) draw together all things and attract them unto Itself, those that can see, those that have motion, those that receive Its light and warmth, those that are scarcely held in being by Its rays; whence the sun is so called because it summeth all things and uniteth the scattered elements of the world." Dionysius, *op. cit.*, iv, 4.

50. John F. Howley, *Psychology and Mystical Experience* (London: Trübner, 1920), p. 15. The mystic was not encouraged to distort his perception by a morbid dwelling on his own wickedness. His attention was rather drawn to the divine love, which immediately upon repentance removed all barriers between him and the upward drawing light. Cf. also pp. 343 ff.

THE FATEFUL GIFTS

Like the betrayal which resulted in the mutual eclipse of empire and church the intellectual betrayal, also, found its initiation for the Middle Ages in the fourth century. Constantine, glorious as the first to unite to Christianity the power of empire, and so to establish the supremacy in its own sphere of the church, at the same time though unwittingly, like the Eagle in the Pageant, bestowed upon it a fateful gift. Augustine, illustrious as the first to unite to Christianity the power of philosophy, and so to establish its supremacy in the world of thought, likewise unwittingly endowed it with a disrupting gift. As Constantine gave to the church a portion of that which belonged rightly only to the temporal government, so Augustine gave to Christian experience a portion of that which belonged rightly only to the realm of sense perception interpreted by reason. Little did Constantine foresee that through his gift the papacy was to assert temporal supremacy: likewise Augustine could scarcely have foreseen, when he insisted on the primacy of inner experience, that he was giving it the power to encroach on the rightful realm of reason and so paving the way for such aberrations as the seeking in trance and ecstasy of rapturous love, for scientific detail concerning the external universe. Honoring both leaders in the *Paradiso*,⁵¹ Dante on earth combated with all his power the fruits of their evil gifts: the theory of papal temporal supremacy and the theory of the primacy of the act of loving over the act of knowing, each of which was an infringement on the essential autonomy of the members of earthly pairs.

As Constantine in setting Christianity above the greatest of pagan institutions made an error the pagan empire had not made; similarly Augustine, in setting Christianity above the greatest of

51.

"L'altro che segue . . . sotto buona intenzion che fè mal frutto, per cedere al pastor si fece greco: ora conosce come il mal dedutto dal suo bene operar non li è nocivo, avvegna che sia 'l mondo indi distrutto."

"The next who followeth . . . with good intention that bore evil fruit, to give place to the pastor, made himself a Greek; now knoweth he that the ill deduced from his good deed hurteth not him though the world be destroyed thereby."

Par., xx, 55-60 (In Sphere of Jupiter).

Augustine holds an important seat in the Rose. Cf. *Par.*, xxxii, 35.

pagan philosophies, fell into an error of which that philosophy had not been guilty. In his defense of the Christian *Weltanschauung* as opposed even to the greatest philosophy of paganism, Augustine gave stability to Christian monotheism, yet gave definite form to the haunting shadow of dualism which has always beset even the most ambitious monism.⁵² From this time forth the official philosophy of Catholicism was to be dualistic, exhibiting now and then monistic possibilities. As a matter of fact, even monists, as dualists delight to point out, although they invariably salve their conscience by calling the opposite pole of being by highly negative names, never rise above the need of a foil,⁵³ whether it be the devil, or raw material. For Augustine, in accord with the tendency already familiar,⁵⁴ light had its foil in darkness. More than this, he pictured the dichotomy concretely in his definition of the two cities, the one good, the other evil. For Plotinus the good was identical with Being, the evil with Non-Being. For Augustine, whatever his philosophy, and for all his training in Neoplatonism, evil assumed persistent reality.

Psychological explanation for this fact is amply suggested in the *Confessions*, but there was also a philosophical reason. Living in the wake of Nicaea, while the absolute equality of the Persons of the Godhead was among the most prominent of controversial questions, Augustine turned his attention to the demonstration of errors in the Plotinian *Weltanschauung*.⁵⁵ Himself having experienced great difficulty with the concept of infinity,⁵⁶ Augustine was hampered in handling all its applications by Plotinus. That is, although to Plotinus the World Soul, like the Logos and the One, is itself infinite and divine, yet as Augustine understood Plotinus, the World Soul was created and so finite. Whereas the Christian speaks of the Three Persons as aspects

52. The problem of evil ever forms the great stumblingblock in the path of those who would define fundamental reality religiously in terms of monotheism, or philosophically in terms of monism.

53. The point here, however, for the mystic, essentially a monist, is that the One finds eternal expression in the Two.

54. Cf. Lactantius, and others, quoted in Chap. III, Pt. I, ii.

55. "Plotinus, save in very rare instances, never discusses anything, the soul or happiness, virtue or magic, God or matter, without unmistakable reference to the totality of his universe." I. Edman, *Logic of Mysticism in Plotinus*, in "Studies in the History of Ideas," II, 52. Cf. also Appendix V, Pt. I, ii, for comparison of the Plotinian and Augustinian conceptions of the trinity.

56. Cf. *De civitate Dei*, 10, 23, and 10, 29.

of and united in the Divine Sun, Plotinus' symbolism is conceived as placing the World Soul in the position of the moon:

Plotinus commenting on Plato repeatedly and strongly asserts that not even the soul which they believe to be the soul of the world, derives its blessedness from any other source than we do, namely, from that Light which is distinct from it, and created it, and by whose intelligible illumination it enjoys light in things intelligible. He also compares those spiritual things to the vast and conspicuous heavenly bodies, as if God were the sun and the soul the moon; for they suppose that the moon derives its light from the sun.⁵⁷

So eagerly does Augustine combat this supposed error of Plotinus that he brings about an entire separation of the world from the divine, giving to it psychologically, if not philosophically, the position of the Plotinian Non-Being.⁵⁸ The God of Plotinus was completely transcendent, but through the World Soul also completely immanent. Augustine, in his opposition to ideas of the World Soul, well-nigh stripped his God of all immanence whatsoever. Immanence remained only as the central point in each soul: the human mind was to be turned inward. Thus the realm of external nature, even contrary to the true spirit of his own theories, became at all times a distraction and frequently an evil.

For Augustine, the setting for the great drama between good and evil is the soul of man, and all things pertaining to the external world are regarded merely as necessary interruptions.⁵⁹

57. Cf. Augustine's *Confessions*, Bk. V, 10-11.

58. At the same time the concept corresponding actually to the Plotinian Non-Being in the Christian philosophy tended to become focused and personified in Mary, through whose union with God all creation and the Nothing itself were taken up into the divine unity. So powerful became this tendency that Mary, who in strict philosophical terms was but human symbol of the Absolute Nothing on which Deity acts, came in fact almost to replace the concept, giving to it, through her willing assent, an actual activity.

In all philosophical theories of creation, there is a dual motion, outward from and returning to the One. The First Person generates the Second, and from this relationship springs the Third, who, in order that there may be external manifestation of Deity, broods over Non-Being, preparing it to embody the Second, whose eternal mission is revelation of the First. Through this mission the Second Person becomes the Way to mystic union, inevitably sought by the *quartum quid*—Non-Being stirred to action by his means in creation. There is no concept in any metaphysic more difficult than this of the negative Fourth, in its relationship to the Infinite.

59. "The earthly city, which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and the end it proposes, in the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule,

The natural response to God as he most closely touches man becomes in consequence one of loving the Immanence within, rather than of knowing the Immanence which is in all creation. The Augustinian arrives at knowledge of the Trinity by true love.⁶⁰

Let no one say, I do not know what I love. Let him love his brother, and he will love the same love. For he knows the love with which he loves, more than the brother whom he loves. So now he can know God more than he knows his brother, clearly known more, because more present, known more, because more within him, known more, because more certain. Embrace the love of God, and by love embrace God.⁶¹

Here is the basis for the medieval controversy: Is loving dependent on knowing, or is knowing dependent on loving?⁶²

A kind of otherworldliness and contempt of too much interest in the data of this present world is common to both Plotinus and Augustine. Nevertheless, both are constrained by their principles to acknowledge sacredness and holiness in matter, though for different reasons—Plotinus because the visible universe is the visible embodiment of the World Soul, and the Christian because the Logos became incarnate in the flesh. Augustine praises the Platonists for their attitude toward matter,⁶³ and proceeds at the same time to point out an error in their account of the origin of evil. In his opinion,

the corruption of the body, which weighs down the soul, is not the cause [as the Platonists maintain],⁶⁴ but the punishment of the first

is the combination of men's wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life. The heavenly city, or rather the part of it which sojourns on earth and lives by faith, makes use of this peace only because it must, until this mortal condition which necessitates it shall pass away." *De civitate Dei*, 19, 17.

60. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 8, 7.

61. *Ibid.*, 8, 8.

62. Cf. pp. 60-61.

63. Plotinus, it is true, somewhat obscures his attitude toward the physical universe by using the term "matter" for the ultimate Non-Being or zero concept of thought, and as such there is no goodness in it. But the matter of which he is speaking is not the "matter" of the physical universe, which already shares in the being of the World Soul or Third Hypostasis of the Plotinian trinity, and as such can truly be said to share in a way in the contemplation of the Logos. (Dante in a similar manner extends the love-principle to inanimate creation. Cf. *Purg.*, xvii, 91-93.)

64. "The Platonists indeed are not so foolish as, with the Manicheans, to detest our present bodies as an evil nature, for they attribute all the elements of which this visible and tangible world is compacted, with all their qualities, to God their creator. Nevertheless, from the death-infected members and earthly

sin; and it was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful, but the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible.⁶⁵

That is, creation *ex nihilo* provides the possibility, not the actuality, of evil in the human will, and the dragging action of matter,⁶⁶ which all men experience even in innocent physical necessities, is not the cause of the will's actualization of that possible evil, but its result. The Fall of Man actually changed the nature, not only of his soul, but of his flesh. For Plotinus the detriment in man's nature was a fact in the natural universe; for Augustine the Fall of Man was drawn into the domain of history. Further, for all of Augustine's understanding of symbolism, he had little interest in checking the one external source of knowledge, scripture, by the other, nature.⁶⁷ The key to his real divergence from the great Neoplatonists is that the attention of the strongly introspective Augustine became centered in human history and in inner experience. This Augustinian tradition with its centralization of history and inner experience rather than of impersonal truth, was to bring Christianity into frequent conflict with philosophy.

Augustinian mysticism finds then its basis in the Platonic idea of eternity and Non-Being, uniquely combined with the naïve and direct narrative of Christian tradition. The philosophy of

construction of the body, they believe the soul is so affected that there are thus originated in it the diseases of desires and fears and joy and sorrow, under which four perturbations, as Cicero calls them, or passions, as most prefer to name them with the Greeks, is included the whole viciousness in human life." *De civitate Dei*, 14, 5.

65. *Ibid.*, 14, 3.

66. To no true mystic is matter evil, and no such doctrine belongs to early Christianity. Even Tertullian, with his undoubtedly extreme ascetic tendencies, regarded the separation of soul and flesh not as a relief to the soul,—the usual Greek or Gnostic view,—but as violence to nature; and the soul, not the flesh, as the source of evil. He even is forced to argue that the concomitants of birth (of which he lists some of the least agreeable) are not shameful. God loved and honored men born in all the natural filth of the birth event, he argues, even though Marcion does not so love and honor. "Loving man. He loved his nativity also, and his flesh as well. Nothing can be loved apart from that through which whatever exists has its existence." (*De carne Christi*, cap. iv.) Only those who repudiate God can hate or envy the flesh. (*De resurrectione carnis*, cap. 63.) Christianity was saved from gnostic exaltation of spirit over matter, by the incarnation and resurrection of Christ. The body that clothes the blessed Logos must be holy, and so must be the bodies which, in his mystical body the church, come in most intimate contact with his sacramental body.

67. To Augustine the sources of knowledge possessing reliable validity are scripture (i.e., human history) and inner experience.

appearance and reality is expressed in terms of grace and sin. Nevertheless, true to the thought which was later to dominate the threefold Way, Augustine conceived the sole activity rightly termed intellectual to be the seeking of God by the soul:

For if the eye knows how to feed on light, and yet doth not diminish the light; for the light will be no less because it is seen by more; it feeds the eyes of more, and yet is as great as it was before; both they are fed, and it is not diminished; if God hath granted this to the light which he hath made for the eyes of the flesh, what is he himself, the Light for the eyes of the heart? If then any choice food were praised to thee, on which thou wert to dine, thou wouldest prepare the stomach; God is praised to thee, prepare the heart.⁶⁸

Augustine's truly wise man seeks God through discipline of body and mind, by a seeking within, not an external seeking.

For Augustine, it is God's handiwork in nature as contemplated within the soul, which constitutes the continual divine self-revelation to man. As the soul thus progresses in illumination it penetrates more and more deeply beneath symbols to the thought expressed: it leaves the city of darkness to penetrate ever more deeply into the mysteries of the city of light:

For the Apostle saith, Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. . . . Why light? Because by participation of that Light, thou art light. But if from the Light wherewith thou art enlightened thou go back, thou returnest to thine own darkness.⁶⁹

In turning to the light the human will, the root of the perturbations of the soul, is brought into harmony with the divine will:

The character of the human will is of moment, because if it is wrong these motions of the soul will be wrong, but if it is right, they will be not merely blameless but even praiseworthy. For the will is in them all, yea, none of them is anything else than will.⁷⁰

In all of this Augustine is in complete accord with Dante's tradition; but the journey from the city of darkness to the city of light takes place within the soul. The mystic reversal comes to him, not with the perception of the conceptual Non-Being of

68. Augustine, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, Homily on John 5 and I Cor. 2, p. 556. Cf. also *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John*, Homilies on John 8. 13-14 and on John 3. 29-36, pp. 493, 215.

69. Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel according to Saint John*, 5. 26, p. 349.

70. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 14, 6.

evil and of its tendency to self-destruction because of the lack of reality there is in it. It comes rather as the fruit of individual progress in the life of grace, and as true for the individual only, for as soon as by grace his will is made good, there is no longer any place for evil. Within inner experience for him lies the whole drama of the world.

Although the way of illumination is traveled by all mystics, and its meaning lies in the philosophy of insight symbolism, nevertheless, for different mystics it bears different aspects. For some mystics it may become a purely intellectual pathway, the road of dialectic, while for others it lies through an ever deeper sensitivity to the meaning of sense phenomena, and for still others it may be a journey into the interior depths of the soul. In the greatest of mystics there is the conscious attempt to exhaust all possibilities of knowledge, from without and from within. Although by his own greatness and by his lack of interest in the material universe, Augustine was saved from the extravagancies into which many of his followers were led, it was philosophically unfortunate that he should have given to introspection such an overwhelming authority. With Plotinus, intuition for its validity rested on the complete development of reason, autonomous within its own sphere. It has been well said: "In the mysticism of a thinker like Plotinus, reason is carried strenuously and precisely to the very heart and substance of Being. If there it finds its own terminus, it must be noted that that terminus has been found by reason itself."⁷¹ Ultimately, the "completest thought merges into that identity of union and rapture which life and love and art sometimes provide for an instant, instants which are types and symbols of eternity."⁷² Followers of the Augustinian tradition on the other hand came to distrust reason and logic and to attempt completion of the illuminative way without them. Such was the evil gift which Augustine bequeathed to later mysticism.

RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSITES

In the approach to an understanding of God through symbolism Augustine, for all his "fateful gift" was in line with the de-

71. Edman, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

velopment of the mystic tradition as it was to be understood by Thomas as well as by Bonaventure. Like all mystics, he employed images belonging to all the senses:

Vocasti et clamasti et rupisti surditatem meam; coruscasti, splendasti et fugasti caecitatem meam; fragasti, et duxi spiritum, et anhelo tibi, gustavi et esurio et sitio, tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam;⁷³

similarly, in description of his concept of God:

Quid autem amo, cum te amo? non specium corporis nec decus temporis, non candorem lucis ecce istum amicum oculis, non dulces melodias cantilenarum omni modarum, non florum et unguentorum et aromatum suaveolentiam, non manna et mella, non membra acceptabilia carnis amplexibus: non haec amo, cum amo deum meum. Et tamen amo quandam lucem et quandam vocem et quandam odorem et quandam cibum et quandam amplexum, cum amo deum meum; lucem, vocem, odorem, cibum, amplexum interioris hominis mei, ubi fulgit animae meae, quod non capit locus, et, ubi sonat, quod non rapit tempus, et ubi olet, quod non spargit flatus, et ubi sapit, quod non minuit edacitas, et ubi haeret, quod non divellit satietas. Hoc est quod amo cum deum meum amo.⁷⁴

Here he has apparently quite intentionally applied to God figures involving the experience of the natural world obtained through each of the five senses. These might be simply casual figures of speech did he not carefully insist that while he means everything he says, he really doesn't mean any of it, so inade-

73. "Thou calledst and criedst unto me, yea thou even breakedst open my deafness; thou discoveredst thy beams and shinedst unto me, and didst chase away my blindness; thou didst most fragrantly blow upon me, and I drew in my breath and I pant after thee; I tasted thee, and now do hunger and thirst after thee; thou didst touch me, and I even burn again to enjoy thy peace." *Confessions*, Bk. X, cap. 27.

74. "What now do I love, whenas I love thee? Not the beauty of any corporal thing; not the order of times, not the brightness of the light which we do behold, so gladsome to our eyes; not the pleasant melodies of songs of all kinds; nor the fragrant smell of flowers, and ointment, and spices; nor manna and honey; nor any fair limbs that are so acceptable to fleshy embracements. I love none of these things whenas I love my God; and yet I love a certain kind of light, and a kind of voice, and a kind of fragrance, and a kind of meat, and a kind of embracement, whenas I love my God; who is both the light and the voice, and the sweet smell, and the meat, and the embracement of my inner man; where that light shineth into my soul, which no place can receive; that voice soundeth, which time deprives me not of; and that fragrant smell, which no wind scatters; and that meat tasteth, which eating devours not; and that embracement clingeth to me, which satiety divorceth not. This it is which I love, whenas I love my God." Augustine, *op. cit.*, Bk. X, cap. 6.

quate is symbolism when the world he is trying to express is one in which time, space, increase or diminution, satiety itself, are irrelevancies.

In the method of obtaining knowledge of God through nature interpreted by reason, there is a development with Dionysius, and with his later follower John Scotus Erigena.⁷⁵ Dionysius sought to gain understanding of God through logical steps outlined as *via affirmationis* (θέσις), *via negationis* (ἀφαίρεσις), and *via superlationis* (ὑπεροχή),—that is, first, affirmation is made concerning God based on some analogy in sense experience; next, limitations and imperfections in this analogy are defined; finally, in the *via superlationis*, these two previous steps are united in a superlative: that which through them has been glimpsed, God is to a superlative degree.

Erigena applying this method of Dionysius states that God may not be called *essentia* because of its opposite *nihil* and so must be called *superessentia*.

Item bonitas dicitur, sed proprie bonitas non est; bonitate enim malitia opponitur; igitur, plusquam bonus et plusquam bonitas. Deus dicitur, sed non proprie Deus est; visioni enim caecitas opponitur et videntur non videns; igitur ὑπερθεός, plusquam videns, si θεός videns interpretatur.⁷⁶

Thus the tri-unity of God, which is of his *essentia*, does not completely define him, because of that *nihil* on which he acts in creation, and only *superessentia*⁷⁷ can suggest that unity of which the deep mystery lies in quaternity.

The best way to describe God, Augustine had found to be through terminology developed from observation of his self-manifestation in the world of nature and in the soul of man,

75. Although the ultimate philosophy closely resembled Augustine's, in the case of each of these thinkers. For a description of the period, cf. pp. 150 ff.

76. John Scotus Erigena, *De divisione naturae*, lib. 1, cap. xiv. Migne, *P.L.*, 122.

77. And so he goes through the list of names, and qualities, applied to God in the Bible, justifying his position thus: "Essentia est, affirmatio; essentia non est, abdicatio; superessentialis est, affirmatio simul et abdicatio. In superficie etenim negatione caret; in intellectu negatione pollet. Nam qui dicit, superessentialis est, non, quid est, dicit, sed, quid non est; dicit enim essentiam non esse, sed plusquam essentiam. Quid autem illud est, quod plusquam essentia est, non exprimit, asserens. Deum non esse aliquid eorum quae sunt, sed plus quam ea quae sunt esse; illud autem esse quid sit, nullo modo definit." Erigena, *op. cit.*, lib. 1, cap. xiv.

and yet had insisted that no term applied to him was true in its physical meaning. That truth lay in the reconciliation of opposites became an axiom through the work of Erigena⁷⁸—an axiom relating not only to the supersedential nature of God, but to the steps by which the soul and all things may return to him.⁷⁹ Its corollary in thought is that all symbols must be used; Christ must be not only the Son of God and the Sun of Righteousness, but the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the second Adam, the Tree of Life, the Corner Stone, the Sparrow sitting alone upon the housetop, the Lamb of the Paschal Sacrifice, the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley.^{80a}

The fundamental principle of this method of the mystics is contained in the following from Dionysius:

The highest of the things perceived by the eyes of the body or the mind are but the symbolic language of things subordinate to him who himself transcendeth them all. Through these things his incomprehensible presence is shown walking upon those heights of his holy places which are perceived by the mind; and then It breaks forth even from the things that are beheld and from those that behold them, and plunges

78. The system of Erigena is briefly summarized as follows:

Deus itaque	{ per seipsum amor est, per seipsum visio, per seipsum motus, }	et	{ neque motus est, neque visio, neque amor, }	tamen	{ plus quam amor, plus quam visio, plus quam motus. }	sed	{ plus quam amor, plus quam visio, plus quam motus. }
Et est per seipsum	{ amare, videre, movere, }	nec tamen est	{ amare, videre, movere, }	per seipsum	{ amare, videre, movere, }	quia est plus quam	{ amare, videre, movere. }
Item, per seipsum	{ amari est, viderique, moverique, }	non tamen	{ moveri est, nec videri, necque amari, }	per seipsum	{ amari et videri et moveri. }	quoniam plus est	{ amari et videri et moveri. }
Amat igitur nec tamen amat sed plusquam amat	seipsum seipsum et amatur	et amatur nec amatur et amatur	a seipso, a seipso, a seipso,	in nobis in nobis in nobis	et in seipso; et in seipso; et in seipso;		
videt nec tamen videt sed plusquam videt	seipsum seipsum et videtur	et videtur nec videtur et videtur	a seipso, a seipso, a seipso,	in seipso in seipso in seipso	et in nobis; et in nobis; et in nobis;		
movel non tamen movet quia plus quam movet	seipsum seipsum et movetur	et movetur nec movetur et movetur	a seipso, a seipso, a seipso,	in seipso in seipso in seipso	et in nobis; et in nobis; et in nobis.		

Op. cit., cap. lxxvi. The arrangement is due to the present author. In the text it appears in simple paragraph form.

79. Here then is the philosophic basis of the statement of Cardinal Newman quoted on p. 146.

80a. In the index to Migne's *Patrologia Latina* are five pages listing such names of Christ.

the true initiate into the Darkness of Unknowing wherein he renounces all the apprehensions of his understanding and is enwrapped in that which is wholly intangible and invisible, belonging wholly to him that is beyond all things and to none else (whether himself or another) and being through the passive stillness of all his reasoning powers united by his highest faculty to him that is wholly Unknowable, of whom thus by a rejection of all knowledge he possesses a knowledge that exceeds his understanding.^{80b}

Thus from one sense concept to another man attains to knowledge of God, and the intellect is prepared for that union of all opposites which the mystic is to know in the unitive way which is beyond all knowledge.

Guide us to that topmost height of mystic lore^{81a} which exceedeth light and more than exceedeth knowledge, where the simple, absolute, and unchangeable mysteries of heavenly Truth lie hidden in the dazzling obscurity of the secret Silence, outshining all brilliance with the intensity of their darkness, and surcharging our blinded intellects with the utterly impalpable and invisible fairness of glories which exceed all beauty!^{81b}

Herein lies the meaning of Dionysius' much disputed statement, "Our highest knowledge is mystic ignorance," which, though innocent in itself, has been the cause of such endless confusion. The unity underlying all things is infinite, ultimately incomprehensible to the finite, and inexpressible even through all symbols used together (although through such use of symbols lies the nearest approach). By "mystic ignorance" is meant, not ignorance (although some in the later less intellectual tradition were so to interpret it), but the terminus found by reason itself when developed to its utmost. Similar is the meaning of the divine revelation chronicled by St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi: "In proportion as My immensity renders Me clear and knowable in Myself, so I become more incomprehensible to My creatures, because of their incapacity. And in this I resemble the sun, which is never less visible than when it shines the most brightly."⁸² Finally, this is the principle of the *docta ignorantia*,

80b. Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*, chap. 1, tr. C. E. Rolt, p. 194.

81a. Implication is exercise of reason in study illumined by grace. Cf. Rolt's note to this word.

81b. *Ibid.*, chap. 1, tr. C. E. Rolt, p. 191.

82. Cf. Poulain, *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, chap. xviii, para. 66, p. 273.

in the statement of which Nicholas of Cusa declares that in God all contraries are unified.⁸³ The Middle Ages said with Job: I walk in darkness toward the light.⁸⁴

The development through Dionysius and Erigena was precursor of the intellectual mystical tradition, which in the time of Dante was to maintain the primacy of knowing as against the more emotional mysticism developed through Augustine's "fateful gift" to maintain the primacy of loving.^{85a} Throughout the centuries consequent upon the disintegration of the Roman Empire, the attention of western Europe became concentrated on problems of moral readjustment,^{85b} involving interest in human history. Erigena, bringing back the Greek heritage, in his insistence on the use of many and opposing symbols for the reality of the divine, vigorously reinstated the way of illumination through sense impressions and reason, and in so doing prepared for the scholastic development with its reiteration of the primacy of knowledge. With the incipient return of classical culture the tendency increased steadily to study and to use to the fullest degree symbolisms of the external universe. The gradual reëfranchisement of reason was to keep pace with the return of Aristotle to the western world.⁸⁶

83.

"Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio
umile ed alta più che creatura,
termino fisso d'eterno consiglio,
tu se' colei, che l'umana natura
nobilitasti sì, che 'l suo fattore
non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.
Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore
per lo cui caldo ne l'eterna pace
così è germinato questo fiore."

Par., xxxiii, 1-9, being the invocation of
contraries were perfectly unified.

"Virgin mother, daughter of thy son,
lowly and uplifted more than any crea-
ture, fixed goal of the eternal counsel,
thou art she who didst human nature
so enoble that its own Maker scorned
not to become its making.

In thy womb was lit again the love
under whose warmth in the eternal
peace this flower hath thus unfolded."

In Mary all
Bernard's prayer to Mary. In Mary all

84. This conception becomes clearer if we realize that the Middle Ages thought of themselves, not as going through a dark passageway toward a faint light at its end, or through a dark night toward a mountain top tinged with the dawning, but as walking directly into the blinding rays of the sun. This discipline, though resulting in the darkness of temporary blindness to eyes weak through sin, was thought of as being their only cure.

85a. Cf. pp. 61, 349 ff.

85b. Cf. Chap. VI, ii.

86. The return was not, even then, of Aristotle in his original setting, but of rewritings of Aristotle, often made with a Platonist slant. Even Platonism, moreover, does not necessitate the type of mysticism which centralizes inner experience, although Augustine derived that type of mysticism from it. Plotinus, likewise on the basis of Plato, built up the most perfectly intellectual mysticism the world has ever known.

THE SOLUTION OF THE PHILOSOPHER

Whereas Augustine knew little of Aristotle, Dionysius and Erigena knew more of him, and it is supposed that "The Philosopher of the Middle Ages,"⁸⁷ under the direction of Albertus Magnus, was responsible for a new and more accurate translation of "The Philosopher" of Greek antiquity. Harnack wrote that Thomas Aquinas was essentially Aristotelian and only accidentally Christian; while Augustine was essentially Christian and only accidentally Platonic. It seems probable that the comparison on the basis of Christianity is of greater effect than accuracy, but the respective allegiance to Plato and Aristotle^{88a} of these two formed the basis for that controversy through which, in the time of Dante, the two suns of the moral realm were still dimming each other's light, for all Thomas' vigorous assertion of their mutual autonomy.

It will be remembered that in the assertion of a mutually autonomous vicarate of philosophy and theology, the rational and the suprarational, Thomas opposed equally Averroism,^{88b} which asserted the supremacy of reason as did the Ghibelline that of the empire, and Augustinianism, which maintained the supremacy of faith as did Guelphs that of the church. The quarrel was in reality over the four sources of knowledge.⁸⁹ The Averroists asserted the supremacy of reason and of knowledge through nature, and thus of philosophy; whereas the Augustinians maintained as supreme, faith and knowledge through revelation, and thus theology. For Augustine, although external nature taught of the Creator, the human soul oriented toward God knew self and God directly with a certainty greater than that of any knowledge through creatures. Therefore, faith was greater than, and because of the Fall prerequisite to, reason.

87. Cf. also the analysis of the Thomistic philosophy by De Wulf in his *Medieval Philosophy*.

88a. It should be remembered that Augustine himself was strongly influenced by Aristotle, but that the emphasis of the Augustinian tradition was Platonic.

88b. Averroës was a Spanish Moor of the twelfth century, celebrated as a scholar and philosopher. He composed three commentaries on the works of Aristotle, which he knew in a Syriac translation. St. Thomas made use of one of these commentaries. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, Averroës was regarded as a dangerous freethinker, spreading doctrines of pantheism and materialism. In the face of this difficulty St. Thomas found the path of philosophy not always easy.

89. Defined by Peter Lombard. Cf. p. 97 n. 249, also p. 296.

Augustine the philosopher, clear as was his recognition of the autonomy of the two natures of Christ each in its own sphere, nevertheless, failed to maintain a similar autonomy of the rational and the suprarational, reason and faith,⁹⁰ just as the Averroists, without a doctrine of the two natures of Christ, acknowledged no relation between the two. Such mystics as Bonaventure, following the Augustinian tradition, thought philosophy such a danger that they demanded faith only.

For Thomas, on the other hand, there was approach to knowledge only through matter and reason, and reason is the rightful guide for him who has set out on the search for knowledge along the threefold way. Man might understand the lower natures of inanimate creation, plants and animals, infinitely more truly than those higher natures of angels and God, to whom direct abstract knowledge is possible. The suprasensible is to be known only through the things of sense; the suprarational only through reason.

Thus, the problem of universals, primary in medieval philosophy and recurrent in modern thought under the head of the "epistemological problem," found in Thomas' compromise the only answer which is in harmony with symbolic tradition and with Boethius' conception of infinity. The emphasis of the Augustinian tradition had always been on the existence of the archetype in eternity before the thing. Discussion had arisen with the rebirth of scientific inquiry as to whether the idea were not merely in the thing, or perhaps even after the thing, that is, non-existent save in the analytic mind. To deny *post rem* is to be untrue to the facts of psychology; to deny *in re* is to be false to common experience; to deny *ante rem* is to abstract the very bases of medieval mysticism. Thomas includes them all; the universal psychologically is *post rem*; yet the mind finds, it does not create, hence the universal is truly *in re*; and in view of the relationship of the universe to the Infinite which makes analogy a sound basis for symbolism, the universal must be also in a certain sense *ante rem*, not in time, but in the hierarchy of being, in eternity.

The student of literature may not well forget that the turmoil

90. Natural in his time.

of the thirteenth century was the outcome of more than the tumults of love. It was a period of intellectual tumult such as the world had not known since the days of the Empire, of which it was the true daughter. The new philosophy had come from old Greek sources by way of the pagan Orient to rob men's minds of peace as love had come to rob their hearts. Pantheism was in it, and denial of individual free will, and denial not only of the Christian God, but of the God of the Jews. In this atmosphere Maimonides published his *Guide to the Perplexed*, which is still a Jewish classic, even as the great synthesis wrought by Thomas Aquinas is a monument of Christian thinking.

One familiar with the universal scope of Dante's intellectual curiosity and with the tradition that he had a friend among the Jews of Rome⁹¹ must recognize in the Hebrew reaction to this crisis a potential element in the shaping of the *Commedia*. One who has paused to study the intellectual conflicts of the time must recognize in Hebrew thought an actual element in the molding of all that was medieval⁹² and so inevitably of the *Commedia*. Hebrew thinkers, having been spared the comfortable tradition of Augustinian psychology, were even more prone than Christians to rise to the crisis, and they too sought solution through a far-reaching unification of symbolisms.

The new philosophy given definite form in scholasticism and reinforced through the influence of Hebrew thought was generally considered the enemy of mysticism; in reality it supplied the possibility of balance and strengthening.⁹³ Involved in the objection made by those influenced by the Augustinian tradition was a misapplication of mystical principles, only too natural in a period marked by fresh discovery of the love ideal. The unitive way has no validity apart from purgation and illumination.

91. Emanuel ben Salomon. Dr. Moore makes the definite suggestion that Dante gained some knowledge of cabalistic numerology from this friend. Cf. Edw. Moore, *Studies in Dante. Third series*, pp. 253 ff.

92. Cf. Appendix V, Pt. I, ii (2).

93. How frequently this is true of a new and disturbing philosophy perhaps no one knows better than the student of the history of thought. In every age there are those only too eager to use the new as a ready weapon for the ruthless demolishing of the old, to the horror and chagrin of those whose life cannot be extricated from tradition. Between these opposing forces the multitude remains bewildered. That age is fortunate which has produced one capable of a synthesis in which the truths of the new and the old may find their places in a more perfect whole.

The purgative way must involve discipline both of intellect and of emotions, and progress in the illuminative way must be through symbols which can be understood truly only through the exercise of sense and reason. Yet this beginning, apparently from the finite, was in reality from the infinite, even as Dante made it in his *Commedia*. Though knowledge is primarily from the senses, "every visible and invisible creature is a theophany or appearance of God."⁹⁴ By the great law of analogy fundamental in knowledge and expression,^{95, 96} the meaning of the infinite is hidden or revealed. Each sees what he has eyes to see. This conception was as fundamental in the thought of Thomas as in that of the Augustinians whose theory of knowledge he combated.

There is, moreover, in Thomas' theory nothing to deny the Augustinian claim of direct unsymbolic knowledge after passage through the discipline of the perception and of the reason through symbols. Indeed, Plotinus had shown reason itself to demand such a terminus.⁹⁷ This knowledge, however,

94. Erigena, as translated in Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 311.

95. Hugh of St. Victor, a mystic, pointed out that the truth of *lion* as a symbol of Christ, depended on the literal meaning of the word. Cf. Appendix IV, Pt. I, i. Moreover, Erigena had made clear for all time the necessity of supplementing one sense analogy by another.

96. Considered philosophically, analogy is of two types, that which rests on likeness of relationship, for example, a king is like a pilot because he stands in relation to his kingdom as does the pilot in relation to the ship—and that which rests on the "participation de l'être créé à l'être incréé." For the use of these two types by Thomas and by Bonaventure, cf. B. Landry, *La notion d'analogie chez Saint Bonaventure et Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Thesis, Louvain, 1922).

97. Hilary of Poitiers expressed this in words which might have been written in the twentieth century: "If we assume that an event did not happen, because we cannot discover how it was done, we make the limits of our understanding into the limits of reality." Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, Bk. 3, chap. 20.

Thomas Aquinas, together with many other mystics, all his life insisted on that which has been expressed in a recent newspaper comment on the work of the occultist William Kingsland, entitled *Rational Mysticism*, that while in the rational pursuit of knowledge "sooner or later we reach the limit, the thus-far-and-no-farther, either in the form of a self-contradiction or as a complete absence of data" and while "we may agree that there is nothing irrational in the attitude of a mind which finds comfort in an experience transcending rational interpretation," nevertheless, "it is an altogether different position when the mystic claims by this illumination to be qualified to expound rationally and in mathematical and logical terms the conditions of transcendent reality."

In other words, just as Dante conceived it, the rational and the suprarational move in different spheres and demand different expression. To think of expressing fully with scientific exactitude the content of that which is seen in the *lumen gloriae* is nonsense. (This, however, in no way relieves the mystic of his responsibility for the expression of his vision.)

would not be the natural knowledge of the soul, as Augustine thought, but a special act of God's grace. Reason alone, autonomous in its own sphere, is rightful guide on the quest of the vision, though reason must be illumined by grace, as empire by church. Beyond the sphere of reason, grace alone has power to raise to the ultimate beatitude. Yet the mystic, even should he be permitted perception without symbols, is bound eternally to self-expression through them; and no one had felt more keenly than Thomas their inadequacy or could better sympathize with Dante's opening lines:

Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende
fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire
nè sa nè può chi di là su discende.⁹⁸

Thomas at the end of his life, it is told, received so intense an intuitive perception of divine truth that he, the scholar, refused to write any more, even to complete the *Summa*, since in the light of the new revelation all he had written seemed to him, though not untrue, so utterly inadequate to Truth.

III. PROGRESSION FROM LIGHT TO LIGHT

THE unitive way, third of the three strands which, intertwined, make up the Way to the Beatific Vision, is of all the most hazardous. Consisting essentially of glimpses of things as a whole, each glimpse a foretaste of the Beatific Vision, it is so grateful that the soul is tempted to try to hold it and to rest in it, and to value its moments alone of all the events in the mystic progress. Man is further tempted through this experience, which pierces beyond the reach of symbolism, to discredit the weary growth from symbol to symbol, and to forget the discipline of life and illumination of intellect through which true experience of the unification of opposites has been safeguarded and at the same time rendered possible. Dante and the Middle Ages were familiar with the story of Semele,⁹⁹ daughter of Cadmus and mother of Bacchus, who, regardless of the weakness of

98. "In that heaven which most receiveth of his light, have I been; and have seen things which whoso descendeth from up there hath nor knowledge nor power to re-tell." *Par.*, i, 4-6.

99. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3, 253-315, and *Inf.*, xxx, 2.

her still untrained vision, wilfully insisted on beholding her lover Jupiter in all his heavenly glory, only to be burned to ashes in his splendor.

The unification of opposites is accomplished only in eternity. Man in this world, though granted glimpses of eternity, must live under conditions of time. Thus, although Dante in vision may behold the ultimate nonexistence of evil, yet Dante on his journey, like all those in the *Inferno*, may experience but the ceaseless flapping of the six bat wings. Over those wings the ice will close only on the Judgment Day, when time and space shall be no more.¹⁰⁰ Fundamental as is a true conception of infinity to an understanding of the purgative and illuminative ways, it is even more essential to the mystic of the unitive way.

SOLUTION OF DUALISM

Of all the opposing pairs that have puzzled the minds of men, perhaps none is more puzzling than permanence and change,¹⁰¹ chosen as the contradictory bases of two of the earliest of Greek philosophies, the mutually incompatible systems of Heraclitus and Parmenides. One of the earliest solutions of this problem which could have contributed to medieval development is suggested non-philosophically in the ritual of the Passover. After the familiar pattern of that modern relic of antiquity, the House that Jack Built, it is told that the father bought a kid which was eaten by a cat in turn killed by a dog which was beaten by a stick which was burned in the fire. The water that quenched the fire was drunk by an ox, promptly killed by the butcher, who himself fell under the stroke of the Angel of Death. In this folk song, year by year impressed upon worshippers, is pictured change and impermanence: death everywhere, a world in which everything,

100. The conception of Plotinus involves not only opposites in the realm of time and space, but the necessity of different coördinates. In the divided world of time and space it is true that items listed in a descending scale of Being, range from the highest conceivable condition of true Being down to all but zero, but can never be minus or negative; while the same items on a descending scale of Value, range from the highest conceivable down through zero (the morally indifferent) to negative quantities. It is only in infinity that Being and Value become related to the same set of coördinates, thus depriving evil of existence.

101. It will be remembered that the twoness to be resolved only in eternity was the solution. Thomas, commenting Aristotle's *De caelo et mundo*, 2, 10-18, states that the Primum Mobile has one unchanging motion, while the other spheres, having two or more motions, generate change. Cf. pp. 33-35, 482.

animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, lies under the power of destruction and lasts but for a time. In the last verse is a real triumph which for the mystic is of deeper significance than that there shall be no more death:

Then came the Holy One, Blessed be He—
And slew the Angel of Death,
 That slew the butcher,
 That killed the ox,
 That drank the water,
 That quenched the fire,
 That burned the stick,
 That beat the dog,
 That killed the cat,
 That ate the kid,
 That father bought for two zuzim,
 One kid, one only kid.

It is the Eternal and Unchanging—Blessed be He—who initiates the whole process of change.¹⁰² Source alike of permanence and change, in Him is the infinite and eternal meaning beneath the world of Time. Had Israel been able to give philosophical statement to this folk song transformed into mystic vision,¹⁰³ it is possible that monism rather than dualism might have become dominant in the Christian tradition. As it was, Athanasius himself failed to escape completely the dualism which was the real basis for the Arian insistence that Christ could not be truly very God, since spirit (God) and matter were so diametrically opposed that it was impossible for them to touch.¹⁰⁴ As it was, the achievement of a monism was vouchsafed only to the mystic of the medieval Christian tradition. Dante in the spheres found matter and spirit everywhere

102. Aristotle gives us reason to suppose that "the Heraclitean doctrine, learned from Cratylus, that the world disclosed to us by our senses is a scene of incessant and incalculable mutability and variation, was one which Plato never forgot." Plato, however, drew the conclusion not that genuine and stable knowledge was impossible, but that since genuine knowledge (science) is possible and existent, therefore that of which this "science" treats must be something other than the never ending flux of sense data. See A. E. Taylor, *Plato, the Man and His Work*, p. 3.

103. The fact that this rhyme may bear for the Jew a political interpretation also, referring to the final divine vengeance upon the enemies of Israel, in no wise invalidates the mystic anagoge of divine triumph over the whole process of finite change.

104. In modern times, this view is held by Christian Scientists.

united,¹⁰⁵ he beheld all things in the one light, even as Julian of Norwich was one day to see "all thing that is made" lying in the hand of its Creator no bigger than a hazelnut, and to hear a Voice telling her that its nature is that God loveth it and keepeth it.

THE TEST OF ATTAINMENT

Yet Dante, through his understanding of infinity and its relationship through symbolism to time and space, was able to return to a world in which "the beginning, middle, and end, the birth and perfection of all we see, arises from contraries, through contraries, in contraries."¹⁰⁶ Such is the realm where the she-wolf roams. For the span of life in the finite realm reason must guide, although for that which lies beyond its sphere grace may be given. The whole of life may not be lived in the moments of completest vision, even though contained therein. Following the career of the sun, the mystic's life is a cycle. Drawn upward to the summit of the heavens, to vision of the infinite whole, he must descend again to fulfilment of his part in the redeeming work of the sun, through long discipline in the finite.

Progression, not only in the ways of purgation and of illumination, but even in the way of union, is progress from light to light, the lesser to the greater, until the Divine Sun is attained, in whom darkness and light, knowing and unknowing, existence and nonexistence, are one. As Dante progressed from the foreshadowing of anagoge in the Sun to that in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars to that in the Rose, it is important to notice which symbols are the last to be discarded. Whereas the symbols of the progress levels of the mystic way were those associated with quest, such as warfare, chemical purification, weeding and plowing, loosing from bonds, appropriate to the *via purgativa*, and especially the symbols of the five senses, appropriate to the *via illuminativa*; the symbols here are those of union, the union of achievement, the union of burning, the union of feeding, and

105. Cf. Grandgent's commentary on *Par.*, xxix, 36. Cf. also many discussions as to the nature of the glorified bodies of the saints after the general resurrection—for example, by Augustine in *De civitate Dei*, and by Thomas Aquinas in *Summae contra gentiles*, especially as quoted, p. 238 n. 518.

106. Giordano Bruno, quoted by Bianchi, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

supremely the union of marriage.¹⁰⁷ This latter symbolism is the only symbolism except that of the sun—which includes it—that contains within itself the rest as to whether the mystic has truly attained.¹⁰⁸ The mystic troubadour, no longer content with the phrases of courtly love only, includes also mystical marriage and its responsibilities to the children of God.¹⁰⁹

THE LOVE THAT MOVES THE SUN AND OTHER STARS

Perhaps the most comprehensive picture of the unitive way has been given within a small compass by Jan van Ruysbroeck,¹¹⁰ who flourished slightly later than Dante:¹¹¹ "When we have learned to open our eyes in the interior light we can contemplate in joy the continual coming of the Bridegroom. It is a perpetual genesis, an ever-recurrent dawn that knows no setting."¹¹² In his description of the consummation of the spiritual romance is reflected all that the world had learned of love: "The soul opens to God its powers, longing to receive the Divine substance and to give its own."¹¹³ On the other hand, Meister Eckhart, during the same years, wrote: "Earth cannot escape the sky; let it flee up or down, the sky flows into it, and makes it fruitful whether it will or no. So God does to man. He who will escape him only runs to his bosom; for all corners are open to him."¹¹⁴ True to

107. Such analysis of mystic symbols is worked out more fully in an unpublished paper by Miss Mary A. Ewer.

108. It will be remembered that these were the two symbolisms which through elimination were given prominence in the New Testament. Cf. pp. 255-256, also Appendix IV, Pt. I, ii. In this connection the influence of the Kabalah is not to be omitted. Cf. Appendices, pp. 505-506. The progression into reality, here also, was a progression through symbol to higher symbol, dominated by the symbolisms both of sun and of marriage. The author of the *Zohar* is termed in the work itself the "Holy Light-bearer," and into his nuptials in heaven all faithful followers were to enter. Cf. p. 339 n. 19c.

109. Of the mystical writers Dante knew, this symbolism was worked out the most completely by Richard of St. Victor (cf. his "De quatuor gradibus violentiae charitatis," in Migne, *P.L.*, t. 196, especially col. 1216), although in great detail didactically by St. Bernard (in his *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, especially sermon ix. See the Eales translation of the Mabillon version of the works of St. Bernard).

110. Ruysbroeck possessed, however (to quote from Maeterlinck), "one of the wisest, most exact, and most subtle philosophic brains which have ever existed" and, like Plotinus, he tried "to extend the paths of the ordinary intellect into the very heart of these desolations."

111. The dates of Dante are 1265-1321; of Ruysbroeck, 1293-1381.

112. Jan van Ruysbroeck, *Flowers of a Mystic Garden*, selections, p. 47.

113. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

114. Sermon lxxxviii.

his tradition Ruysbroeck stresses equally the infinite and the finite quests: "The tempests of love have differing effects: sometimes a light shines forth. . . . Then the soul and the spirit moving toward the light experience in this encounter an intolerable bliss, and there are times when the man is burnt up in the radiance. This is ecstasy, the bliss that can never be described. . . ."115 It is, moreover, the vision of the mystic Rose of which Dante is forever powerless to tell.

The life of ecstasy for him who is prepared, is, as Ruysbroeck declares the sanest of all lives. It maintains the balance of perfect freedom in the will which has become moved entirely by love.

He only is a contemplative who is the slave of nothing, not even of his virtues . . . he must lose himself, without confusion of substance, in the holy darkness, where joy delivers him out of himself, never again to find himself according to the human mode.¹¹⁶

This balance is maintained of course through the unification of opposites:

the interior man . . . is struck by a light flashing forth from the Divine Unity. This lightning flash is the surface of darkness. . . . For when he enters the nudity he is destitute of his own light, bereft of his powers of seeing, and is wholly impregnated, penetrated, and transfigured by light itself.¹¹⁷

Man "pledged brother to every creature" is to "dwell on the summit of his soul, between essence and power, between joy and activity, essentially abiding in God in the abyss of fruition and in the depths of the darkness; for the holy darkness is not only the supreme beatitude of spirits; it is the supreme bliss of God."¹¹⁸

SUMMARY

In fine, the true life, as revealed to the initiate in the Way of purgation, illumination, and union, is not the purely contemplative, although the ladder of contemplation rises to the Empyrean; but highest is the contemplative life which bears fruit in

115. Ruysbroeck, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

117. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

116. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

action. Thus is maintained the eternal cycle uniting the finite and the infinite. From unspeakable vision the mystic, superior alike to quietism and pantheism, returns to the accomplishment of a divine mission among men.

CHAPTER V. SCHEMA: Part II, CONT.

<i>Literal Level*</i>	<i>Allegorical Level</i>	<i>Tropical Level</i>
The quest of the seeker on the Way of Purgation, a Comedy, begins in impotence of the will, ends in perfected nature	The quest of the seeker on the Way of Illumination, a Comedy, begins in brutish ignorance, ends in perfect vision	The quest of the seeker on the Way of Union, a Comedy, begins in infinite separation from the object of his desire, ends in union
I. The seeker comes to himself in the chaos of nature deformed through lack of discipline and sacramental grace Escape barred by threefold detriment due to Fall	I. The seeker comes to himself in the darkness of conflict between the rational and the suprarational Escape barred by three hindrances to knowledge: sacraments withheld through corruption of church, lack of peace for study due to corruption of empire, vice in the soul	I. The seeker comes to himself in a struggle between the demands of action and contemplation Escape barred by three vices; fraud, violence, cupidity
Rescue, made possible by the Trinity, offered through working out of autonomies of discipline and grace	Rescue, made possible by the Trinity, offered through working out of autonomies of <i>ratio</i> and <i>supra-ratio</i>	Rescue, made possible by the Trinity, offered through working out of autonomies of active life and contemplative life
II. Progress through agonies of initiation in the Way of discipline, in increasingly vivid appreciation of the nature of threefold detriment: Experiences of the corruption of natural good, leading up to dangerous triumph of appreciation of Immanent Presence, resulting in Tumultuous experience of deformity of mind, leading through betrayal, a wrong gift from discipline to grace, to irrevocable <i>reatus poenae</i> in their mutual eclipse out of which may come the mystic inversion, giving opportunity for restoration	II. Progress through agonies of initiation in the Way of knowledge, in increasingly vivid comprehension of the threefold bar: Experiences of vice in soul, leading up to dangerous triumph in foreshadowing of vision, resulting in Tumultuous experience of revelation false through neglect of study leading through betrayal to mutual eclipse of <i>ratio</i> and <i>supra-ratio</i> out of which may come opportunity for restoration of their autonomies	II. Progress through agonies of initiation in the Way of contemplation, in increasingly vivid comprehension of the threefold root of separation: Experiences of separative result of cupidity in soul, leading up to dangerous triumph in foreshadowing of union, resulting in Tumultuous experience of divine possession, leading through betrayal to mutual eclipse of action and contemplation (quietism) out of which may come opportunity for restoration of their autonomies
Reorganization of personality	Reorganization of personality	Reorganization of personality
Progress through the labors of: construction of disciplined life Formulation of a rule of life Acquiring of disciplined habits Perfection in habits	Progress through the labors of: construction of sound body of knowledge New plan of study Practical living of knowledge Perfection in illumination	Progress through the labors of: the active life New dedication to service Practice of the active life Perfection of union
III. The seeker at the height of the disciplined life is ready to rise to the realm of grace, to return to the fulfilment of his mission, moved by the Will of the Prime Mover	III. The seeker at the height of the illuminative way is ready to rise to the perfect Vision, to return to the fulfilment of his mission in expression of the Vision	III. The seeker at the height of the unitive way is ready to rise to the divine union, to return to the fulfilment of his mission in spiritual fruitfulness

* For review of the literal order which forms the basis for these higher levels, cf. chart of symbolism of the first order, p. 156, and for the relationship of orders cf. p. 98.

PART II. THE THREEFOLD WAY: UNION OF SUN AND UNIVERSE, CREATOR AND CREATED

I. SITUATION: UNIVERSAL QUEST

IN the nine-sphered Paradise of ultimate truth revealed to Dante through his communion at the summit of the Mount, it was Christ's ascension that raised him from the Heaven of the Fixed Stars to that circle wherein are the roots of time. Of all that had pertained to such knowledge as may be derived from the external universe Dante had beheld the consummation, projected in condescension to the weakness of his vision, in the sphere of the Sun. Of all that pertained to such knowledge as may be derived from human history and organization, with its center in Christ, Dante had beheld the consummation projected in condescension to his weakness, into his own sign of Gemini. At last prepared for that which should complete his vision of personal and corporate responsibility, the full revelation of each creature's relationship to the One, he is raised from Gemini by the Radiance of the Divine Sun, Christ, who had completed the revelation to men of God, not only as Father, but as Bridegroom—as the sun is both to the earth.

Complete interpretation of the first order of symbolism—of that revealed in the passage from the Moon to the Sun—was impossible until Dante had understood his relationship to organized humanity, and the sense in which his life might become an allegory of that which Christ accomplishes through his four bodies.¹¹⁹ So also the deepest mysteries of the second order of symbolism—of that revealed in the passage from Mars to the fixed stars—could not be understood until Dante had grasped something of that mystic progress by which the individual soul meets God in loneliness.

THE DARK WOOD

Dante, setting out toward this goal, suggests in outline the vicissitudes of every adventurer along the threefold way. With the awakening to consciousness of catastrophe every seeker comes to himself. Deeply impressed upon him is a realization of some particular obstacle, its nature varying with his *Weltanschauung*. Impelled by a sense of the reaching out of the infinite

119. Cf. pp. 285-286, also pp. 74-75.

through the finite, and of the endeavor of human nature to reach through the finite to the infinite, he sets out upon a quest of which the nature is determined by the proportionate strength of these two forces. To the quest of the infinite through the finite, the obstacle is ignorance in some one of its many forms, whether purely intellectual or whether characterized by undue self-reliance (the form in which it is dreaded by St. Francis of Assisi, by Luther, and others) or by illusion of separateness (as generally viewed by Hindu mystics). To the reaching out of the infinite, the obstacle is human failure to provide for its reception.

The theme for the quest molded by consciousness of man's search for God, becomes God's self-revelation through the sources of knowledge; the theme for the quest molded by consciousness of God's coming to man, becomes the Real Presence. In the most balanced of mystics both themes are found, as, for example, the Real Presence is the theme of the poetic works of the great intellectual adventurer, Thomas Aquinas. The wayfarer, dominated by either one of these themes to the complete exclusion of the other, is doomed to failure; for him the beckoning goal is unattainable and recedes like a mirage into the distance. There is necessity for both activity and receptivity, and the balance between action and contemplation is to be maintained. Dante, ever insisting on the equal importance each within its own sphere of the members of pairs, gives prominence to both in the same relationship as that which governs the relation of empire to church or philosophy to theology.

Dante, the seeker for vision of things as a whole, comes to himself in the Dark Wood, which has its appropriate terrors for each phase of the mystic progress, as impotence, avoidable ignorance, and separation. On his escape from the Wood at dawn the Mount of Vision is displayed to him under the Sun of all Power, Wisdom, and Love. This goal, described in the imagery of sight, although subsuming that of all the senses,¹²⁰ stands witness to the fact of frailty, ignorance, and distance as fundamental difficulties. Of this there was premonition at the close of that work in which the *Commedia* is promised, to ac-

120. Cf. p. 356.

complish which he tells that he must study to the utmost: "E di venire a ciò io studio quanto posso, sì com' ella sae veracemente."¹²¹

One need but read the story of Dante's journey from the point of view of the mountaineer to realize his keen interest in the interplay of effort and of adventitious assistance, necessary for the seeker in the Way. Indeed, Dante describes as alpine—*alpestro*—portions of the descent into hell.¹²² Clambering over the rocks and precipices of the Inferno in a pitchy blackness relieved only here and there by the dull red of torture, Dante frequently experienced the flagging of his strength, only to be exhorted by Virgil to greater effort. Even the sage refers to the climb up from the center of the earth in the wake of Satan's fall as "sì aspra e forte, che lo salire omai no parrà gioco."¹²³ Yet Dante, fresh from regions where "la via e lunga e 'l cammino è malvagio,"¹²⁴ was to experience the ascent up the Mount of Purgatory as anything but play. Soon "the ground beneath required both feet and hands" ("e piedi e man volea il suol di sotto")¹²⁵ and, indeed, after the first sharp climb, Dante was forced to cry for mercy, entreating the sage to wait. Yet Virgil's answer was but to point to a ledge above with the demand that his charge at all costs drag himself to its height—*infin quivi ti tira.*" Dante, creeping upward in the footsteps of his guide, was permitted rest and the seeking of strength from the east, only with the attainment of this goal.

On the other hand, human effort strained to the utmost, suffices not for the journey, and there is constant dependence on supernatural assistance. It is present, even though scarcely perceptible, in the obscurity of the Inferno. An angel opens the gate of Dis, and Virgil himself carries Dante on more than one occasion, in virtue of the strength which empowered his whole guidance of the poet. It is to be remarked that apart from the infusion of *virtu* from outside himself for the accomplishment of his journey, the sage could not have stepped beyond the bounds of Limbo. In the *Purgatorio*, however, the infusion of grace be-

121. *Vita Nuova*, XLII.

122. *Inf.*, xii, 2.

123. "So rough and hard, that the climbing now will seem but play to us." *Purg.*, ii, 65-66.

124. *Inf.*, xxxiv, 95.

125. *Purg.*, iv, 33.

comes more spectacular. Dante is raised miraculously to the gate of purgatory by Lucia, surrogate of Divine Wisdom. Furthermore, the whole ascent is perilous in its governance by more than physical laws. (In this connection Dante's meticulous cosmological references may be studied.) By no possible effort can man mount upward in the nighttime, and during those hours in which the sun is absent, descent is but too easy.

THREEFOLD DETRIMENT

Virgil then as spirit of discipline, preparing for the grace of Beatrice, surrogate of the Holy Spirit, the Help of man, offers the first escape from the beasts, which, as here representative of the threefold detriment in human nature, would drive him back into the wood of impotence. The leopard, spotted and nimble, principle of death, is the *reatus poenae* remissible by God alone.¹²⁶ Man is only too ready to pursue his way, light-mindedly dismissing from consciousness the sentence under which he walks. With the appearance of the lion in opposition to Divine Wisdom, comes experience of the deformity of mind which all men bear as the mark of initial rebellion. Only the wisdom of the Logos can restore clarity of vision, yet the blind man is proverbially unconscious of his blindness, and Dante is still full of hope until that beast appears which is the corruption of natural good, human nature so disordered that it is no longer responsive to divine attraction, and in inability to choose the greater good, falls helpless prey to *gravezza*. Divine love in mercy sends discipline to prepare man for the reception of that supernatural grace through which alone he may attain the ultimate conquest of *gravezza*, be it by however perilous and tedious a path. Here in the *Commedia* is a story completely apposite to the mystical tradition of progress through the way of purgation.

Superseding even Dante's interest in effort and grace is his interest in progress and illumination. Indeed, he has written at

126. For this threefold detriment, caused by the Fall and inherited by each human child, together with the reasons why the detriment cannot be overcome, in any of its phases, without divine assistance, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *S.Th.*, 1, 2, Q. 109, art. 7, c. For the *vulneratio naturae* see Thomas Aquinas, *S.Th.*, 1, 2, Q. 85, art. 3.

some length on those defects which hinder man's attainment of knowledge, the height of human blessedness. Two of these are pardonable, pertaining to the condition of finite existence. Of these, one pertains to the environment in which a man lives, being the limitation involved in the fulfilment of duty: family responsibility and civic care. The other pertains to the man himself, being the limitation of physical defects such as deafness and blindness. Two, however, are pernicious, and likewise one of these pertains to the environment (the "luogo ove la persona è nata e nudrita"): lack of facilities for study, library, companionship, and so on; while the other pertains to the man himself: vice within the soul.¹²⁷ The place where Dante was born and nourished was Florence, a veritable city of Dis, wherein the conflict of church and state opposed a double barrier to the pursuit of human blessedness. The state had eclipsed the church, and in consequence imposed a barrier to the sacramental reception of the Infinite in his reaching out toward man. The leopard, already seen in his opposition to the Father, as the fraudulence which pervaded church and empire, on the unitive level of the symbolism defrauds mankind of the supreme Gift of the Father—the sacramental Body of the Son. Similarly the church had eclipsed the state, thus robbing the citizens of both peace and facilities for study and contemplation. The lion, already seen in his opposition to the Son, the Prince of Peace, as the violence which seizes and takes by force, on this level tears from the citizen the leisure essential for and the atmosphere conducive to thought. Florence had robbed her citizens of the "bread of angels" which is both knowledge and the Eucharist, each being the embodiment of the Eternal Wisdom for man's reception. Such is the significance here of lion and leopard, yet from both of these the seeker has hope of deliverance through the guidance of the sun himself, until the wolf appears, that vice within the soul which subjects to distraction from the goal through the delusion of vain delights. Thus hindered man is powerless to maintain the autonomy of *ratio* and *supra-ratio*.

Even as the seeker in the purgative phase of his journey is barred from attainment by the threefold detriment of fallen na-

127. Cf. the opening chapter of the *Convivio*.

ture, and as he is barred in the illuminative phase by the threefold hindrance to the pursuit of infinite wisdom, so he is barred in the unitive phase by the threefold vice in his own nature. This vice, stressed here with reference to progress in the unitive way, was a hindrance according to the symbolism of the first order, in Dante's moral development,¹²⁸ and according to the symbolism of the second order, in the growth of individuals within the church and empire of Christ¹²⁹ though they were strengthened against it by the sacramental Body. The beast of "fame senza fine cupa"¹³⁰ is the very spirit of separateness, enflaming such desires as set every man's hand against his brother, and lead downward in increasing distance from the sun. Assisted by her two companions she blocks the acquisition of all virtues, those natural which are acquired through effort, and those theological which are the gift of grace. Natural law and human will¹³¹ in their conflict appear to have given her power in Dante's personal life, as, in a larger sense, the conflicting claims of philosophy and theology were her opportunity to overcome individual participants in Christ's sacramental Body. Stated generally for every seeker for union with God, the opposition is of the active life to contemplation. The solution of Thomas Aquinas here again was maintenance of mutual autonomies, as Dante beheld it in his dream on the steps leading into the Terrestrial Paradise,¹³² faint foreshadowing of the ladder which rises from Saturn into the Empyrean.

Whereas leopard, lion, and she-wolf, constitute a threefold detriment in each phase of the mystic progress, there is a further symbolism in which each in turn dominates in one phase of the threefold way. The opposition of the she-wolf is a force especially in the way of purgation, although she has her special perniciousness, not only as innate corruption in natural good, but also as the vice which blocks knowledge and the cupidity which turns love through self to the Nothing in its opposition to Re-

128. Cf. pp. 162 ff.

129. Cf. pp. 288 ff., especially p. 294.

130. *Purg.*, xx, 12, referring to the wolf, with her "hunger endlessly deep."

131. Cf. pp. 47 ff.

132. *Purg.*, xxvii, 97 ff. Dante sees Leah as the active life, Rachel as the contemplative. This symbolism was usual. Richard of St. Victor, however, uses, not Rachel, but her beloved son Benjamin, as the symbol of contemplation, in his works, *Benjamin Minor* and *Benjamin Major*.

ality. The lion, deformity of mind, lack of peace for study, and the sin of violence as tool of the root of all sin in cupidity,¹³³ blocks especially the illuminative phase of the mystic progress, though he aids the *lupa* in rendering discipline difficult and sense of union well-nigh impossible. The leopard, subjecting to *reatus poenae*, is as always harbinger of death. Fraudulent in deprivation of the true sacraments of the church, the bread of life which Christ would bar to none, he is of especial malignance in the way of union; nevertheless the leopard, like the lion, assists the *lupa* to oppose all three phases of the soul's progress. Blocked by the she-wolf, the seeker may advance not one step along the way, but is driven backward into darkness.

THREEFOLD MERCY

In this dilemma there is sent, by the grace of God acting through her whose loveliness had inspired Dante's quest, the vision of discipline, of practical reason, of action. This vision is represented in Virgil, who is to guide to that point where at last, through habit working harmoniously with sacramental life, revelation, and contemplation, he may free the advanced soul for the ultimate accomplishment. The practical ordering of life releases the confused mind to realization of the forces upon which it may rely for aid: the three Ladies, each the surrogate for one of the Persons of the Trinity. They appear as: Mary, Queen of the Church, whose special care was that the sacraments of her divine Son might not be lacking to her human sons;¹³⁴ Lucia, illuminer of vision, concerned to provide peace for study even to those who live in the midst of battle; and Beatrice the Blessed, lover of wisdom and enemy of all turning from the sun, through whose inspiration Dante as a candidate for the love of the Court of Heaven, may take up his labor.

Beatrice thus opposes the she-wolf especially in empowering the mystic reversal which marks entrance on the purgative way, but she opposes the she-wolf also as that ravaging beast appears in the ways of illumination and union to distract from study and to distort love from the Infinite to the Nothing. Lucia, similarly,

133. Cf. p. 164 n. 189.

134. Cf. the numerous legends in which Mary brings the sacraments to one of her devotees imprisoned or wounded in a place far from priest and altar.

opposes the lion especially as he dominates the illuminative way, but she opposes him also as he appears in the ways of purgation and union as deformity of mind and the sin of violence. Finally, Mary opposes the leopard not only, though especially, as he dominates the way of union, but also as he appears throughout the threefold way. It was Mary through whose humility was offered release from *reatus poenae* and the possibility of new life in the very face of the harbinger of death.

Here there may be added a word of caution well supported by the symbolism just described: Throughout this order of symbolism, that which Dante's time-space pilgrimage reveals in regard to eternal truths cannot be dated in respect to the mystic way, or even divided into temporal stages. This is one reason for the unsatisfactoriness of the many attempts which have been made to equate stages of the mystic way as worked out by Bonaventure, by Richard of St. Victor, or by some other mystic whom Dante may have known. The mystic way itself had not been charted with the accuracy later displayed in the Spanish school; and, moreover, it is *par excellence* that journey into eternity which, though it may be related to the time-space journey of social, moral, or sacramental development, exists in reality all at once.

Those mystics who have been most meticulous in analysis of the mystic way into sub-subdivisions of purgation, illumination, and union, nevertheless always add that the three main phases are but different meanings of the same progress, though emphasis may swing from one to another. The attempt to equate *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* to the three phases of the mystic way is thus (except in a very restricted sense) contrary to the meaning of the way itself, as Dante beheld it in eternity. Indeed, there are probably few critics who would attempt to equate the *Inferno* to the whole of Dante's visionary journey, the *Purgatorio* to the story of his political development, and the *Paradiso* to the story of his moral life. The *Paradiso* is regarded as having properly no part in the journey itself, even though through the peculiar plan of appearances in the time-space spheres, of that which is not in time and place, there is given suggestion of progression. Knowledge of the mystic way as it ultimately exists

must be given, as Dante represents, only in the Empyrean beyond time and space where although he must tell of it as progression, no progression can exist. Only purgation belongs really to time and space, and thus it is summarized in that last most swift of the spheres of motion,¹³⁵ which to the mystic's vision becomes the first, so mightily is it moved by the point of flame its true center.

II. PROGRESSION: INEVITABLE TRANSMUTATION

"COME, in sì poc'ora, da sera a mane ha fatto il sol tragitto?"—"How, in so short a time, has the Sun from eve to morn made transit?" In the *Inferno*, at the end of a long journey among Circe's creatures, Dante comes to the sudden realization of the reversal which marks the entrance upon the mystic quest. At the outset of his journey, thrown into confusion by the beasts, Dante hesitated to follow that which Virgil, as practical and active reason, pointed out as the only road. Whereas this hesitation might have been interpreted as true humility, Virgil termed it craven fear, the result of faulty vision, characteristic of one still under the power of that *gravezza* which makes the Worm the center of the universe:

L'anima tua è da viltate offesa;
la qual molte fiata l'omo ingombra
sì che d'onrata impresa lo rivolve . . .¹³⁶

Such fear is betrayal to the power of Circe and her hellish metamorphoses, the true character of which Dante is soon to see, in the inversions and gruesome parodies of hell, where fire, image of Divine Wisdom, falls downward to extinction in slow flakes like snow. Hell's very shape is an inverted cone, to him whose vision centers in the Worm; but he whose vision centers in the Divine Sun sees the same law is potent in both hell and purgatory.¹³⁷ One need but recall Virgil's reiteration: "Vuolsi così

¹³⁵. Cf. pp. 85 ff.

¹³⁶. "Thy soul is smit with coward fear, which oftentimes encumbers men, so that it turns them back from honoured enterprise." *Inf.*, ii, 45-48.

¹³⁷.

"Giustizia mosse il mio alto Fattore;
fecemi la divina potestate,
la somma sapienza e 'l primo
amore."

"Justice moved my High Maker; Di-
vine Power made me, Wisdom Su-
preme, and Primal Love."

Inf., iii, 4-6.

colà dove si puote ciò che si vuole."¹³⁸ Had the sun become for Dante permanently the center of the universe, he might have climbed "il diletto monte," and risen to the spheres from any point on the earth's surface. In reality, however, the reversal is an ever recurrent motif throughout the whole of the *Commedia*—finite expression of the eternal reversal in the *Primum Mobile*.

INSIDE THE GATE

Withdrawing attention from the drag of the great refusal, the mystic in increasing awareness of failure takes his place in the cosmic drama wherein the Dark Wood becomes, by the transmutation of mystic development, the *divina foresta* of the Terrestrial Paradise, and ultimately the Celestial Rose, as Dante himself progresses from a tangled jungle of conflict to the sturdy oak of the Terrestrial Paradise, and finally after death is to take his place among the petals of the Rose. The beasts on the other hand, three vices in opposition to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, under transmutation become the Worm at the center of the universe. They are represented in Upper Hell by Charon, Minos, and the threefaced Cerberus. In the approach to lower Hell the transmutation becomes inversion; there where sin of will had been more than failure, is the mockery of fire and the negation of cold. Plutus, the cursed Wolf, is followed by Phlegyas the violent, and the coiled and knotted Geryon.¹³⁹ The symbolism of Charon, with eyes like wheels of fire, is appropriately the thunder manifestation; that of Minos the mockery of judgment; and that of Cerberus first the doggishness earlier discussed as the unpardonable sin,¹⁴⁰ and second, the three faces which sum up in cupidity the opposition to the Tri-unity.¹⁴¹ At last, in Satan, parody and negation of the Sun, approach to whom is prefaced by that most horrible of all transmutations, the snake union which parodies the mystic marriage—is the summary of the whole.

138. "Thus it is willed there, where what is willed can be done." *Inf.*, iii, 95-96. Cf. *Inf.*, V, 23-24, and IX, 94-96.

139. Geryon's coils and knots suggest the spots of the leopard. Cf. p. 190.

140. Cf. pp. 163 ff.

141. Cf. pp. 199 ff. and p. 164 n. 189.

SEARCH AMID FAILURE

Beneath the drama of transmutation to conscious experience of which the mystic is committed, lie the vicissitudes of the threefold way, which, although never marked out in temporal stages, are cast in a universal mold. Passing out from the Dark Wood through the fateful gate and turning his back on the possibility of refusal, the seeker progresses through a period of testing characterized by vision of failure accomplished through that vice which, blocking knowledge¹⁴² and separating it from its good, has corrupted nature. In the pattern outlined with reference to the first and second orders, each detail in the symbolism of Upper Hell is pregnant for the initiate in the way.

EXPERIENCE OF DEFIANCE

At the point where it seems that further progress is irrevocably barred, the gate is suddenly opened as it were by a miracle of supernatural power, and the traveler enters in a triumph which is ominous. In the triumph is a new sense of divine power both immanent and transcendent: which in the dolorous realm with its tumultuous deformity of mind and soul delivers the traveler through betrayal into peril of perdition.

Though in the experience of divine transcendence is a foretaste of the ultimate goal, the way to betrayal is laid open through the surrender of reason to experience of the suprara-tional. Furthermore the experience following the triumphant revelation of entry is a tumult which leaves no peace for study. The seeker is thus placed in such confusion that, apart from knowledge and sacrament, he tends to seek direct guidance in trance and ecstasy after the fashion of the false mystics, followers of the *Everlasting Gospel*¹⁴³ and others, who roamed through Paris, through Italy, and through Provence in Dante's

142. The importance of this conception in the Middle Ages, suggests yet another reference to Dante's philosophical background, with reference to the relationship of sin to the inability to see straight intellectually. According to Thomas Aquinas, "Peccatum non potest esse in voluntate, nisi cum ignorantia intellectus." Cf. *S.Th.*, 1, Q. 63, art. 1 ad 4; 1, 2, Q. 58, art. 2, c. and Q. 77, art. 2, c.; 2, 2, Q. 20, art. 2, Q. 51, art. 3 ad 2, Q. 53, art. 2, c., etc.

143. Ascribed to Joachim of Flora. The book, which represented extreme views sponsored by certain Franciscans, was a storm center for a time at the University of Paris.

time. Such is the *sacrificium intellectus* (one of the three great perils of mysticism), which even today renders the word "mystic" slightly akin to "mentally unbalanced." Again rendered impotent in the power of the vice within the soul, the wayfarer may escape only through absolute reversal.

Similarly the experience of divine immanence within was in reality a foreshadowing of the ultimate harmonization of the will of the traveler with the will of the Prime Mover. Yet such is the threefold detriment that in the presence of the gift of grace there comes betrayal in temptation to pantheism (the second of the perils of mysticism), and a presumptuous reliance on grace for that which lies within the sphere of discipline. Thus the *reatus poenae* becomes absolute as both discipline and grace are rendered impotent, and the only escape is the mystic reversal, piercing through the utter corruption of nature.

Finally, from the point of view of development in union, there comes at the moment when despair seems imminent the miracle of sudden unitive experience. The lion, still satellite of the *lupa*, enters into experience of divine union, and through the leopard there is given to contemplation the gift of energy that should be spent in action. Thus in ensuing quietism (which is the third peril of mysticism), is destroyed the balance between activity and receptivity, man's seeking of God and God's seeking of man, and both means of progress are rendered impotent.

DEATH AND REBIRTH

The seeker for the Beatific Vision depends for his progress on the Logos, who in his union of the finite and the infinite is in fact the Way, potent to maintain the balance between effort and grace, reason and revelation, action and contemplation, and so save from peril of the *sacrificium intellectus*, pantheism, and quietism. In company with him the seeker, through some experience of these three perversions, is led to the mystic death beyond which lies the resurrection in the mystic reversal. In the passage through the center of the earth there is premonition of the reconciliation of opposites obtaining in eternity, yet the subsequent progress is the weary maintenance of opposing autonomies. Though Dante passed instantaneously from night to

morning, from spring to fall, as Virgil clambered up Satan's ribs, yet he made his way up the rivulet, by effort, reason, and action, acting as autonomous in relation to grace, revelation, and contemplation. As the pantheist comes to see himself in God rather than God in him; as the supernaturalist comes to see God's gift of knowledge in the exercise of reason, rather than the best exercise of reason in acceptance of an independently given gift of knowledge; as the quietist comes to see that *laborare est orare* as clearly as he sees that *orare est laborare*: so each no longer misled by the truths of divine immanence, transcendence, and love, is freed from the fetters of a false mysticism. Even Tenebrifer may appear as if turned once more into Lucifer, or at least into a flight of stairs by which the stars of the morning once more may be regained.

THE REVERSAL STABILIZED

The center passed, the mystic must reorganize his life and whole personality on all levels or phases of the Way.¹⁴⁴ Emerging to see the stars of the morning, the wayfarer passes from the painful seedtime to the laborious harvest, being required before the work of the day to wait below the gates for supernatural help. In the presence of Cato, who shines as the sun of effort, reason, action, under the stars of the cardinal virtues, he must formulate a new rule of life and discipline, a new plan of study, a new dedication to service. When it shall please Lucia, the Eagle of Divine Wisdom, to end his waiting, he will be placed before the gate of true progress, which even effort, reason, action, cannot enable him to reach.¹⁴⁵

INTEGRATION

In purgatory, Circe's enchantments must be unspelled, through the twofold activity of grace and the discipline it empowers. Those whom she had lured through pride must work their transformation bowed down to earth, as must the glutton,

144. Modern studies of the psychology of mysticism and religious experience, all reiterate the fact well known to men as skilled in introspection as Augustine and Dante, that the crisis of inner experience consists in a point of inversion followed by a reorganization of the personality around a new center.

145. It is as fatal to overemphasize one member of a pair, as it is the other. This is true on the mystic levels, as it has been on the six preceding.

lean and thin through fasting. Their penance, then, is not punishment, but the working out of the law of love. Even in purgatory, in the dream wherein Circe again proves her power over him who will look toward the Worm, Dante is again reminded of the unswerving devotion of his will, through which alone Beatrice can accomplish in him progress beyond the human.

Accompanying this purgation, of which the law is the perfect simplicity of intention stressed by Dionysius, comes an increasing power to perceive in symbols their true meaning. It is not enough to use reason to the fullest, reason must become a practical force in living. Even as Circe's spell of impotence is slowly and painfully unspelled through the discipline of the terraces, so her spell of ignorance is slowly and painfully unspelled through study not now unorganized but orderly, for the illumination of the lessons learned in the disorder of previous experience.¹⁴⁶ In this process the veil of symbolism becomes increasingly more transparent, or, more truly, substance and accidents and their relations become fused. Throughout the phase of illumination also, except in moments of unitive experience, it is Lady Philosophy reflected in Virgil (ultimately Lucia, unseen except in the symbol of the Eagle) who is guide.¹⁴⁷

The way of union, most perilous of all phases of the mystic's journey, likewise receives in the purgatory its positive development. Practice of the active life is now unhampered by the confusions of hell. Though painful in the step by step unspelling of failures in love, the burden of *gravezza* is gradually removed. At length, even as at the heights effort has led to grace and reason to revelation, so action leads to contemplation, and the fruition of all the pairs is placed within the grasp of the seeker. For the attainment of the reconciliation of opposites, of which there was premonition in the mystic inversion, the seeker has been thus guarded and strengthened through the maintenance of the mutual autonomies of pairs, in the ways of purgation, of illumination, and of union itself.

The full significance of this symbolism in its relationship to the problems of the time in which Dante lived can be shown

146. The fundamental division of evil is that in the *Purgatorio*. In the *Inferno* men are punished, not for the root vice, but for the fruit to which it led.

147. Lady Philosophy is not a rival to Beatrice. Cf. pp. 169-171.

most clearly through a contrast. Among all the writings of ancient or more modern times, primitive, Jewish, Roman, or Oriental, which have afforded such a fertile field for those whose interest is in tracing similarities,¹⁴⁸ the mystical works of Ramón Lull stand out with peculiar interest. It is indeed possible that this "Spanish Jacopone da Todi" was in Paris during those very years in which Boccaccio tells that Dante studied there. Moreover, during a previous stay he wrote his novel-like *Blanquerna*, within which was contained a complete mystical treatise, the "Book of the Lover and the Beloved, teachings given to Blanquerna by Ramón the Fool"; and the allegorical "Tree of Love." In the latter Ramón Lull set forth his failure to achieve his aim: "to work great good by means of knowledge"; and his

148. A word of caution may not be out of place here as to the tracing of similarities as proof of literary dependence, within the field of symbolism. Perhaps in no other field is this always hazardous occupation more likely to lead into absurdity. The work of Fr. Miguel Asin y Palacios on Mohammedan sources of the *Divina Commedia*, one of the greatest monuments of Dante scholarship to appear within recent years, is deserving of comment in this connection. With no wish to controvert Fr. Asin's conception of a great debt owed by Dante to Islamic visionaries, one yet cannot but question, as proof of this debt, symbolisms inherent either in the definite teachings of Christian patristic theology, or in ideas so fundamental that they appear in the minds of all mystics, modern and primitive, whether in Greece, Rome, India, Scandinavia, or Peru. The following example is characteristic of much of his argument:

"The feature . . . that shows most conclusively the affinity between the two stories is the one that is repeated *ad nauseam* in the Mahometan Ascension. At each stage of heaven Mahomet is dazzled by the lights, and each time he is fearful of being blinded. Repeatedly he raises his hands to his eyes to shield them from the intense radiance, and in the end he becomes dazed. . . . This scene is reproduced, often with the same words, in more than ten episodes of Dante's *Paradiso*. . . . In the eighth sphere the refulgence of Christ in the image of a sun blurs the poet's vision. . . ." Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, p. 27.

Had Professor Asin based this argument on the idea of a journey through the spheres to God (as indeed he argues elsewhere), it might be accepted as a possibility; but anyone familiar with older literature would be aware that the idea of increasing dazzling of vision with increasing nearness to God was "repeated *ad nauseam*" long before Mohammed ever existed. (Cf. pp. 124 ff.) (It should be remembered that Mohammedanism, like post-Christian Judaism and Christianity itself, is inheritor both of the Old Testament and of the Greek tradition. In all three, in medieval times, the authority of Aristotle listing nine physical heavens was accepted. This being so, Christian theology could not but add the tenth heaven (cf. pp. 34-35) and the use of this conception in the *Divina Commedia* is scarcely to be termed a literary artifice, even though Fr. Asin considers it to be such in the Ascension of Mohammed.) When the learned critic later, compelled by his Catholic theology to trace Dante's conception of the *lumen gloriae* (the unique light in which the soul may see God) to Thomas Aquinas, then declares that Thomas could have gotten the conception from no other than a Mohammedan source, one wonders whether his wide scholarship has omitted a glimpse of the mystery cults. Quite apart from the biblical basis of

decision to adopt a new aim: "to work great good by means of love." To the furtherance of the new aim he is to write a book on the philosophy of love. Meditating on this decision in a forest somewhat resembling that of the Terrestrial Paradise, he meets a lady who is Philosophy-of-Love, sorrowing over the fewness of her lovers in contrast to those of her sister, Philosophy-of-Knowledge. Her words suggest the conflict between discipline and grace: when men, she says,

have mastered the sciences, they grow to love the philosophy thereof, and make many books and many arts. So their love goes wholly to the sciences, and they have none for me, nor for that love which is my essence and nature. . . . Therefore do I weep and lament, not from envy and pride, but because few men in this world have knowledge how to love.¹⁴⁹

At once those ladies who have *intelletto d'amore* are recalled, among them Lady Philosophy, and Beatrice herself, whose essence and nature is Love. Here is also an idealization of the system of courtly love, giving intimation of its very problems, both real and artificial,¹⁵⁰ and a picture of the dilemma of the illuminative way:

Two lovers met; the one revealed his Beloved, and the other learned of Him. And it was disputed which of those two was nearer to his Be-

the idea, common alike to Mohammedanism and Christianity, there is the unbroken tradition of the Church Fathers. In the Middle Ages, as all mental seeing took place only in the presence of the *lumen intellectus*, and as all sensory seeing took place only in the presence of the *lumen solis*, so spiritual seeing required the *lumen gloriae* of which both were symbols. Fr. Asin's discovery that a comparison of many scenes in Mahomet's Ascension "with numerous similar descriptions in the *Paradiso* makes it clear that in both stories the element of light reigns supreme" (*op. cit.*, p. 25), is hardly a safe basis on which to rest his conclusion of literary influence on the *Divina Commedia* from the Spanish Moslem mystic school of Ibn Masarra and Ibn Arabi.

Even more surprising is Fr. Asin's ascription to hyperbole and affectation Dante's protestation that as the vision increases he is less and less able to tell of it. There is probably in existence no account of the mystic vision in which this has not been said, whether the vision were produced by spiritual meditation or even by the use of drugs. (Cf. Dr. Leuba's citation of the drug vision experimentally produced, of which the subject states that he has perceived the unutterable.) In brief, arguments can hardly be drawn from the fact that the psychological effect of the Beatific Vision is the same in the study of Mahomet and of Dante, since human nature remaining constant, it could not be, and indeed never has been described as, otherwise.

149. Ramón Lull, *Tree of Love*, tr. E. Allison Peers, p. 4.

150. Accused by Power-of-Love, Wisdom-of-Love, and Will-of-Love (the personification is nominal only; they have no human lineaments) for insufficient

loved; and in the solution the Lover took knowledge of the demonstration of the Trinity.¹⁵¹

Description of the mystic progress in terms of light and darkness, the attraction of the sun and its negation, dominates the whole of Lull's treatment:

They asked the Lover in what manner the heart of man was turned towards the love of the Beloved. He answered them and said: "Even as the sunflower turns to the sun." "How is it, then, that all men love not thy Beloved?" He answered: "They that love Him not have night in their hearts, because of their sin."¹⁵²

The way of union with its foreshadowing of anagoge is characteristically described through the combination of the supreme symbolisms of sun and courtly love:¹⁵³

Love shone through the cloud which came between the Lover and the Beloved, and made it as bright and resplendent as is the moon by night, as the day-star at dawn, the sun at mid-day, the understanding in the will; and through that bright cloud the Lover and the Beloved held converse.¹⁵⁴

Lull is as conscious as is Dante of the danger to union of the abuse of insight symbolism, that is, the resting in creatures rather than the constant ascent from "fair to yet more fair" until ultimately strengthened for the love of the Beloved:

And he said that he had sinned many times with the eyes in looking upon creatures of God that were fair, and rejoicing rather in their beauty than in the beauty of the Beloved, who created them to show forth his beauty and goodness, that his lovers may delight therein.¹⁵⁵

use of them, and by the Virtues for neglect, the Lover appeals to Love; only to be accused freshly by Truth, Glory of Love, Difference of Love, Concordance of Love, and Contrariety of Love. Then is inserted an episode in which the Lover is ill, attended by the Physician of Love who merely attempts to aggravate the illness. Whereupon the Lover fled from Love together with Contrariety and Minority, only to be captured and thrown into jail by two angels. The Beloved wishes to condemn the Lover to death, but the Lady of Love intercedes. A trial ensues, with Life of Love the advocate for the defense, and Death of Love the advocate for the prosecution. Between them they carry on a long dispute after the tedious fashion of the courts of love. The result is that the Beloved condemns the Lover to die. Cf. pp. 428 ff.

151. Lull, *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, tr. E. A. Peers, p. 113, § 361.

152. *Ibid.*, p. 107, § 342.

153. For medieval treatment of sex symbolism, cf. Appendix III, Pt. I, i.

154. Lull, *op. cit.*, p. 53, § 118.

155. Lull, *Tree of Love*, p. 46. Cf. Augustine, quoted on p. 356.

Like Dante, also, Lull commits his spiritualization of the ideals of courtly love to the vernacular¹⁵⁶—for him, Catalan.

Ramón Lull lived and disputed on theological questions at a time when the fourfold method was in full prominence. In complete agreement with Dante's mysticism in the matter of courtly love, he failed, through an allegiance to Augustinianism in contradistinction to Thomism, to maintain the autonomy of pairs through the time-space progress of the Way. That which is remarkable is the fact that while using in his mystical works individual symbols in constant interpretation on all four levels, he has so used them in his story that more than one mystical interpretation is rarely possible. In other words, it would seem that Lady Philosophy-of-Love, suggesting Beatrice, when she is served in contradistinction to Lady Philosophy-of-Knowledge (Lady Philosophy, or Lucia) is unable to give that clearness of vision which alone makes possible the arrangement of symbolic interrelationships necessary for the complete truth of the four levels. It is to be remembered that for Dante, allegiance to Beatrice demanded also allegiance to Lady Philosophy,¹⁵⁷ sent forth from Mary. In reality Lady Philosophy-of-Love and Lady Philosophy-of-Knowledge are one and the same,¹⁵⁸ and in separating them Lull has separated the Persons of the Trinity. In creation's progress toward God, the seemingly natural order for men of reaching the Son through the Spirit and the Father through the Son (that is, from Love to Wisdom to Power) is impossible. Catholic theology could never escape the fact that man might reach union with God by way of the Primal Love, only after Eternal Wisdom had descended to earth to initiate and maintain in his own dual nature contact with men.

156. Many more similarities could be traced between the mystical work of Lull and the *Divina Commedia*.

157. Cf. pp. 169-171.

158. "Tandis que le mystique, s'élance impétueusement, le regard fixé sur le but qu'il veut attendre, le scolastique s'avance avec lenteur et précaution; il sonde le terrain, il écarte doucement les obstacles; sa démarche n'est pas rapide, mais elle est sûre. L'idéalisme de Platon est le fondement du mysticisme, et la dialectique d'Aristote l'instrument nécessaire de la scolastique. . . . Elles ne s'excluent donc pas l'une l'autre . . . l'une est plus analytique et l'autre plus synthétique. . . . Saint Thomas et saint Bonaventure furent à la fois mystiques et scolastiques. . . . Il y a une vraie et une fausse scolastique, un vrai et un faux mysticisme." Mgr. Hugonin in his "Prolegomena" to the works of Hugh of St. Victor, in Migne, *P.L.* 175.

In Dante's "dolce stil nuovo" was reflected the sternness of mystic discipline, and conventional birds and ladies and disputes had no place. Francis, when he is separated from Dominic, though still able to lead deeply into the ecstasies of love, cannot give the complete illumination which is the Beatific Vision; and this is the full significance of the *via mystica* as Dante saw it in his *Commedia*. Those loves which course around the Sun all have their delight

quanto la sua veduta si profonda
nel vero in che si queta ogni intelletto.
Quinci si può veder come si fonda
l'esser beato ne l'atto che vede,
non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda.¹⁵⁹

Again is made exigent the balance between the members of the pairs and, as Dionysius and John the Scot made clear in their theory of knowledge, progress is possible only through full resolution of their conflict. Love is reached only afterward, in that which surpassing both unites them. He who attempts immediate attainment of union goes upward to remain still blind, not, like Dante, to be blind no longer.

III. CULMINATION: NEW MOTION

WITH the consummation of Dante's quest in the all-revealing moment of communion at the summit of the mount,¹⁶⁰ the solar symbolism becomes strongly reënforced through the symbolism of marriage. There is in the anagoge of Dante's personal life¹⁶¹ a suggested comparison of Dante's union with Beatrice to the marriage of Francis with Lady Poverty and of Dominic with the Faith.¹⁶² This has its appropriateness in the order of symbolism

159. "In measure as their sight sinketh more deep into the truth wherein every intellect is stilled. Hence may be seen how the being blessed is founded on the act that seeth, not on that which loveth, which after followeth." *Par.*, xxviii, 107-111. This is the Thomist view, as against the Augustinian and Franciscan.

160. Cf. Chap. IV, Pt. II, iii, especially pp. 320 ff.

161. As seen by him especially in the sphere of the Sun. Cf. pp. 58 ff.

162. Cf. *Paradiso*, cantos xi and xii. In addition to the mystic marriage of the soul, and of all humanity to God, certain individuals chosen for a special office are conceived of as bringing forth fruit in particular mystic marriages of the kind mentioned. Even as Francis and Dominic each brought a numerous progeny to the service of God and the salvation of church and Faith, so Dante expects that by his work, inspired by Beatrice (as Francis and Dominic by Poverty and the

where Dante journeys as type of Christ, whose marriage with the church took place on the Cross.¹⁶³ To this marriage all the baptized in Christ's mystical Body owe their new birth, as on the more personal level each soul, through its relationship to the sacramental Body, is itself bride of Christ.¹⁶⁴ In the order of symbolism relating to the mystic quest, truly represented in the spheres in the Ladder rising from Saturn, is the final significance of this symbolism. Jacob's Ladder¹⁶⁵ was interpreted by Rabanus Maurus as *Charitas* which unites and couples.¹⁶⁶ Up the ladder of contemplation the soul journeys to ultimate union with the object of its quest.

No fact is made more evident in the symbolism of both earthly and heavenly Paradise than that he who in the culmination of the mystic progress shrinks from expression, fails in fruitfulness, and so annuls the mystic marriage itself. Expression of that to which the ecstasy of love has led, must be through the power of intellect¹⁶⁷ and good works, indeed, a reflection of the Trinity in all its aspects. For example, Ramón Lull, in the words of Lady Philosophy-of-Love, pointed out the barrenness of those who in union with knowledge failed to express it in good works, but then, like so many a Franciscan of his time, he sought the remedy in a union with love which failed to bear fruit in the intellect.

Faith, respectively), he will bring a numerous progeny "from a state of misery to a state of bliss." Cf. *Epistle XIII* (X).

163. Cf. Eph. 5. 25-32 and other passages.

164. It is in virtue of this marriage-union with the Logos, fruit of his suffering, that the mystic must go through the agonies of hell, since the essence of marriage consists in the making of two as one to share the same experiences. The bride of Christ shares his sufferings and his joys.

165. The ladder is a timeworn symbol for sexual congress.

166. "Quod charitas nos et per compassionem sociat proximo, et per desiderium copulat proximo." Rabanus Maurus, commenting on *scala* in Gen. 28. 12.

167. Mary, the supreme example of the mystic marriage, alone among creatures uniting the heights of virginity and of fruitfulness, is said by Albertus Magnus to have been supreme also intellectually. It is ever to be remembered that her Child was Eternal Wisdom. In fact, medieval theology itself implied the necessity of giving a high place to the intellect even in the exercises of devotion, though it is true and necessary that in practice the ignorant rely on faith in many spheres belonging properly to the domain of reason. Thomas points out that the data of revelation rightly understood no more conflict with the findings of reason than do the data of sense experience. (In both fields there are many superficial conflicts, for example, between the real and apparent size of the sun.) Faith is knowledge of a type inferior to reason. Its value lies in its greater reach. Cf. Gilson's work on Thomism, chapters 2 and 3.

How Giacomo da Todi, lawyer, became Jacopone, minstrel, is a story full of significance. After years spent in a shrewd and intelligent practice of his profession Giacomo, on the death of his wife, succumbed like so many another to the lure of the mystic way. Unprepared through discipline for its perils, he was swept from his feet in the love enthusiasm which spread like a fire through the Europe of his day. In the glory of initial triumph in a vision of the love of the Court of Heaven he hastily relegated to the court of Satan not only his former sins, but also the intellect by the light of which he had lived. Wandering about the countryside, singing songs of love, Giacomo, lawyer of Todi, became Jacopone, the simple.

The defects of such "erotic mysticism" as that of Jacopone have been the subject of frequent comment, of which the outcome is generally to place them under the ban of sex perversion. As a matter of fact a source of motivation of such power as that of love can scarce be absent from a quest which is coterminous with the whole of life, demanding the utmost of the whole personality. That which subjects the verses of such mystics as Jacopone to censure, is in reality not sex but the lack of balance resulting from the *sacrificium intellectus*. Even the uninitiate is likely to feel a sense of wrongness in a love poem to Eternal Wisdom, with its urgent supplication for union, from one who spends his days speaking scorn of all that pertains to the intellect. Although the symbolism of love and generation was chosen equally with that of the sun for preëminence in the New Testament, it is like an edged tool in the hands of children when unsafeguarded by solar imagery. In general the symbolism of the sun expresses for the intellect that which the images of love express for the emotions, although both are subject to either treatment.¹⁶⁸

Bearing witness to his maintenance of the primacy of the act of knowing, Dante's progress on every level is from light to light, that is, from lesser to greater insight, made possible alike by his increasing discipline and his increasing illumination. In

168. Angela of Foligno, whose early life was that of a pampered lady of society, became by no means a distinctly intellectual mystic. Yet her work taken as a whole presents the balance between the two symbolisms and the two motifs which Dante makes essential in his *Commedia*, and her mysticism was fruitful

the *Paradiso* he is shown at last the function of each element of his education.¹⁶⁹ There is a hierarchical progression of symbols. Thus in hell the progress of Dante is from darker and grosser sights to scenes even darker and more gross, until at last, empowered to endure with Christ the full horror of evil, he ascends, greeted at first by the pale light of dawn and by an angel who causes agony to his unaccustomed eyes. Then on from brighter to brighter angels, from clearer to clear vision, he mounts, gradually lightened of sin until in the Earthly Paradise, his transmutation accomplished and his quest achieved, the miracle of nine is completed: that has been said of Beatrice which before has never been said of woman, that through her eyes is revealed the whole secret of the universe.

Dante has seen the development of himself as an individual in personal, civic, and moral life; he has seen the fourfold life of God incarnate in which is bound up the twofold corporate life of humanity; he has been granted in a flash vision of the threefold truth of the mystical life of each soul alone with God. Yet with perception of nineness in the universe—or even of the threeness of the divine nature, the sole root mathematically and theologically of the nineness—it is impossible to stop.¹⁷⁰ To the interlocking tercets must be added the fourth line which gives

in disciplined wisdom in her life. Cf. the atmosphere of the following selections, the first of which is a poem of Jacopone's, the other the last vision of Angela, before her death in 1309:

"Love! Love! lovely Jesus!
Love, I will die
Embracing thee.
Sweet Love, Jesus my Bridegroom,
Love, Love, Jesus thou Holy One,
Give me thyself, transform me into
thyself,
Think, that I am in rapture,
That I have lost myself,
Jesus my hope,
Come, sleep in love!"

"And then he showed unto me the
Bridegroom, the Eternal Word, so that
now I do understand what thing the
Word is and what it doth mean—that
is to say, this Word which for my sake
was made Flesh. And the Word en-
tered into me and touched me through-
out and embraced me, saying, 'Come,
My love, My bride, beloved of Me
with true delight—come, for all the
saints do await thee with exceeding
great joy.'"

169. To the seven heavens nearest the earth "correspond the seven sciences of the Trivium and of the Quadrivium, to wit grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astrology. To the eighth, to wit the starry sphere, answers natural science which is called physics, and first science which is called metaphysics. To the ninth sphere answers moral science; and to the quiet heaven answers divine science, which is called theology." *Convivio*, 2, 15.

170. Cf. p. 339 n. 19c.

completion; to the nine which is the circumference of all reality must be added the point which gives it being. It is the one analogue of each and all of the threefold three that binds in one volume the scattered leaves of all the universe—that which ultimately must be seen without symbols and so may not be told.

CHAPTER VI. SCHEMA

THE *Commedia*, like Chartres, a Speculum, gathering up the great quest motifs of the people.

I. *Liturgy*: The cathedral as a setting for the drama of the Mass presents the pattern of ultimate truth. In the Mass is represented the orbit of the Divine Sun, borne out in the daily cycle of the Hours and the annual cycle of the Christian Year.

II. *Popular literature*: Fragmentary and inconsistent reflection of the cultural development which culminated in the thirteenth century in the worship of woman and the sun-guided quest for the love of the Court of Heaven.

III. *Grail cycle*: Quest in which the hero, knighted survival of Celtic heathendom, and the Christian motif itself, are solar manifestations.

IV. *Alchemy*: The story of transmutations in which the transmuting power and the ultimate product are alike manifestations of the Divine Sun.

Thus men were trained in the quest for the Infinite, answering to the quest of the Infinite for man. To this dual quest unified in the Cross, Dante gave supreme expression.

CHAPTER VI. SYMBOLISM IN MEDIEVAL POPULAR USAGE: LITURGY, ROMANCE, SCIENCE

S'io ti fiammeggio nel caldo d'amore
di là dal modo che'n terra si vede,
si che de li occhi tuoi vinco il valore,
non ti maravigliar; chè ciò procede
da perfetto veder, che, come apprende
così nel bene appreso move il piede.
Io veggio ben sì come già resplende
ne l'intelletto tuo l'eterna luce,
che, vista, sola e sempre amore accende;
e s'altra cosa vostro amor seduce,
non è se non di quella alcun vestigio,
mal conosciuto, che quivi traluce.

If I flame on thee in the warmth of love, beyond the measure witnessed upon earth, and so vanquish the power of thine eyes, marvel not; for this proceedeth from perfect vision, which, as it apprehendeth so doth advance its foot in the apprehended good. Well do I note how in thine intellect already doth reglow the eternal light, which only seen doth ever kindle love; and if aught else seduce your love, naught is it save some vestige of this light, ill understood, that shineth through therein.

IT is told that when Dante, during the last years of his life, appeared in city streets of early fourteenth-century Italy, small boys were wont to gather on the corners to gaze in awe on that grave figure who had been in hell. To whisperings and the pointings of many fingers, Dante had been injured on his journey and whatever their share in deepening those lines of sorrow and of pain revealed by the death mask, in contrast to the proud courage of the early portrait by Giotto, the exile was no longer deterred by them. Walking among men for whom the separated mocking lights of hell had always held such fascination he pondered on that mission of which the Celestial Rose held the ultimate revelation: reinstatement of the suns of Rome that through them men might be brought to know the glory of the source of light in response to whose attraction all creation moves.

Dante's mission was not to leaders only, but to all people that they might know "if aught else seduce your love, naught is it save some vestige of this light, ill understood, that shineth through therein." For the sake of this mission, not only had Dante journeyed where no living man but the founders of church and state had walked, but also he had dared to intrust to the vulgar tongue the masterpiece of his life, a consummation of learning which in its import was to rival the greatest scriptures of the past.

To those undisciplined in the way of vision, and so unable

even to distinguish symbol from reality, the beauty of his poem would bring the effulgence of Supreme Reality softened and made tolerable to the weakness of their vision. This Dante expressed at the close of an ode in which as in the *Commedia*, he beheld Lady Philosophy reflected in the heaven of love:

Ode! I believe that they shall be but rare
 who shall rightly understand thy meaning,
 so intricate and knotty is thy utterance of it:
 Wherefore if perchance it come about
 that thou take thy way into the presence of folk
 who seem not rightly to perceive it;

Then I pray thee to take heart again,
 And say to them, O my beloved lastling;
 "Give heed at least how beautiful I am."¹

Thus, for the first time a supreme expression of the deepest mystery of the universe was submitted to the world, clad in imagery *vulgaris eloquentiae*. Previous to Dante's act of daring, the deepest mystery and the highest knowledge had received for the people no other translation than translation in stone.

Indeed, the tremendous rhythms of the *Commedia* and of Chartres claim so much of kinship that real insight into the poem is scarcely possible to one unacquainted with the gargoyles and rose windows in those great forests of stone within which all men might find the terrors of the Dark Wood of medieval life softened and transformed beneath the power of the living Sun into at least a momentary semblance to the Celestial Rose. The Cathedral also was a book. Victor Hugo remarked that during the Middle Ages men had no great thought they did not write down in stone. It was soon discovered that static art was the expression to the community at large of the whole best thought and experience of medieval life. Whereas some cathedrals were chapters only, Chartres,² like the *Divina Commedia*, expressed all that was apprehended, dimly or clearly, through emotion or intellect, in regard to the whole universe. In later centuries, the masterpiece of the static arts, into which

1. *Convivio*, second treatise, Ode.

2. For a readable discussion of Chartres as an expression of the struggle of mankind to grasp the infinite, cf. Adams, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*.

had been built the full scope of medieval life, from castle to hovel, was to aid in rendering that life once more appreciated and understood.

Modern culture is full of dead symbols, for the most part ignored or treated as curiosities; but a cathedral is with difficulty ignored, and its symbolism carries conviction of persistent vitality. Perhaps, then, it is little wonder that those whose interest is in the static arts have led all groups of modern symbolists in the understanding of medieval thought. The point of view of the logician, mathematician, philologist, and philosopher is abstract, whereas that of literary symbolists has been marked by vagueness and confusion. Modern mystics have lacked discipline and an understanding of their antecedents, while the interest of ethnologists and psychologists has been confined to one aspect of symbolic usage. The artist, however, especially the artist in France with its wealth of medieval art and architecture, is fairly compelled to make a systematic study of symbolism for its meaning to the Middle Ages. To be sure at the coronation of Louis XVI, eighteenth-century screens were employed to conceal in the Cathedral of Rheims, the "crudeness" of Gothic decorations, but perhaps it became piquing to pride to live amid the masterpieces of an art the meaning and inspiration of which remained a mystery. In any case, those who have attempted to elucidate "l'histoire iconographique de la France" have led in awakening an understanding of medieval symbolism.

Taking his cue from the fact that mirror or *imago* was an ever recurrent title in medieval literary expression, M. Male has studied art as mirror, especially in the thirteenth century, of nature, science, ethics, and history. M. Millet also, with a more careful study of eastern influence and of the church in relation to the drama of Calvary, has developed this function of art as an expression of life in all its aspects. There is, however, an aspect of symbolism which the static artist and the interpreter of the medieval cathedral neglects almost entirely—its function in the development of thought itself. Would this be true, one wonders, if the cathedral were more often recognized as a forest like the forest of the *Commedia* under constant transmutation as the setting for a supreme drama enacted within it—the

drama of the eternal Quest. In cathedral as in *Commedia* the source of life is the moment of communion, in the corporate intimacy of which is focused and revealed the eternal meaning of the whole. Thus is realized man's deepest and most secret longing, vision in which no symbol intervenes to dim the union with reality, though symbol still remains as the only path of attainment and the eternal expression.

I. THE SUN OF THE CHURCH

IN the symbolism of the Mass was constant stimulus for every temperament to deeper thought and deeper feeling. In the letter of its beauty and rhythm, it had its message for the artist; in allegory it reviewed for the people the life of Christ and the whole cultural development which lay back of their tradition, at the same time extending to each Christ's life; in trope its symbols taught of discipline and the acquisition of virtues and understanding; while in anagoge it contained the knowledge and inspiration of the mystic way and the means of man's nearest earthly approach to the Beatific Vision.

The church services, it is to be remembered, were not public meetings in the cause of religion, but were expression and maintenance of a vital relationship between man and God, in which the whole created universe was included. "The Mass was not devised to make an impression on the beholders. It was not primarily a meeting for propaganda or appeal or instruction; it was a union of faithful souls to adore and commemorate their God, a meeting of the Church Militant with the Church Triumphant, an attempt to realize the communion of saints in heaven and in earth."³ The gaze of all eyes was both toward the sun, as the church faced toward the east, and toward the cross or monstrance:⁴ the cross symbol of the Sun in creation and suffering,⁵ the monstrance symbol of the Sun in glory. (In this connection

3. B. L. Manning, *The People's Faith in the Time of Wyclif*, p. 16.

4. The monstrance as a receptacle for the Host, came into use owing to its necessity in Corpus Christi processions. Cf. Y. Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine*, pp. 147 ff. Cf. also J. Hoppenot, *La messe dans l'histoire et dans l'art*.

5. It should be noted that only in the rood is the element of suffering emphasized. The cross on the altar represents primarily Christ in glory as Prophet, Priest, and King—the "Lamb as it had been slain." From this solar cross proceeds the life ministered to man in the sacraments.

it is interesting that sometimes the sun and moon are represented on the cross itself to show the sun as suffering an eclipse.) Thus the constant emphasis of the service was Godward, but there was also the constant stimulus to man for the strengthening of his vision and his love that he might be drawn, not to Negation, but ever closer to the primal Power, Wisdom, and Love.

From this point of view then, the function of church services was to give knowledge of God involving, as that must, a goal for man's life, together with a motivation and a technique for the attainment of that goal. In other words, in order to worship God man must know him. This knowledge must be more than the knowledge of the philosopher; it must become an integral part in the unification of the personality. Thus only, motivation can be supplied. Given both the goal and the desire to attain it, a definite technique is necessary. Finally, as it has been said, one must know to be holy and one must be holy to know. In other words, these three aims which for convenience' sake have been distinguished, in reality are intimately bound up with one another, and are to be strengthened by the church simultaneously.

Such being the case, it is easy to see why symbolism should have been prominent. Of course, symbolism is essential for the expression of all knowledge, indeed for the formation of any concept, especially in the realm where the finite is seeking the infinite; but more than this, symbolism of the kind used in the church services involves an inner spiritual meaning, an intellectual appeal, and an emotional stimulus received through as many as possible of the five senses. In other words, symbolism unites aspiration of the soul, the mind, and the body, and so is a tool peculiarly well suited for the unification of the personality in the search for reality. Not only this, but the God on whom all attention centered was seeking man through symbols. Through symbols was his self-revelation, and in symbolism of the kind involved in the sacramental system, his special gift of grace.

For the unification necessary that man may respond to the divine love, the outward and inward must be bound together. Symbols through which reason and faith or aspiration may function must be drawn from the created universe and from doc-

trine. Here again appear the four sources of knowledge. It is significant that medieval writers use the terms scripture and doctrine interchangeably, as one of these four. Although the medieval churchman asserts⁶ his belief to be in that which the Bible teaches, yet as has been pointed out, he is never under the necessity of going to the Bible to discover what that may be; he knows it beforehand. The real source of his faith is the Person of Christ—interpreted to the mind and conveyed to the soul through his mystical body the church and his sacramental body mediated therein.

There was no educative factor in the life of the Middle Ages more powerful than the Mass, attended daily by the leisured class, while the poorest laborer was fined if he failed to be present on Sunday. The Mass and the church were intended to be a "toke and a boke to the leude peple that they may rede i' imagerie and painture that clerkes rede i' the boke." The pictures, images, curtains, and ornaments were the lessons and scripture of the laity.⁷ At the same time there was taught a mnemonic couplet similar to that used for the fourfold method⁸ that there might be no confusion of these "lessons" with the God about whom they taught:

Nec Deus est nec homo, quam praesens cernis imago,
Sed Deus est et homo, quam sacra figurat imago.

A full discussion of the symbolism of the Mass, in which each accessory, each motion, and each word was to be interpreted on the four levels, would demand a treatise in itself.⁹ On the other hand no one should venture into the symbolism of the *Divina Commedia* unfamiliar with some of the symbolism of the Mass, which, ubiquitous and omnipresent, formed the atmosphere of the Middle Ages.

6. As did Dante. Cf. for example *Par.*, xxiv, 91 ff.

7. It should be pointed out that there was consciousness, even in medieval times, of the psychological as well as of the educational effect of liturgical symbolism. For example, Cabasilas (Migne, *P.L.*, t. 150, col. 372) analyzes the psychological effect "avec toute la subtilité d'un psychologue." G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile* . . . , p. 28.

8. Cf. p. 277.

9. For the full symbolism of the church, cf. Gulielmus Durantis, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, and *Church Symbolism, Being the First Book of the Rationale* . . . , tr. Neale and Webb.

The symbolism of the church itself is fairly familiar. In structure it represents the human body, the chancel being the head and the transepts the arms. It represents similarly the cross of Christ and much more, for example: that Christ saved the four quarters of the world; that charity is fourfold, to God, self, friends, and enemies; and that the cross is to be borne in four ways: "meditation in the heart, confession in the mouth, discipline in the body, and impression in the face." In the consecration of the church there occur such ceremonies as the threefold sunwise circuit to show that Christ came down to earth, descended into hell and ascended into heaven; and also to symbolize the Trinity and the threefold state of the saved. There is, moreover, the threefold knock at the door to show that Christ has a threefold right to come in: creation, redemption, and promise of glory. Throughout the Mass there is reminiscence of the threeness in the universe, as also of the twoness and fourness bound up in its unity.¹⁰

The symbolism was carried out into amazing detail, for example, the very cement which held the stones together was made of the lime of charity, the sand of social service, and the water of the spirit. The altar represents the ark,¹¹ the table of

10. For example, in the *Kyrie eleison* mercy is implored three times in remembrance of the Trinity who forgives sins by virtue of the Incarnation, while the *Gloria in excelsis* suggests the peace which Christ brought at his birth to a world in which there were three enmities, that between God and man, that between angels and men, and that between man and man. This is reminiscent of the Tri-unity which gives structure to the universe, and of its threefold negation.

11. The tabernacle of the covenant and the temple of the Old Law were regarded, likewise, as having symbolical meaning. The tabernacle is, according to Richard of St. Victor (Migne, *P.L.*, t. 196), the state of perfection, since "ubi perfectio animi, ibi et inhabitatio Dei." He says further: "Per atrium intellige disciplinam corporis, per tabernaculam disciplinam mentis. Ubi exterior disciplina deest, interior pro certo observari non potest. Disciplina vero corporis inutilis certe sine disciplina mentis." This accords with the fact that the tabernacle must be in a temple, and yet the temple is given its *raison d'être* only by the tabernacle. Nor can man remain ever in the tabernacle: "Exit homo de tabernaculo in atrium per operis exercitium. Intra homo tabernaculam primum, cum redit ad seipsum. Transcendendo sane seipsum elevatur in Deum. In primo moratur homo per considerationem sui, in secundo vero per contemplationem Dei." Richard analyzes the sacred articles within (altar of sacrifice, candelabra, table, altar of incense, etc.) in several ways. This whole interpretation belongs to the order of trope, but the fourfold interpretation of the Old Law given genesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews (cf. pp. 260 ff.) was fundamental in the Middle Ages, even where, as here, only one order was under consideration.

the Last Supper, the heart,¹² and so on, there being the definite allegory of the corporate church, the trope in its application to the individual soul, and the anagoge in the relation to the heavenly intercession of Christ. Furthermore, not only does each accessory have its own independent appropriate signification according to the levels, but also it is given additional meanings appropriate to its relation to the course of the Mass—meanings which reflect, moreover, the alteration in emphasis throughout the yearly cycle. Thus, for example, in relation to Christ the altar is sometimes the manger, sometimes Calvary, and sometimes the tomb; whereas on the level of human history there are also appropriate meanings, such as that the priest in moving away from the right side of the altar indicates Christ's necessary transfer of the center of the church from Judea which has not received him,¹³ while the final replacement of the Bible on the right side presages the ultimate forgiveness of the Jews.¹⁴ The priest goes from the left to the right side of the altar to show, furthermore, that Christ took humanity to the right hand of God. Another meaning given to the motion in this connection is the movement of Christ from his passion to life eternal.¹⁵

In the consecration of the altar the water represents tears, the people made fruitful by the Divine Sun, and the Spirit through

12. The orfroy is a crown in a circle on the front of the altar. If the altar is taken in the sense of the heart, then the orfroy is the "taking in hand of a good occupation wherewith we ought to adorn our foreheads that we may give light to others." In the sense in which the altar represents Christ, the orfroy is charity.

13. In the medieval rite in England the priest in censuring, circled the whole altar sunwise, whenever the construction of the building made this possible. It is of interest to remember also that in certain oriental mysteries the priests in performing sacrifice circle the altar sunwise. Cf. p. 116 n. 36, and p. 218.

There is the same ritual in Hebrew esoteric cultus with which modern readers have been made familiar in the classic play by S. Ansky, the *Dybbuk*. Note in the scene of the solemn summoning of the dead, the stage direction which demands a sunwise circle drawn for protection, to be removed only by a counter-sunwise motion. Scottish peasant usage of a similar protective circle has been mentioned by Sir Walter Scott; innumerable such instances could be cited.

Motion in purgatory as described by Dante is especially to be remembered, as is the motion of mystical progress. Cf. Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*, on the circular motion of souls.

14. The priest's lingering at the center of the altar suggests the long sojourn in the desert.

15. "On sait que les mystiques voient dans le symbole non point un signe conventionnel, mais une manifestation réelle des essences suprasensibles. . . . Cette église est la figure de cette caverne. Bien plus, elle est presque la caverne même, car elle contient le lieu où git le corps du Seigneur." G. Millet,

whom he acts; the wine means spiritual exaltation, spiritual knowledge, and God; the salt, discretion, divine law, and faith; and the ashes, penitence, humility, and the Passion. The two candlesticks upon the altar represent the joy of two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, over the Incarnation of Christ, and recall the dual division of Dante's Celestial Rose. Their light signifies the faith of two peoples: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light";^{16a} and the progression from light to light. These two candles also represent Jesus Christ in his two natures—the Light of the World, while the snuffers of the candles are "divine words by which men amputate the legal titles of the law and reveal the shining spirit."^{16b} Usually in discussion of church symbolism, however, the four levels of meaning are given only for the more important elements. It is assumed that he who is trained in the symbolic habit, when given one interpretation will without hesitation supply the others.

The drama of the Mass like all that deals with the method of man's progress to God (the historic, mystical, sacramental, and glorified body of Christ; the literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical levels of symbolism, and so forth) is divided into four parts. From the introit to the offertory is represented the preparation of the world for the Incarnation, and the Annunciation and Birth. In Part II (by far the longest, being from the offertory to the Agnus Dei) is represented the Ministry and Passion of Christ; in Part III (from the Agnus Dei to the kiss of peace) is represented the Resurrection; and in Part IV (from the Communion to the end) the days of waiting and the coming of the Holy Spirit. To each of these are joined, moreover, such tropological and anagogical meanings as are appropriate thereto.

The procession with which the Mass begins¹⁷ represents the going out from Egypt and various other scriptural processions,

Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile . . . , p. 26. The original of the passage quoted may be found in Migne, *P.L.*, t. 151, col. 272.

In brief, "L'église figure le lieu de la Passion et de la resurrection; la liturgie, ces événements eux mêmes." G. Millet, *loc. cit.*

16a. Eph. 5. 8.

16b. Durantis, *op. cit.*, tr. Neale and Webb.

17. Cf. the procession in the Pageant, and discussion pp. 315 ff.

such as, for example, when Joshua was victor, as was Christ later. In it is unconscious reminiscence, not only of the Jewish preparation for Christ, but also of the ancient mystery processions representing the people's waiting for the young Sun God to arise and free the goddess of fertility and vegetation. An attendant at Mass familiar with symbolisms may behold in epitome the whole history of humanity, historic and prehistoric.

After the introit, which represents the advent, the priest goes to the altar¹⁸ to signify Christ's birth from a virgin like a bridegroom coming forth from his chambers, the invariable method of appearance of the Sun God.¹⁹ The incense shows prayers ascending to God—"golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints,"²⁰ even as the fires of sacrifice²¹ once rose, and as the mists are drawn up by the sun. The censer has three chains, because the union of two natures in Christ involves three unions; that of flesh and soul which is common to all mankind; and that of the divine nature with each of the two components of the human nature, flesh and soul.²² (One chain is of gold for the flesh of Christ, one of copper for the mortality of Christ, and one of iron for the fortitude of Christ.) This is important as one of those details which served to keep before the people the orthodox conception: that one of the divine Persons (the Logos) accepted human body, mind, and soul as his equipment, but did not assume simply a human body in which his eternal

18. "The East is the direction that must be assigned to his worship." John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 12. Cf. p. 212.

19. "Ad altare accedit significans q. Christus expectatio gentium carne sacrosancta assumpta ex virginis carne incorrupta et secreto habitaculo coelorum egressus est in mundum vel de secreta ede videlicet et virginiali ubero egressus est tamquam sponsus de thalamo suo." Durantis, *op. cit.*

"In them hath he set a tabernacle for the Sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." Ps. 19. 4-5. 20. Rev. 5. 8.

21. Jewish priests used to bring blood and coals in a censer for prayers. More specifically, according to Christian practice, prayers, given new meaning through union with Christ's sacrifice and holiness, first ascend to God, then in the censuring in order of clergy and lay folk, descend to sanctify the members of his mystical body.

22. The implications of this theory as to the nature of the Incarnation lead to curious results as to the period between the first Good Friday and the first Easter. Death had severed the human union of body and soul, but not the incarnate union of God and Man. Wherefore the incarnate life of God was present in two places, in the tomb where lay the dead Body of Christ, and in the place of departed spirits, where the Soul of Christ was opening the gate of bliss to the souls of Old Testament saints and of the repentant thief.

divine nature became the soul. This latter theory, recurrent in recent Protestant thinking, was known as the Apollinarian heresy.

Because the church is joined to Christ in holy marriage²³ and because Christ came willingly and gladly to the altar of his passion, the priest kisses the altar. Here is recalled the sun as the source of all life on earth, and the secret of the mystic way, as the soul which has enjoyed the union of spiritual marriage in the Beatific Vision returns to bear fruit in good works.

After various moral significations to impress the fact that the second division of the Mass refers to the public ministry of Christ, comes the second censuring of the altar, reminder of Mary Magdalene's anointing of the Lord in preparation for his Passion. Further ritual actions and prayers represent the stages of the Passion, till the Lord's Prayer reminds of the death cry from the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The *Agnus Dei* declares Christ Lamb and sacrificial victim. (The connection existing, between the Lamb and Aries, the one of the twelve signs of the zodiac in which the sun is at the time of the Passion, should not be forgotten.)

In the third section of the Mass the priest *re-takes* the paten as a sign of the *re-surrection*, and breaks the host over the chalice to signify the rolling away of the stone from the sepulcher. (Morally, this is interpreted that good works must be united to the Passion of Christ to prevail; and anagogically that the fruit of the Passion is eternal Beatitude.) Through the fourth section the symbolism continues until in the last prayer is reflection of the prayers of the apostles in the period between Ascension and Pentecost,²⁴ and the blessing signifies the coming of the Holy Spirit. In all of this is but the barest suggestion of the significance of the four parts of the Mass. In them is concentrated and reviewed the complete story of the solar year.²⁵

23. "In osculo siquid os ori coniungitur et in Christo non solum humanitas est unita divinitati verum etiam sponsa copulata est sponso iuxta. . . ." Durantis, *op. cit.*

The priest after the introit kisses the altar twice, in honor of the two natures of Christ.

24. Acts 1. 9-11.

25. "As we reckon four seasons in the solar year, so likewise four mystical seasons are distinguished in the liturgical year. The first mystical season, or Ad-

The story however was enacted daily, not only in the tremendous symbolism of the Mass,²⁶ but also in the seven canonical hours²⁷ which follow the shorter of the cycles of the sun. The life of Christ is again suggested in this cycle with its follow-

vent, corresponds to winter. . . . The sun sheds his light and heat sparingly and does not succeed in completely dispersing the gloom and darkness. Similarly, Advent is for souls the season of cold . . . and of waiting, . . . the time of the spiritual labor of prayer, of penance, and of trial. . . . In nature, spring marks the return of life, after the apparent death of winter. . . . This is the image of the second mystical season which embraces Christmas and the Epiphany, the true springtime of souls in which all seems to be born again to the life of grace, in which all hastens to grow with Christmas, and to blossom with the Epiphany. Summer is the time of hard labor. Under the action of an ardent sun the great heat accelerates the maturing of the crops and prepares an abundant harvest. Such is the third mystical season which includes the Septuagesima weeks, the austerity of Lent, the joys of Easter. It corresponds with the most laborious time in the life of our divine Saviour. . . . In the natural order autumn is the time of harvest. So is the fourth mystical season which includes the whole time after Pentecost. The seed which was sown in Advent, germinated and blossomed at Christmas and the Epiphany, and ripened during Lent and Paschal time, is now fit to be harvested by the care of the Holy Ghost, and the Church, the great reaper of souls." Leduc and Baudot, *Liturgy of the Roman Missal*, pp. 42-43.

26. For a much fuller, though rather unsympathetic, treatment of this vast subject, cf. Y. Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine*. There is an excellent bibliography.

27. Prime, Lauds, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. These monastic offices were kept in the minds of the people by the monastery bells, often their only timepiece. (Cf. Dante's reference in *Convivio*, 3, 6.)

Tertullian recommended the addition to daily morning and evening prayers, of remembrance of the coming of the Holy Spirit at the third hour, of Peter's vision at the sixth, of Peter and John in the temple at the ninth, and of the Trinity at least at three other hours. Later assignments of the Hours varied:

York Hours (from <i>Lay Folks' Mass Book</i>)	Franciscan Office of the Passion*
Matins—Betrayal	Lauds—Scourging
Prime—Mockery	Prime—Before Pilate
Terce—Scourging	Terce—Way of the Cross
Sext—Crucifixion	Sext—Crucifixion
Nones—Death	Nones—Death
Evensong	Vespers—Descent from the Cross, body received in arms of Virgin
Compline—Burial	Compline—Placing in the tomb

The following lines written in the fourteenth century give a summary in brief:

Hora prima ductus est Jesus ad Pilatum.
 "Crucifige!" clamitant hora tertiarum.
 Jesu hora sexta est cruci conclavatus.
 Hora nona dominus Jesus expiravit.
 De cruce deponitur hora vespertina.
 Hora compleotii datur sepulturae.

To be found in Remy de Gourmont, *Le Latin mystique*, p. 287.

* Given by E. Gilson, "Saint Bonaventure et l'iconographie de la passion," in *Revue l'histoire franciscaine*, directeur Henri Lemaitre, t. 1, 1924, pp. 405-431.

ing of the sun as man rises each morning from the death of sleep to the life of the new day. In nearly every one of the breviary hymns for Lauds there is some reference to the advent of the Sun of Righteousness to revivify souls:

Splendor paternae gloriae De luce lucem proferens, Lux lucis, et fons luminis, Diem dies illuminans:	Laetus dies hic transeat Pudor sit ut diluculum; Fides velut merities; Crepusculum mens nesciat.
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Verusque sol illabere, Micans nitore perpeti: Jubarque sancti Spiritus Infunde nostris sensibus.	Aurora lucem provehit, Cum luce nobis prodeat In Patre totus Filius, Et totus in Verbo Pater. ²⁸
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Day by day the Divine Sun, like the physical sun, rises and goes his journey of life-giving, light-giving, and heat-giving, for the sake of men, killing the noxious monsters of evil and making the heart glad. Night by night he journeys beneath the earth "to give light to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death" and to bring to them the hope of a future resurrection. In this scheme it is clear why Mass, in which Christ the Divine Sun comes to shed anew within the church the glory of his presence, could be said only between dawn and noon.²⁹ In the heat

28. Verses 1, 2, 7, 8 from the hymn for Lauds on Mondays. Author, St. Ambrose. "O Splendor of the Father's glory, bringing forth Light from Light, O Light of Light, and Source of Light, Day illuminating Day. O Thou, true Sun, descend, shining with everlasting brightness, and infuse into our hearts the radiance of the Holy Spirit. . . . Joyfully may this day pass by; may our modesty be as the dawn, our faith as the noonday sun, and may our souls know no twilight. The aurora leads on the light; with the light may there appear to us the whole Son in the Father, and the whole Father in the Word." M. Britt, *Hymns of Breviary and Missal*, pp. 55-58.

29. With the exception of certain mystical occasions in which there is especial reason for signifying the presence of the Divine Sun at midnight, for example, the Midnight Mass of Christmas. For the spirit which seems to underlie the diurnal worship of the sun, and especially the thought of the sun at midnight, Mr. Kipling's "A Song to Mithras" in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (Doubleday, Page & Co., 1906) is suggestive:

"Mithras, *God of the Morning*, our trumpets waken the wall!

 Mithras, also a soldier, give us strength for the day!

"Mithras, *God of the Noontide*, the heather swims in the heat,

of the noonday (Terce to Sexts) is remembered especially the crucifixion^{30a} and at Nones the actual death upon the cross. Prudentius gives it:

Sol refugit et lugubri sordidus ferrugine
 Igneum reliquit axem seque maerens abdidit:
 Fertur horruisse mundus noctis aeternae chaos.^{30b}

In the hymns and prayers of Vespers with memory of the deposition is reflected the setting of the sun:

Jam sol recedit igneus:
 Tu lux perennis Unitas,
 Nostris, beata Trinitas,
 Infunde lumen cordibus.³¹

These offices also have their symbolism on the moral level as was indicated in the last two verses of the hymn quoted for Lauds. At Compline is said the prayer suggesting the experience of Dante in the valley of negligent princes, where the compline hymn is sung and receives its symbolic answer.³²

Mithras, also a soldier, keep us true to our vows!

"Mithras, *God of the Sunset*, low on the Western main,
 Thou descending immortal, immortal to rise again!

Mithras, also a soldier, keep us pure till the dawn!

"Mithras, *God of the Midnight*, here where the great bull lies,
 Look on thy children in darkness. Oh take our sacrifice!

Mithras, also a soldier, teach us to die aright!"

30a. The use of the Angelus with these emphases seems to date only from the fourteenth century.

It may be remembered that with pagan religions using the symbolism of the cross, the cross is seen in the midday sky.

30b.

For the Sun in garb of mourning veiled his radiant orb and passed
 From his flaming path in sorrow, hiding till mankind aghast
 Deemed that o'er a world of chaos Night's eternal pall was cast.

Prudentius, *op. cit.*, tr. R. Martin Pope (cf. Bibliography), pp. 104-125.

31. Verse 1 from the hymn for Vespers on Saturdays. Author, St. Ambrose. "The fiery sun now sinks to rest, O thou light eternal, O Unity and blessed Trinity, infuse thy light into our hearts." Britt, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

32. Cf. pp. 212 ff.

With reference both to the life of Christ³³ and to the story of the solar year, the cycle is enacted in the greatest detail throughout the annual course. The latter, a modern Catholic writer has explained completely in the mood of the medieval conception:

The connection with the solar year consists in the harmony existing between the succession of the days, weeks, and months of the solar year and the course of events by which it has pleased God to ransom mankind, ruined by sin. Equal in length, enclosed within the same circle, illuminated, the one by the material sun, the other by the divine Sun of Justice, these two years afford man the means of attaining the end for which he was created, the solar year by the development of his material life, the liturgical year by that of his spiritual life. The first governs the natural, the second the supernatural world.³⁴

Advent is the period of waiting for Christmas: "O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae: veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis."³⁵

Vox clara ecce intonat Obscura quaeque personans;
 Procul fugentur somnia Ab alto Jesus promicat.³⁶

33. Cf. the rhyme to assist children in remembering the church seasons:

"Advent tells us Christ is near;	Christmas tells us Christ is here!
In Epiphany we trace	All the glory of his grace.
Those three Sundays before Lent	Will prepare us to repent,
That in Lent we may begin	Earnestly to mourn for sin.
Holy Week, and Easter, then	Tell Who died and rose again:
O that happy Easter day!	'Christ is risen indeed,' we say.
Yes, and Christ ascended too,	To prepare a place for you,
So we give him special praise,	After those great Forty Days.
Then he sent the Holy Ghost,	On the day of Pentecost,
With us ever to abide,	Well may we keep Whitsuntide!
Last of all, we humbly sing	Glory to our Lord and King,
Glory to the One in Three,	On the Feast of Trinity."

(Episcopal Hymnal, 348)

Furthermore, in the Catholic system, "three parts of the liturgical year correspond with three great epochs which mark the history of mankind . . . , 1st, Advent, or the four thousand years which prepared the way for the coming of the Messias; 2d, Christmas and the Epiphany, Lent and Easter, or the time of the Incarnation and the Redemption, which were accomplished during the thirty-three years of our divine Lord's life on earth; 3d, Pentecost, or the course of centuries which began at the moment of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and which will end at the last day." Leduc and Baudot, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

34. Leduc and Baudot, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

35. The seven Great Antiphons are said, one each day, at Vespers, from December 17 to December 23, inclusive. "O Oriens" is the fifth. "O Orient, Splendor of the Eternal Light, and Sun of Justice, come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." Britt, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

36. Verse 1, hymn for Lauds during Advent. For liturgical use, the first line

The date of Christmas, as is well known, was fixed by the turning of the sun to return northward, after he has touched the tropic of Capricorn.³⁷ Christmas is consciously associated with solar imagery in the hymn for Vespers and Matins of Christmas Day:

Jesus, Redemptor omnium	Tu lumen, et splendor Patris,
Quem lucis ante originem	Tu spes perennis omnium,
Parem paternae gloriae	Intende quas fundunt preces
Pater supremus edidit.	Tui per orbem servuli. ^{38a}

is altered to "En clara vox redarguit." Date, fifth century. "Lo, a clear voice exhorts, penetrating everything darksome. Let dreams be banished afar, Jesus shines forth from heaven." *Ibid.*, p. 99.

37. In regard to Christmas it has been pointed out that "the necessity for such a festival arises from the fact that in both north and south Europe existed from prehistoric times the great old feasts of the winter solstice. In Scandinavia, the great feast of Yule, with all its various ceremonies, had celebrated the birth of the winter sun-god. In the Latin countries there had reigned *Saturnalia*, a cult of the god Saturn. The date December 25th coincided also with the birth of Attis, a Phrygian cult of the sun-god, introduced into Rome under the Empire. The popular feasts attached to the births of other sun-gods such as Mithras, were also invariably celebrated at the time of the winter solstice. So that a general consensus of popular feeling contributed to place the birth of our Lord, not distinctively associated in the gospels with any particular time of year, in midwinter, and by the middle of the fourth century, when the Emperor Julian went to church in state to celebrate the birth of Christ, the festival as we know it became established. . . ." The date was formally determined by the church, and a festival in honor of the Nativity decreed in the fourth century.

The traditional accessories of Christmas gaiety have roots likewise in ancient sun worship: "The Christmas tree, originating in the world ash of Scandinavia (erroneously termed Ygdrasil), is closely connected with Christmas flowering trees of all kinds—the Glastonbury Thorn being one example. . . . It recapitulates the idea of tree-worship, and the universe-tree—lights, flowers, and gilded nuts and balls symbolizing the sun, while red and golden apples are a survival of the myth of Iduna, the Goddess of Youth and Health, with her world apples keeping the gods ever young and immortal."

Like the name Easter, the name Yule has a pagan (Teutonic) origin. "In Scandinavia, England, and North Germany, there was a festival—Yule—towards the close of December in honor of Freyr, the God of Golden Sunshine. . . . Freyr represented light, love, peace, goodwill, and fertility—his shining sword was brandished against the frost-giants. His sacred animal was Gullinbursti, the goldenbristled boar, symbolical of the sun-rays or the furrows of the golden grain, ploughed by his tusks. Mounted on Gullinbursti, fabled to be swifter than a horse, the sun-god made his daily course east and west." Ethel L. Urlin, *Festivals, Holy Days and Saints' Days*.

38a. Verses 1-2, hymn for Vespers and Matins on Christmas Day. Date, sixth century. "Jesus, the Redeemer of all, who, being the equal of the Father's glory, was begotten of the sovereign Father before the beginning of light. Thou light and splendor of the Father, Thou never failing hope of all, give ear to the prayers which Thy servants throughout the world pour forth." Britt, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102.

Again, more definitely:

Quid est, quod artum circulum	Caelum nitescat laetius
Sol iam recurrens deserit?	Gratetur et gaudens humus,
Christusne terris nascitur,	Scandit gradatim denuo
Qui lucis auget tramitem? . . .	Iubar priores lineas. ^{38b}

The sun comes as savior to a race lost in sluggishness, darkness, and cold; captive as, in the old stories, was the sun maiden, symbol of all the fertility and happiness of the earth. The Epiphany, likewise, is marked by appropriate symbolism:

Ibant Magi, quam viderant	Lumen requirunt lumine:
Stellam sequentes praeiviam:	Deum fatentur munere. ³⁹

The rescue of earth from captivity to gladness, however, as always in the sun story, is no slight labor for the God. Through temptations, sorrows, and difficulties he must pass, while the earth languishes;⁴⁰ hence, during Lent, gloom increases even in the adornments of the church, until on Good Friday all is blackness.⁴¹ Moreover, no bells of joy are rung during the period, and Alleluia is never sung. As the date of Christmas was fixed by the winter solstice, so that of Easter is fixed by the full moon of the vernal equinox.⁴² Its meaning and obvious connection

38b. From Prudentius, *Liber metricus Cathemerinon*. Tr. R. Martin Pope, pp. 124-125.

Why doth the Sun re-orient take	Now let the sky more brightly beam,
A wider range, his limits break?	The earth take up the joyous theme:
Lo! Christ is born, and o'er earth's	The orb a broadening pathway gains
night	And with its erstwhile splendour
Shineth from more to more the	reigns.
light! . . .	

John Mason Neale, in his volume of translations of medieval hymns and sequences, compares with the first verse of the above, the statement of Peter Chrysologus, "The days begin to lengthen, because Christ, the True Day, hath arisen"; and the sequence of Notker, "This the present shining day testifies; increased in its length, because the True Sun, born on earth, hath with the ray of its light dispersed the darkness."

39. Verse 2, hymn for Vespers on Feast of the Epiphany (January 6). Author, Sedulius. "The Magi proceeded, following the star, which they saw leading the way; by the aid of light, they seek the Light, by their gifts they acknowledge him to be God." *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

40. Much of this is due to the length of winter in northern zones.

41. Verse 1 from the hymn for Lauds during Lent, altered from sixth-century hymn "Jam Christe sol justitiae" is "O Sol salutis, intimis, Jesus refulge mentibus, Dum nocte pulsa gravior Orbi dies renascitur." *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

42. That is, Easter is the first Sunday to occur after the full moon which happens next after the vernal equinox. It has been pointed out that this expresses

with the regiving of life to vegetation, and with the older tales of the dying and risen god⁴³ mourned and hailed under the light of the vernal equinoctial moon, is now generally familiar:

Vexilla Regis prodeunt:
Fulget Crucis mysterium,
Qua vita mortem pertulit,
Et morte vitam protulit.⁴⁴

Paschale mundo gaudium,
Sol nuntiat formosior,
Cum luce fulgentem nova
Jesum vident Apostoli.

In carne Christi vulnera
Micare tamquam sidera
Mirantur, et quidquid vident
Testa fideles praedicant.⁴⁵

A complete separate treatment is needed in regard to the reflection in liturgy of the development of doctrine. Sufficient here is mention of the echo in the hymns down through the centuries of the emphases already noted in regard to trinitarian doctrine;⁴⁶ or, on the other hand, of such a ceremony as the Elevation, adopted to combat the heresy of Berengarius.

Probably the most venerable of all ceremonies, comparable for age only to the ablaut in language, is the blessing of the

the redemption from winter by the united Sun and Moon, that is, by the masculine life-giving force of the Sun responded to by the feminine life-receiving and nourishing force of vegetation. The spiritual application emphasizing the need of the soul's response to God's grace, is plain.

43. Cf. also the resurrection hymn of Venantius Fortunatus, quoted in translation in "Ante-Nicene Library," vol. 22, pp. 223-227: ". . . The gloomy chains of the infernal law yielded, and chaos feared to be pressed by the presence of the Light. Darkness perishes, put to flight by the brightness of Christ, the thick pall of eternal night falls on earth. . . . Give back thy face that the world may see the light; give back the day which flees from us at thy death!" Cf. the underworld journey of rescue undertaken by the solar god, referred to on pp. 109-110.

44. Verse 1 of Vespers hymn, from Passion Sunday (two weeks before Easter) to Wednesday in Holy Week. Author, Venantius Fortunatus. "The banners of the King come forth; brightly gleams the mystery of the Cross, on which Life suffered death, and by his death, obtained for us life." Britt, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124. Cf. also pp. 198, 309 for Dante's use of a parody of this hymn.

45. From hymn for Lauds on feasts of Apostles in Eastertide. Ambrosian. "A more beauteous sun proclaims to the world the joys of Easter, when the Apostles beheld Jesus resplendent with a new light. They wonder to see the wounds in the flesh of Christ shine like stars, and what they see, as faithful witnesses, they proclaim." *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155. Cf.:

" 'Tis the Spring of souls today; Christ hath burst his prison;
And from three days' sleep in death As a Sun hath risen;
All the winter of our sins, Long and dark, is flying
From his Light, to whom we give Laud and praise undying."

St. John Damascene, tr. J. M. Neale.

46. Through hymns doctrine was wedded to emotion in the lives of the people.

New Fire preparatory to Easter. From the downward plunge of Light into darkness on Good Friday until the hour of this service, Light lies in the tomb; and during the time, no light or fire remains in the church. More than this no sacraments are celebrated, for the sacraments are the channels of light.⁴⁷ The people wait for that spark from flint and tinder that shall kindle first the triple candle to indicate that from the light of Christ proceeds revelation of the Trinity, and then the Paschal Candle and all the lights of the New Year. An epitome of human history is in the joyous greeting of the first flame: *Lumen Christi, Deo gratias!*⁴⁸

Such hymns as the following in which in simple terms the very thesis of the present work is stated were everywhere familiar:

"En, pater omnipotens, proles cum flamine sacro,
Simplex et trinus; jam veneratur homo
Lux, calor et motus persistunt semper in igne;
Invariabiliter tres deitate manent. . . .
Ut radius sole procedit, splendor ab igne,
Verbum de patre nascitur omnisciens."

Analecta hymnica medii aevi, vol. 52, no. 30, p. 32.

Furthermore, throughout the centuries, the development of philosophical and emotional emphasis was reflected. Cf. Appendix VI, i.

47. Cf. "bread of angels" as both wisdom and the Eucharist, discussed p. 377. It should be noted that whereas all sacraments must of necessity be symbols, few symbols are sacraments, that is, actual channels of Light. Analogies, through which man may progress in his search for God, are written from eternity in all things. In those however which are true sacraments is an extension of the Incarnation in a special manifestation of God's search for man. (Cf. p. 490 n. 7.) As channel of Light, Mary, the instrument of the Incarnation, thus has a special association with the sacraments. Upon this obvious fact M. Hirn has constructed his whole treatment of the "sacred shrine."

It should be noted that Light, here central in the macrocosm, has its parallel and appropriate symbolism in the life of sex, which, together with all new marriages, is discouraged during the season of Lent, to be renewed in joyfulness with the return of the new Light, after the festivities of Easter are over. Cf. Hugh of St. Victor: *De sacramentis*, 8, 13 and 9, 2. (Migne, *P.L.*, t. 196).

48. The impressiveness of this service as celebrated among the Orthodox, Armenians, Copts, Jacobites, in the rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, receives discussion in an article in the magazine section of the *New York Times*, April 17, 1926:

"It is moving beyond belief . . . the annual miracle of the bringing down of flame from heaven." Followed by a crowd carrying tapers in their hands, the Patriarch and the Armenian bishop pass into the Sepulcher. "The rest happens more quickly than the eye can take it in. A confused impression remains of the thrust of a flaming torch from the hole; of a great roar of exultation drowned by the furious clangor of the bells; of half naked runners dashing away with blazing torches held high over heads; of fire dawning from taper to taper until the entire rotunda glows with a million wavering points of brightness; of the aged patriarch staggering from the Sepulchre holding aloft three blazing bundles of tapers—an unforgettable figure of gleaming white against a background of

Thus, through liturgy was transmitted to minds in the thirteenth century the experience and the culture of past ages. Many, perhaps still barbarian at heart, could see in it only their own primitive practice, and so received it as a superb basis for charms and black magic.⁴⁹ At the same time heirs of the tremendous intellectual search for unification and consistency in experience found, in this same liturgy and its vast associated symbolism, an instrument of thought made ever more keen through the use of many generations. In this manner the vast literature centering around the twofold quest, man's search for reality and the reaching out of God for man, found a thread of unification in the daily drama of the Mass and its monumental mirrors in stone which, perhaps more than anything else, prepared the Middle Ages to receive, and Dante himself to write, the *Divina Commedia*.

II. THE SUN IN POPULAR LITERATURE

IN the thirteenth century liturgy itself bore the imprint of new experience. Into its stern fiber of moral discipline and intellectual search was infused a new idealization of the real. Fundamental as was the liturgical heritage in the structure of Dante's poem, it was this new experience which supplied not merely the motivation, but the vibrant life of the *Commedia* and of its century.

The preceding epoch of gloom presented a striking contrast to the temper of the new age. More than once this gloom⁵⁰ has been ascribed to ecclesiastical oppression from which man's in-

dark faces and dancing fire." Finally, there are "processions circling the Sepulchre rejoicing in the possession of the redeeming fire."

49. Cf. such tales as those told by Caesarius of Heisterbach, etc.

50. That the tradition of gloom, even in the so-called "Dark Ages," has been seriously overdone, is well maintained by Dr. E. K. Rand in his article, "Medieval gloom and medieval uniformity," in *Speculum*, vol. 1, pp. 253 ff. He points out further that much of the gloom that did exist was an inheritance, not from strictly medieval sources, but from classical sources:

"If young and old in the Middle Ages saw visions and dreamed dreams, if they sometimes looked gloomily on the pleasures of the present, it was partly because they read the work of Cicero, glossed by Macrobius. They might have felt far less dismal had they not been so well read in the great classics of antiquity."

Moreover, the medieval definition of man, was *animal risus capax*. To clinch his point, Dr. Rand translates the joyous spring poem of Sedulius Scottus (ninth century) entitled, *The Battle of the Lily and the Rose*.

domitable soul burst forth at last. Some idea as to what actually happened in those centuries is invaluable to him who would interpret rightly the luxuriant symbolisms of the Middle Ages proper. In his summary of the earlier age, M. Faure has said:

Had Christianity remained as Saint Paul desired it and as the fathers of the Church defined it, it must needs have turned its back upon the plastic interpretations of the ideas which it introduced. But as it wished to live, it obeyed the law which compels us to give to our emotions the form of the things that we see.⁵¹

No outlook on life is afforded—the soul alone has the right to life, on condition that it never breaks through the continuous circle of stone in which it is held by dogma. Rome has cemented the thought of Saint Paul in the material of the churches.⁵²

It was clearly impossible that in this universe which had been closed for ten centuries, the monk sculptor of the Romanesque churches, the theologian armed with a chisel, should discover any more, at first, than a meager type of nature—emaciated, compressed, and suffering, like himself. Long figures, which make a tragic effort to break the mold of the Byzantine, were flattened against the new façades, mechanically expressing an arrested symbolism.⁵²

The question as to whether St. Paul and the Church Fathers were iconoclasts, is really one of great moment in medieval symbolism.

To begin with, the people who came under this harsh and repressive rule of the church were barbarians. M. Faure himself would scarcely have expected the migrating ancestors of the Greeks to have continued the Cretan and Mycenaean art development they found in progress in their new homeland, instead of beginning with the flattened and emaciated forms which have always marked the initiation of a new racial art. Why, in the case of medieval art, should such forms be ascribed to enforced asceticism? M. Faure speaks, moreover, of arrested symbolism. It is true that the development of symbolism initiated by scholars steeped in the long heritage of Graeco-Roman thought was arrested in the so-called Dark Ages, but it would seem that the mentality of the barbarian were sufficient explanation without recourse to the strictures of the church.

St. Paul's attitude was, however, in a sense iconoclastic. Like

51. E. Faure, *Medieval Art*, p. 262. 52. *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

all great prophets he felt keenly a reality beneath and revealed through the world of sense, and he recognized in symbol the most adequate expression of this reality possible to human language built up as it is of concrete elements with a basis in physical experience. Obviously, when a symbol came to be valued purely for itself, thus obscuring the reality it was intended to reveal, it defeated its own purpose. This is the very battleground in medieval symbolism where the conflict is sharpest between Reality and its Negation.⁵³ Always it has been the task of those who have penetrated more deeply into reality than the rest of mankind, to restore and to develop further the real significance of sense imagery.

Certain psychological laws have been stated by M. Ferrero by which he explains the tendency on the part of the less gifted among men to lose their hold on the reality in favor of the expression. He says of their results:

Le symbole n'est qu'un signe; sa seule fonction est de représenter quelque élément psychique, une image, une idée, une émotion; mais si telles sont sa nature et sa fonction considérées en elles mêmes, le symbole finit souvent au contraire par remplacer entièrement la chose qu'il devrait représenter; il absorbe la réalité, et acquiert une importance exagérée, l'importance de la chose représentée.⁵⁴

Again:

Il est notoire que dans la religion, presque partout et dans tous les temps, l'adoration, qui devrait s'élever jusqu'à Dieu dans le ciel, s'arrête bien plus bas, aux images qui représentent la divinité. Qu'il s'agisse des sculptures grossières des sauvages ou des chefs-d'œuvres de l'art grec, des portraits des saints catholiques ou des étranges statues chinoises, c'est toujours à ces symboles que s'adressent les prières c'est sur eux que s'appuie l'espoir des croyants, sans aucune considération de l'être qu'ils devraient représenter.⁵⁵

53. St. Augustine, than whom no one is more typical of the "Fathers of the Church" and to whom incidentally *is* to be traced much of later asceticism, was in his teaching merely a good psychologist. Modern educators would scarcely recommend the theater as it flourished in his time, and are completely in accord with his objection to compelling small children to memorize certain passages of unexpurgated versions of the classics. Augustine, nevertheless, though insisting like all true mystics on the proper discipline of the senses, used all types of sense imagery to express reality. Cf. p. 353. His task was like that of St. Paul.

54. Ferrero, *Les Lois psychologiques du symbolisme*, p. 93.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 111. This tendency M. Ferrero finds to exist in social as well as in religious ceremonial: "Le cérémonial n'est donc pas seulement un sys-

But of the struggle of leaders against this tendency there are innumerable examples, all showing an urgent insistence that the insight symbol shall not degenerate into mere comparison, still less into a meaningless form. Augustine, commenting on certain anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity, says:

If, then, he that formed the eye be the Word, seeing all things are by the Word, and he that planted the ear be the Word, seeing all things are by the Word, we cannot say, The Word doth not hear, the Word doth not see, lest the psalm chide us and say, Ye fools, at length be wise. Consequently, if the Word does hear, and the Word does see, are we however to look even in him to find, diversely placed, eyes and ears? Doth he by some one part hear, by some other part see, and hath ear not the ability which the eye hath, and the eye not the ability which the ear hath? Or, is he all sight, and all hearing? . . . yes; always understood, however, that the act of seeing in him, and the act of hearing in him, exists in far other sort than in us. To see, and to hear, exists together in the Word; nor is it in him one thing to see, another to hear; but hearing is sight, and sight hearing.⁵⁶

Obviously, there is danger in symbols worshiped for themselves or exaggerating sensuous elements. Imagery is invaluable, but only when it serves to render the inner reality less vaguely incomprehensible, and to keep it central and supreme. So taught the leaders, yet although tradition of insight symbolism grew constantly in power among the intellectual, its laws could never quite regulate the luxuriant complexity of the symbolisms of the people. Examples of the misuse of symbolism are multitudinous, as well in the often pedantic and artificial literature as in the visions and trances so heartily mistrusted by mystics of real vision. The decline was inevitable.

The centuries so often described as the age of gloom and church oppression comprehended in reality an age in which a race new to civilization was creating a culture of its own on the basis of such fragments of the glorious cultural heritage of the Roman Empire as those devoted to the religious life could save, at no small pain, from fire and sword. What more natural than

tème de signes ou de symboles auxquels nous attribuons une certaine signification, sans savoir le pourquoi; nous leur donnons aussi une importance plus grande encore qu'aux sentiments qu'ils devraient représenter, car nous confondons presque entièrement ces sentiments et leurs symboles." P. 123.

56. Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel according to Saint John*. 5. 19, p. 283. Cf. p. 354 n. 69.

that the brightness of the sun should have gathered round the cross, and glorified the life of the blest?

There shall sinful men, sad at heart, behold the greatest affliction. Not for their behoof shall the cross of our Lord, brightest of beacons, stand before all nations, wet with the pure blood of heaven's King, stained with his gore, shining brightly over the vast creation. Shadows shall be put to flight when the resplendent cross shall blaze upon all peoples, But this shall be for an affliction and a punishment to men, to those malefactors who knew no gratitude to God. . . . For all this will he righteously exact recompense when the red rood shall shine brightly over all in the sun's stead.⁵⁷

There is song of angels, joy of the blest; there is the dear presence of the Lord, brighter than the sun unto the blessed; there is the love of dear ones; life without death . . .⁵⁸

Was it not inevitable also that the thought of the Lord of Light as a means of escape from the trials of the world not only should have become dominant among those who retired to the religious life, but should have penetrated even into the folklore of the common people?

In much of the earlier religious literature exhortations to a consecration of life to God's service, which then meant retirement to convent or monastery, are based not on considerations of a positive nature, but on such facts as the uncertainty and transitoriness of human love, the manifold chances of misery in life, the ease with which riches may be stolen, and so forth. In *A Love Rune*⁵⁹ eleven out of twenty-six stanzas are occupied with such motives. The next six contain descriptions of the joy of heaven. The eighteenth reads:

And never man his face shall see,
E'en as he is, enthroned with Might,
But all with bliss fulfilled shall be,
Beholding him, our Lord, with sight.
To look on him is joy and glee,
For he is Day, that knows not Night.
Methinks, sweet Maid, right blest is she
That hath her home with such a Knight!

57. Cook and Tinker, *Select Translations from Old English Poetry*, p. 89, Selections from the *Christ*, 7.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 91, Selections from the *Christ*, 9.

59. Cf. Jessie L. Weston, *Chief Middle English Poets*.

The remainder of the poem exhorts the Maid to dedicate her life to this "Knight."⁶⁰

A typical medieval bestiary⁶¹ contains an elaborate account of the manner in which the *Eagle*, grown old, renews his youth by flying upward toward the sun. The sun though renewing his sight scorches him so that he falls down into a well over which he has chosen to fly, and ultimately he escapes with youth restored. The *Significatio* of course interprets the eagle as a human soul, old in sin, its spiritual sight dimmed; the sun is God, and the well is Baptism. The soul

Doth on Jesus Christ believe,
Priestly lore doth learn,
So the mist his eyes shall leave

All his hope to God doth run,
Learns his love so true,
This I trow shall be the Sun,
Gives him light anew!
Naked, falls he to the font,
There renewed is he. . . .

It was at this time that such customs as that of burying the dead facing eastward (that is, toward the quarter in which Christ, as a rising Sun, was expected to appear on the Day of Judgment) assumed to the great majority far more importance than any great philosophical tradition of the church. Of matters of doctrine the Day of Judgment engaged attention:

Then suddenly upon Mount Zion a blaze of the sun, shining clear from the southeast, shall come forth from the Creator, gleaming more brightly than the mind of man can conceive, when the Son of God shall appear hither through the vault of heaven. All glorious from the eastern skies shall come the presence of Christ, the aspect of the noble King, gentle in spirit toward his own, bitter toward the wicked, wondrously varied, diverse to the blessed and the forlorn.⁶²

What wonder, indeed, that the story of the Phoenix,⁶³ based on

60. This Middle English poem is entirely in the spirit of the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon *Hali Meidenhed*. A comparison with the poem entitled "Sweetness of Jesus" is suggestive. Weston, *op. cit.*, pp. 343, 353.

61. Middle English version of the *Physiologus* of Theobaldus, translated by Miss Weston, *op. cit.*

62. Cook and Tinker, *op. cit.*, p. 86. Selections from the *Christ*, 6.

63. Described also by Ovid and Pliny, and in Dante's time by Brunetto Latini.

the poem of Lactantius, had become familiar in the hands of some Cynewulfian poet, as symbolizing the journey of the soul to "that blessedness where, fair above the hosts in the City of glory, shines the Sun"—not of wisdom, but—"of righteousness."⁶⁴ The light of the Sun is here no longer desired chiefly to illumine the mind, but to penetrate the cloud of sin.

Lo! Thou splendor of the dayspring, fairest of angels sent to men upon earth, Thou Radiance of the Sun of Righteousness, bright beyond the stars, Thou of thy very self dost illumine all the tides of time! . . . Thine own handiwork in its present need imploreth Thee with confidence that Thou send us the bright sun, and come in Thy very person to enlighten those who have long been covered with murky cloud, and sitting here in darkness and eternal night, shrouded in sins, have been forced to endure the shadow of death.⁶⁵

At the same time, it is to be remembered, the church was reflecting this development in her hymns.

This period had been a stage of progress in cultural development, rather than a time of oppression and constriction. From the point of view of the medieval tradition, it is best compared to the discipline of the *via purgativa*, that first strand which must be woven into the life of the mystic. Indeed, the period eventuated in a typically mystic discovery. To this discovery the church, far from inhibiting, had contributed no small share alike through its constant stimulation of symbolic thinking and through its courageous endeavor to teach those lacking not only mystic but cultural discipline, to distinguish between symbol and reality.

At the time in which Dante wrote there had developed well-defined mystic movements in Italy, Germany, the Low Countries, and England. The Spanish and French schools became important only at the close of the Middle Ages, when the tradition was becoming isolated and less and less an integral part of contemporary thought. Yet they, even more than the schools first mentioned, have served to preserve the mystic spirit beneath the varying degrees of modern indifference.

The troubadour of divine love *par excellence* is, of course, St. Francis of Assisi. His biographer says: "Of the ardent love

64. Cook and Tinker, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 80. Selections from the *Christ*. 6.

that glowed in Francis, the friend of the Bridegroom, who can avail to tell? He seemed utterly consumed, like unto a coal that is set on fire, by the flame of the love divine. For, at the mere mention of the love of the Lord, he was aroused, moved, and enkindled, as though the inner chords of his heart vibrated under the bow of the voice from without."⁶⁶ Naturally, he could not escape the sun symbol. He says himself in what is perhaps the most characteristic of his utterances, the *Canticle of the Creatures*, called by him the Canticle of Brother Sun:

Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures, and especially our brother the sun, who brings us the day, and brings us the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendor; O Lord, he signifies to us Thee!⁶⁷

The compiler of the *Mirror of Perfection* comments: "Above all other creatures wanting reason, he loved the sun and fire with most affection."⁶⁸ Indeed, Francis himself has been symbolized by the sun, and he is so termed, as will be remembered, by Thomas Aquinas in canto xi of the *Paradiso*.⁶⁹ "The comparison of Francis to the rising Sun is ancient and widespread. 'Glowing as the light-bearer and as the morning star, yea, even as the rising Sun, illuminating, cleansing, and fertilizing the world like some new luminary, was Francis seen to arise,' says the Prologue of one of the earliest lives."⁷⁰

Another paean characteristic of the new age rises from the early English school in the famous "Luf es lyf that lastes ay" of Richard Rolle of Hampole. In the midst of this great love enthusiasm it was to be expected that attention should be called to

66. *Life of St. Francis*, edited with the *Little Flowers* in the Everyman ed. Chap. ix.

67. *Mirror of Perfection*, chap. cxix (in the Everyman ed. with the *Little Flowers*).

68. *Ibid.*

69.

"Di questa costa, là dov'ella frange
più sua rattezza, nacque al mondo un sole . . .
Però chi d'esso loco fa parole,
non dica Ascesi, chè direbbe corto,
ma Oriente, se proprio dir vuole.
Non era ancor molto lontan da l'orto,
ch'el cominciò a far sentir la terra
de la sua gran virtute alcun conforto."

Par., xi, 49-57.

70. Note to *Par.*, xi, 49 ff. in "Temple Classic" ed. of the *Paradiso*.

the physical reactions accompanying emotions. In his *Incendium Amoris* Rolle tells of his puzzle over the question:

More have I marvelled than I showed when, forsooth, I first felt my heart wax warm, truly, and not in imagination, but as if it were burned with sensible fire . . . oftentimes, because of my ignorance of such healthful abundance, I have groped my breast seeking whether this burning were from any bodily cause outwardly. But when I knew that it was only kindled inwardly from a ghostly cause, and that this burning was nought of fleshly love or concupiscence, in this I conceived it was the gift of my Maker.⁷¹

Comparison of such passages with the attitude of St. Augustine shows clearly what has happened. Augustine searched through scripture and nature for knowledge of God, and, for all the importance he gave to inner experience, when he came to his own nature his attitude was that of the theoretical psychologist; his interest centered in those faculties which are bound up with reason, such as memory and imagination. Rolle, on the other hand, in his search for God looks first to his own nature, and especially to the reaction of his emotions.

The shift in the very aim of spiritual life is pointed out in a modern comment on the three properties of God—Life, Love, Light, as mentioned by Julian of Norwich.

Here the thought seems to be centered in Light as the manifestation of Being . . . the Triune Divine Light which in man is corresponding Reason, Faith, Charity; Charity keeping man, while here, in Faith and Hope; Charity leading him from and through and into the Eternal Divine Love.⁷²

Still the sun is the guide, as was seen throughout the *Divina Commedia*, but guide to a heaven of love. The earlier mentions of the love of God had been as an escape from life⁷³ but now men are saying that "all the life of a good Christian man is nought else but holy desire."⁷⁴ Suso and Tauler are among the many examples in Germany of this so-called "erotic mysticism."

71. From the first paragraph of Rolle's preface to the *Incendium Amoris*, as translated by Richard Misyn.

72. *Revelations of Divine Love*, by Julian, anchoress at Norwich, ed. by Grace Warrack. Note to the beginning of chap. lxxxiii.

73. Cf. pp. 151, 420.

74. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 415.

The love emphasis⁷⁵ involved, moreover, not only the raptures of man, but the "inexorable following love of God, impossible to escape. . . . 'Earth,' said Meister Eckhart, 'cannot escape the sky; let it flee up or down, the sky flows into it, and makes it fruitful whether it will or no. So God does to man. He who will escape Him only runs to His bosom; for all corners are open to Him.'"⁷⁶ Thus keenly were men beginning to feel the power and attraction of the underlying Reality.

The love element as the great addition to sun symbolism in the Middle Ages proper, is outstanding in all forms of literary expression. In the search for beauty and joy even the trials of life were disguised or swallowed up in the greater whole of chivalric and love ideals expressed largely through the romances. No service was too arduous to be undertaken for a lady's favor. Here again, as with liturgy, some turned the external expression to the ends of Circe, whereas for others it was true insight symbol. Symbolism in the love motif appeared in the Middle Ages in all phases of transmutation.

It is a striking fact that all of medieval literature, from *fabliaux* and ballads to homilies and debates, could well be classified with reference to the function and levels of the symbolism. In such poems as the *Confessio Amantis* and the *Roman de la Rose* there is no more than comparison and arbitrary association symbol. Yet such symbolism as Dante used is frequent. For example, the symbolic value of certain solar elements in a Middle

75. Perhaps the culmination of mysticism from the twelfth to the fifteenth century is in Jan van Ruysbroeck, mentioned already for his inclusion of the highest of mystic symbolisms, that of marriage, with the final and most complete development of the sun symbol of the Trinity.

Such passages as these are worthy of attention:

"There the single eye is penetrated and illuminated by the eternal light, as the air is penetrated and illuminated by the sun."

"The naked intelligence is penetrated and illumined by Divine Light, and the single eye draws from its contact with this radiance power to contemplate eternal verity."

"This is why the Christ-Sun, from the summit of his ascent, seated at the right hand of the Father, sheds countless rays of light and glory into the depths of the penitent."

"This action of God glorifies, and there are those in whom it has operated who become men of light."

"We are one with the Father and Son in the unity of the Holy Ghost, the eternal fire."

Flowers of a Mystic Garden, pp. 105, 77, 64, 16, 22, 87.

76. Translation from Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 162.

English allegorical description of Life has been pointed out as follows:

Life is a beautiful woman, a medieval queen. Her description in its various details resembles closely that of other women in the literature of the Middle Ages—Dame Nature, Lady Anima, Idleness, Helen, the Virgin Mary of the religious lyrics, and Venus and Flora of the Court of Love debates and Dunbar. Her countenance "brighter than the bright sun," "her rudd redder than the rose," her lighthearted joyousness and mirth, her relation to nature, are appropriate to her character as Queen of Life. The effect of her approach upon the flowers and branches . . . is especially symbolic.⁷⁷

Furthermore, poems written primarily to tell a story or to set forth the manners of the Age of Chivalry frequently were given subsequent allegorization. The great poems of Ariosto and Tasso are among these, and Tasso, indeed, has left an allegorized interpretation of his *Gerusalemme liberata* devised by himself.

As would be expected, there is a less noble side. Nowhere is this shown better than in the so-called Goliardic verse. Symonds says: "The literature of the Wandering Students . . . owes nothing to chivalry, and emanates from a class which formed a subordinate part of the ecclesiastical militia. It is almost vulgar in its presentment of common human impulses; it bears the mark of the proletariat, though adorned with flourishes betokening the neighborhood of Church and University."⁷⁸ As is natural, this sensuous poetry connects the sun with love through

77. E. Scamman, *The Alliterative Poem, Death and Life*, p. 111. Cf. also the tale of three monks who saw a branch coming downstream with leaves of gold, silver, blue, and green, and fruit of wondrous sweetness. The monks set out to find the garden from which the branch came, but forgot to notify the abbot of their going. They went through beautiful woods, on the grass they found delicious manna, later they scaled a mountain one hundred miles high, then they reached the gate of Eden guarded by an angel with a flaming sword whose face was like unto the light of the sun. They sat looking at him for five days and nights and then he let them in. While hearing the sound of sweetness, softness, and delight—the wheels of heaven revolving—two venerable patriarchs, Enoch and Elijah, came to guide them. On their journey they saw the Fountain of Youth, Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life (from which the wood for the cross was taken), etc. When the elders asked them to leave they exclaimed, "We haven't been here a week"; the elders replied, "You have lived here seven hundred years." Returning to the monastery they proved their identity by an old missal.

78. J. A. Symonds, *Wine, Women, and Song*, p. 5.

the passionate excitements of spring, and much of it is unquotable.

On the other hand, the "religion of beauty in women" had its symbolism, identical in kind with that associated with the Divinity.

Lady, since I conceived
Thy pleasurable aspect in my heart,
My life has been apart
In shining brightness and the place of truth;
Which till that time, good sooth,
Groped among shadows in a darkened place
Where many hours and days
It hardly ever had remembered good.⁷⁹

And:

Love, taking leave, my heart then leaveth me,
And is enamour'd even while it would shun,
For I have looked so long upon the sun
That the sun's glory is now in all I see.⁸⁰

Again:

Who is she coming, whom all gaze upon,
Who makes the air all tremulous with light,
And at whose side is Love himself?⁸¹

The language of courtly love is evident. But writers of the *albe* and the associated poetry of *l'amour courtois*⁸² gave utterance now and then to the higher ideal of divine love,⁸² if not always with sincerity, then as the result of an occasional scruple, ill fortune in a love affair, or simply imitation of a tradition. For example, Fra Guittone d'Arezzo writes, in a sonnet to the Blessed Virgin:

Behold this earthly Love, how his darts glide—
How sharpened—to what fate—throughout this earth!
Pitiful Mother, partner of our birth,
Win these from following where his flight doth guide.
And, O, inspire in me that holy love
Which leads the soul back to its origin,
Till of all other love the link do fail.⁸³

79. Panuccio dal Bagno Pisano. Tr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

80. Maestro Migliore da Fiorenza. Tr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

81. Guido Cavalcanti. Tr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

82. For a brief discussion of courtly love and its idealization, cf. Appendix VI, ii.

83. Guittone d'Arezzo. Tr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. To Guido Guinicelli's canzone "Of the gentle heart," reference has been made previously.

Ramón Lull again refers the symbol to Christ:

Love shone through the cloud which came between the Lover and the Beloved, and made it as bright and resplendent as is the moon by night, as the day-star at dawn, the sun at midday, the understanding in the will; and through that bright cloud the Lover and the Beloved held converse.⁸⁴

And:

They asked the Lover in what manner the heart of man was turned toward the Love of his Beloved. He answered them and said: Even as the sunflower turns to the sun. How is it, then, that all men love not thy Beloved? He answered, They that love him not have night in their heart, because of their sin.⁸⁵

Here in other terms is the struggle of Beatrice and Circe, the sun and its opposition. Phineas Fletcher has used similar erotic symbolism with considerable audacity in his long poem *The Purple Island*, while the anonymous author of the *Cursus Mundi* declares his work to be a "religious romance"—openly in competition with tales of earthly love.⁸²

At the same time, resolution of this competition was offered in the Court of Love itself, which was such as to admit a constant possibility of mystical interpretations. In a generation which had so glorified virginity that the married were sometimes told the love of God was not for them, there is a special pertinence in even the famous first rule of the Court, "Marriage is no good excuse against loving." The second rule, too, voiced one of the deepest laws of mystic experience, the requirement that, unless revelation were divinely bidden, the soul keep secret its most intimate commerce with God. So one might continue through the whole list of thirty-one. Even such rules as might be questioned with reference to the earthly ideal receive their full appropriateness as applied to the heavenly. The code declares, "Real jealousy always increases the worth of love"; and God, demanding complete and unique allegiance, is verily a jealous God. Furthermore, the mystic gives constant stress to such themes as are expressed in the following: "The true lover thinks naught good but what he believes pleases the co-lover";

84. Lull, *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, tr. E. A. Peers, no. 118.

85. *Ibid.*, no. 342.

"The true lover is haunted by the co-lover's image unceasingly"; "The lover cannot be satiated by the delights of the co-lover." Though as far as is known the code bound but few, its influence spread rapidly through all the courts of Europe, inspiring to the quest of love. By its expressions of crude love and inert religion were given the possibility of new interpretation. Here, again, it may be recalled that, according to medieval theory "free choice is given to man between his loves, sacred and profane. . . . So choice and following of sacred love is the 'ground of merit' by which man attains beatitude."⁸⁶ The basis of judgment is in man's recognition of the underlying reality which gives both meaning and sacredness to every outward expression. Human love, understood in its literal meaning only, may become an implement of the *gravezza* of the *lupa*, but not so if it be insight symbol. Although probably no one else accomplished a transmutation of the earthly into the heavenly Court so complete and full of daring⁸⁷ as did Dante in honor of Beatrice, the identification was an ever present potentiality throughout the medley of medieval love-song.

In brief then, symbolism, made glowing with the love motif, permeated the literature of the thirteenth century. The tales of the Middle Ages, pious and profane, were likely to be given symbolic meanings both because of their primitive origins and because of their general popularity. In this, parish priests helped not a little: in such tales was an excellent means of enlivening the sermon, and all that was necessary was to add a moral at the end. Saints' lives and sermons and pseudo-history, as belonging to the lower levels of literature of learning, shared perforce in its symbolic tradition. Of course, love was a favorite theme for debates and lyrics, and these were symbolized more or less as fancy of author or hearer dictated.⁸⁸ Since, however, all these

86. J. B. Fletcher, *Symbolism of the Divine Comedy*, pp. 146-147.

87. It is of interest that Virgil speaks of spiritual love (*Purg.*, xxii, 10) in the same terms in which Francesca spoke of carnal love (*Inf.*, v, 103). Cf. pp. 35, 168-169, 250, 346-347, 387 ff., Appendix VI, ii.

88. The ballad, because of its terse and direct narrative character, is not considered here; although a little later poems in ballad form were written with definite symbolic intention, and some carols were formed on the ballad model. Cf. for example such a ballad as "The falcon has borne my mate away," in which the speaker is evidently Mary, mourning over the crucifixion of Christ.

were intended for the populace, usually one of the mystical meanings was considered sufficient to stress at a time, and frequently there was degeneration to mere arbitrary and colorless personification.⁸⁹ In contradistinction, nevertheless, to the relative newness and triviality of much of this exuberant literature, represented, for example, in only one phase of the long tradition of liturgy, there was in medieval literature a romance cycle as old in experience and as well traveled, if not as highly educated, as liturgy itself.

III. THE SUN OF THE QUEST

THERE has never been a time when men have not engaged in some sort of mystical quest and adventure. Ranking rather with liturgy than with *Commedia* and Cathedral into both of which it penetrated, the Quest romance had its root in all aspects of life. It drew from folklore and epic, from customs of courts, from travel lore of the crusades, oriental infiltrations, from theology, philosophy, politics, pageantry, mysticism, and even, as some have suspected, from a secret tradition to which there is no longer access even through the great initiatory societies themselves.

In the Middle Ages the Grail, the Chalice of the Mass,⁹⁰ had become central in that heterogeneous wealth of prose and verse now termed the Arthuriad. The unity of this cycle is, however, broken and blurred so that it presents none of the clear outlines of the other three medieval masterpieces.

Arthurian romance taken as a whole is like a great tapestry on which countless forgotten hands have worked. The weave is loose, no thread is held all the time, bulk and detail obscure the pattern. No one person ever saw the entire design, yet it has grown under their labors. One of the extraordinary things in literary history is this emerging of a syn-

89. Cf. Appendix IV, Pt. I, iii (2).

90. Much has been made of the probable origin of the Grail in magic cauldron or other vessel of Celtic folklore, and the fact that there are many extant tales and romances in which it appears, not only not as a Christian relic, but not even as a cup. The fact remains, however, that at the height of the tradition there was an inextricable interweaving of associations gathered around the magic vessel, around the Cup of the Last Supper (supposed to have been preserved by Joseph of Arimathea), and around the sacred chalice and the miracle of transubstantiation.

thetic vision, and image of a civilization on quest, from the unrelated and spontaneous activities of many minds through many generations.⁹¹

Nevertheless, the *Morte Darthur*, of which Caxton's colophon states that "here is a story chronicled for one of the truest and holiest that is in this world," is in many ways similar to the medieval *Commedia* to which was prefixed, not by the author, the adjective *Divina*.

In Arthuriad as in *Commedia* there are possible interpretations belonging to the levels of allegory, trope, and anagoge, together with centralization of Christ. An ideal in both is political unity: in the one for all the world under Italy; in the other for all of England under the House of Plantagenet.⁹² Moreover, in the *Divina Commedia*, which upholds scholastic philosophy with all the clear-cut precision of Thomas Aquinas himself, is evidence of two great trends in the thirteenth century: the wedding of theology to Aristotelianism, and the increase in devotion to the sacramental presence in honor of which was established the festival of Corpus Christi. (The prayers and hymns of this office were written by The Philosopher, who appeared to Dante in the Sun.) Similarly, there is some evidence that it was at least partly under the inspiration of the monks of Glastonbury, interested in the new Eucharistic devotion, that the Grail elements of the Arthuriad assumed their Christian and sacramental form.

Arthuriad and *Commedia* alike, in their development of the quest represent the world under constant metamorphosis in varying response to the sun.⁹³ Knights wandering through the same forests, visiting the same castles, stopping at the same

91. Quoted from Dr. Scudder, who thus writes after having discussed the transition of early episodic tales to the expansion in the prose romances tending toward the absorption of wider and wider aspects of life, in her *Le Morte Darthur of Sir Thomas Malory and Its Sources*, p. 183.

92. This is not the place to enter into the question whether or no the Norman-English court deliberately fostered these romances; but it is at least interesting that Arthur, historically no more than a Celtic chieftain fighting a guerrilla warfare against Saxon invaders, became the great hero of the Anglo-Saxon-Norman kingdom.

93. There is not only a similarity in theme between the Grail Quest and the other medieval quests, but also, as would be expected, similarity in minor symbolic devices. Arthur, the Grail hero, and various other characters have solar significance. (A possible example: "Arthur's twelve victories are obviously a re-

wayside shrines, met with strangely different adventures; because some were feeding on the light of divine wisdom, the bread of angels, and others on the pasturage of Circe. The strengthening of vision through purgation and illumination is striking in the experience of those adventurers who, having in their quest arrived at the castle of the Grail, all unknowing journey on, only to discover their mistake and wearily journey back at last to find the castle metamorphosed through their purified vision.

Finally, however, the Arthuriad is in a sense unique among medieval masterpieces. Both *Divina Commedia* and liturgy in the setting of the cathedral, end in the triumph of vision and joyous dedication to a noble mission, but the quest of the Grail, perhaps more true to life, certainly more true to Dante's experience, ends in a lapse from an ideal too high for earth. At the last, king and knights of the Round Table confess their inability to build the kingdom of Christ in the land of Logres.

From the point of view of symbolism, also, the Arthuriad stands out among the monuments of the medieval period. In *Commedia*, Mass, and Cathedral, the symbolism is definite. Dante labored meticulously that his every line might help to convey the fourfold message of the scripture. In the Arthurian romances, on the other hand, there are long passages with no symbolism at all other than arbitrary or comparison imagery

production of the twelve labors of Hercules or the Sun; and the statement that the peerless knight never died at all, and that he who had been king should still be king again, proves Arthur to have been "one in symbolic origin with Barbarossa, Sebastian of Portugal, the Tells, Harold the Saxon, and the Moor Boabdil. Smith, *Symbolism of Science*, p. 24.) In Nennius, Arthur carries the cross of Christ on his shoulder, and tradition is recorded that Christianity was introduced into Britain by a king called Lucius, which means "Light-bringer." There is a Grail version in which Percivale kills the (evil) Red Knight while in wolf's garb. (Cf. p. 202 n. 356.)

Guenevere of necessity had numerous rescuers, because each character of solar significance played the part of the rescuer of the sun's female counterpart. Guenevere's vegetation significance is suggested, among other scenes, in her Maying party before one of her abductions.

In the Middle English *Gawain and the Green Knight*, the fateful meeting between the two heroes (both solar derivatives) occurred at Christmas, the winter solstice. The vacant chair at the Round Table is another device which is significant. It reminds also of Dante's use of the vacant chair in *Par.*, xxx, 133. (Cf. further the vacant chair in heaven in the Syriac *Visio S. Pauli*, in the vision of Tundal, and in Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*.)

which, purely fanciful, appears amid vague, haunting reminiscences of old symbolisms. Dante made clear and definite in the harmony of the whole even that which he took from pagan sources, but in the Arthuriad layer upon layer of Celtic and Christian folklore are to be found, so veiled in allusion or altered and retouched, as to suggest that in the original stories outlines were intentionally blurred, perhaps to prevent understanding on the part of Christian zealots.⁹⁴ The process of tracing origins in these stories calls to mind the toil now demanded to recover on monastery and podestal walls great paintings concealed beneath plaster and the adornments of a later day.

An important and structural origin is probably, however, sacred tales of the Celtic sun-storm god, in his enactment of the resurrection drama of the year—that drama enacted by all sun gods of all races in all countries from all time, which in the Middle Ages had its locus in the cathedral and its form in liturgy. The hero, triune as sun god, storm god, and vegetation god, moves through romance after romance, revealed only by such hints as golden hair, miraculous birth, unquenchable heat of body, the marvelous weapon, or the revolving castle from which he rises at dawn. He is, moreover, bound to go on perilous expeditions, often by night, for the benefit of mankind or to rescue a lady. The names of Grail heroes are frequently traceable, with a high degree of probability, to Celtic hero-names with such significations as "Shining One, Son of the Permanent," "Gray Hero" (storm god), "Fire," "Golden Hair, Lord of Light," and so forth. The hero as the sun, loves flower ladies and moon ladies, ladies who must be rescued from imprisonment. Gawain, Peredur, Lancelot du Lac, Galeschin, and Galahad each rehearse some part of the sun drama. Galahad, indeed, reigns in the spiritual city just one year, the term of the sun god, and then is swallowed up in eternity.⁹⁵ Nor is solar imagery lacking in the Grail symbolism itself. The Grail may not appear

94. Stories of pagan deities, when Christianity gains power, must become re-interpreted and fitted into the Christian scheme, either as relating to Christ or to some saint; or they must be transformed to fairies or to devils; or they must be hidden away in some form of secret tradition.

95. Miss Weston states in her *From Ritual to Romance*, p. 154, that "the root origin of the whole bewildering complex of [the Grail legend] is to be found

without the gleam of solar radiance and the redness of the covering (red samite), before it fully manifests itself.⁹⁶

Complete development of the solar Trinity, although strongly suggested, is not, however, to be found in these stories: First, because popular faith lacks the interest of theology in fine distinctions, and, second, because the matter in hand is really an initiation, to be concealed from him who has not achieved the Quest. All the non-initiate may know, is that there is to be achieved an *epiphania*, a manifestation of the radiance of God.

Thus, this complex of romance attracted to itself the most sacred theme of Christian art and story—the Last Supper, in the form of a sacrament administered by Christ himself within the

in the Vegetation Ritual, treated from the esoteric point of view as a Life Cult, and in that alone." That is, she allows no Christian origins for the legend. This statement in no wise excludes, but rather presupposes, the whole case for the solar symbolism of the creative forces, both in the primitive origins and in the medieval Christianized forms of the Grail Quest.

It is of some importance to recall the fact that solar theories of the origin of ritual customs are not opposed to "vegetation" origins. Possibly nothing is more puzzling in recent study of comparative religion than the assumption that a vegetation theory could displace a solar one or *vice versa*. Modern city civilization may see no obvious connection between solar and vegetation concepts, but the connection is clear in the experience of primitive agricultural communities. The prominence given to sexual fertility magic in vegetation theories is no argument to the contrary, since the sexual significance of the sun is clear in primitive religion, and may be expressed in brief thus: Both sun and phallus give life; they are the only creative forces known to unsophisticated man. Cf. pp. 113 ff., and Appendix III, Pt. I, iii.

96. The solar symbolism as always, and especially in the lore of the people, contains within it the symbolism of sex. Galahad arrives at the Spiritual City in the Ship of Solomon. To say nothing of the mystic meaning of his companions on that ship, or of the ship's furnishings, the Ship itself is of manifold significance. Obviously it represents the church (cf. use of ship as symbol of church by Augustine, Rabanus Maurus, etc.), primarily the church of the Old Testament, but that church as prefiguring, as symbolizing, the church of the New Testament of which indeed, in the larger sense, it was a part (cf. p. 69 n. 154). But the Ship has had a long history as a symbol. According to Cox, it is a step in the progression of ideas by which the Yoni or female principle of generation was symbolized: the ark of safety in which life was preserved, the Argo, the shell of Aphrodite, the ship of Isis, the mystic lotus of the earth's fecundation, cups and inexhaustible vessels of which the pagan original of the Grail was one.

Hence, not only in the Sun God, represented by character after character in the story—just as in Dante's vision—is there analogy between the Grail quest and the quest of the *Divina Commedia*, but also in the relation between the sacred and unspeakable vision, and the duty which ensues upon it. Even as Dante, having seen the truth of universe, Trinity, and Incarnation, returns as a wheel moved by the Divine Sun who controls all stellar orbits; so Galahad, having re-found the Holy Thing and having been communicated from it by Christ himself, goes at once to his year's duty in the orbit of the Sun God, setting sail in the sacred Ship whose symbolic origin was that of the Grail itself.

walls of Corbenic^{97, 98}—even as if some instinct in the mind of the people insisted on giving Christ, the Logos, his place in the framework of inherited fragments of ancient solar mythology. Indeed, such syncretism had had precedent back even of the reaches of history when early crosses bore also the wheel of the sun.⁹⁹ Who, moreover, was more logically lord of the Castle of the Fisher King than Christ, *Ichthus*?¹⁰⁰

Although Dante's two direct references to the Arthuriad seem merely illustrative, in the mystic pageant, pageant of the Sun God and of the Mass, Beatrice appears as suddenly and as dramatically accompanied as does the Grail.¹⁰¹ This vision is in

97. In this device is a symbolism similar to that used by Dante at the summit of the Mount. Here Dante, like Galahad, is a symbol of Christ, yet is given communion by Christ symbolized in another form. Cf. p. 321.

98. Christ's administration of the mystery within Corbenic is not the only hint of this. The writer who Christianized the Galahad quest found in his source the name Galaain (corruption of Balin), and being a pious man, thought it a corruption of Galaad (the Latin form of Galahad). Galaad is the Vulgate form of Gilead, which Gillebert, the Cistercian abbot, in his commentary on the Canticles, interprets as "hill of testimony," which, he says, can be sought else than "Christ, on whom all the testimonies of the prophets" and of his own merits and his disciples' powers, are heaped up. This hill, he continues, is the head of the church.

Thus, though there is no sign in the Grail literature of a definite statement that all is to be interpreted by the fourfold method, yet, as in the New Testament example quoted (cf. p. 259), the three types of interpretation actually are used. (It may be remembered that Caxton in his colophon termed the Grail legend one of the truest and holiest stories in the world.)

The Grail story, in its finally Christianized form, is likewise a moral tale, in which tropes are seen. Finally it deals with the vessel of the Last Supper and its contents not only as they were historically in Jerusalem, not only as they strengthened the moral lives of individuals in the sacrifice of the Mass, but also as they were in Eternity, the final goal of Quest.

99. For the consideration of the influence of the Quest motif in medieval thought, it is possible to lay too much stress on the question of origins. The early connection of the Grail with Celtic solar and fertility cults, demonstrated by Miss Weston, Dr. Loomis, and others, is no indication of awkwardness and unnaturalness in its medieval connection with the *Sol Verus*, as St. Patrick himself termed Christ. The physical feeding function of the Grail, by the laws of symbolism, enriched rather than invalidated its function in transmitting spiritual food. The achievement of the Quest as the reestablishment of physical fruitfulness was not incompatible with the same achievement as spiritual creativity. It is the law of insight symbolism that the symbol is the natural basis of the truth which in turn gives it its meaning.

100. Fish imagery was characteristic of the primitive church and prominent even in the writings of the first Church Father. Cf. pp. 140-141.

Cf. also Eisler, *Orpheus—the Fisher*. He mentions that the Sun is equated symbolically to the Fish or has fish companions.

101. Two further points of likeness between Dante's quest and the Quest of the Grail are deserving of special attention. The Grail is carried by a beautiful woman; Dante's attainment of the Beatific Vision depends on the continual aid and inspiration of a woman. In each case blessedness is mediated by a figure of

very fact the achievement of his Quest, initiating his blessedness, as that of its hero is initiated by the Grail. The Grail, likewise, is attained only after the endurance of dire adventure and the overcoming of grievous obstacles, through which at last entrance is obtained into the sacred precincts of castle or of garden.¹⁰² The Quest of the Grail was too tremendous and too powerful in medieval symbolism not to have left its mark in many places. Even today its symbolic power through associations running far back of history and happily free from all flavor of pietism, draws to it an ascription of sacred character: the great Wagnerian *Parsifal*, in which the music itself carries out the imagery of the seasons, is performed customarily on Good Friday,¹⁰³ its appropriate place in the solar drama of the Chris-

supreme feminine beauty, who in neither case becomes the earthly bride of the hero whom she guides to the heights of attainment.

Second, in both quests complete outward vision of the sacred symbol of blessedness is possible without attainment, and is followed by expulsion from the presence of the symbol. Gawain, during his perilous night at Corbenic, actually sees the Grail twice. In the evening the Grail is carried past the table, feeding all present except Gawain. After the bitter adventures which follow, the Grail-bearer and attendants worship before the holy vessel in Gawain's presence. This time he shares in its benefits, for it heals the wound given him by the fiery lance. Yet the outcome of his experience is to be bound in a vile cart drawn by a decrepit horse, and pelted out of town with mud and filth. Perceval's uncomprehending vision of the Grail mysteries, ending in his expulsion from the castle, is too familiar to need recounting. Similar mischances befell most of the Grail questers.

Dante's experience is not dissimilar. In the *Vita Nuova*, although behaving toward Beatrice with the utmost reverence of which he is then capable, he is scorned by her and refused her salutation. Again, in the Earthly Paradise, the mere vision of Beatrice brings not blessedness, but rather rebuke. None the less, without outward vision, in the one case of the Grail, in the other of Beatrice, no true attainment of the Quest is possible. Thus appears, in the form peculiar to the Quest-motif, the fundamental law of symbolism: successful attempts at spiritual insight must pass in every case through the channel of the symbol; yet the symbol interpreted in a literal, formal, or descriptive sense only, without the insight which penetrates to the underlying meaning, is void and barren.

102. Or full experience of their mystic meaning. Cf., for example, the adventures of Boors and of Gawain at Corbenic, as related in the Vulgate *Lancelot*. The perils include a mysterious storm, wounding by a fiery lance, encounters with lion, leopard, dragon, and armed knight, and a vision of the Grail in brilliance as if it were the sun; yet in spite of the undergoing of these trials neither Boors nor Gawain attain the ultimate goal of the Quest. Similar perilous adventures of the hero are recounted in Chrétien de Troyes' *Conte del Graal*, in Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Die Krone*, and in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.

103. Dr. Loomis has suggested that, were an initiate of one of the old mystery cults to be recalled to life on Broadway on Good Friday, and, after his bewilderment by the confusion and hurry of modern civilization, were he to wander into the Metropolitan Opera House—he would feel that at last here was something which he understood, and among the significations of which, with its secret mys-

terian year. In the spring is portrayed the triumph of the Christ—and of all heroes who have shared in sun imagery—over the motionless, dark, cold blight of evil. There is something deep within even the unlettered that shows him more than farce in the confusion of the simple Parsifal when asked his name: "I have had many names." Truly, he had.

IV. THE SUN OF METAMORPHOSIS

IN constant support of the love motivation of the quest in medieval thinking is the perception of metamorphosis. Fascinating and perturbing in its mystery, transmutation is a theme with a history extending far back into antiquity. From the shape-shifting of primitive folklore to that transhumanizing which may not be told in words ("trasumanar significar per verba non si poria"¹⁰⁴) this mystery aroused men to thought and to strange experience. Those in the Middle Ages most irresistibly lured by the mysteries of the natural universe became absorbed in the study of transmutation. The quest for the Philosopher's Stone motivated the initiation of modern science.¹⁰⁵

Alchemists, like other knights of the Quest, worked under the spell of solar symbolism. *Sol* with its attendant lion, eagle, king, and sex symbolism, was omnipresent, and its use by alchemists is reflected in much of medieval literature from romance to bestiary and is suggested in the *Divina Commedia* itself. There was a continual discovery in nature of the new reflections of the solar Trinity and of its associated numbers,¹⁰⁶ in the light of

etic meanings, he was at home. It is interesting further, since many of the elements reminiscent of sun-worship and of the mysteries had been lost from the sources of the *Parsifal*, as Dr. Loomis points out, that Wagner, simply from his sense of the artistic rounding out of a whole, should have restored so many such elements.

104. *Par.*, i, 70-71.

105. "There is not the slightest doubt that chemistry owes its origin to the direct labours of the alchemists themselves, and not to any who misread their writings." H. Stanley Redgrove, *Alchemy, Ancient and Modern*, pp. 3-4. See also the excellent two volume history of experimental science, by Dr. Lynn Thorndike.

106. A summary of the principles of alchemy is given in the *Smaragdine Table*:

1. I speak not fictitious things, but what is true and most certain.
2. What is *below* is like that which is *above*, and what is *above* is like that which is *below*, to accomplish the miracles of one thing. *Analogy*

which these symbolisms in the *Commedia* should be studied. The field of medieval alchemy is, however, rather a tangled thicket than either a dark forest or an ordered garden,¹⁰⁷ and in it many fall prey to the powers of darkness. Its basic hypothesis was, nevertheless, that of all medieval creativity:

La matière concrète de la nature est notre seule base tangible, la seule preuve sensible de toute affirmation. . . . L'esprit et la matière, dans le

3. And all things were produced by the meditation of *Unity one Being*, so all things were produced from this one thing by adaptation.
4. Its father is the *Sun*, its mother the Moon; the wind *Sun-sex central* carries it in its belly, its nurse is the earth.
5. It is the *cause of all perfection* throughout the whole *First Mover* world . . .
8. *Ascend* with the *greatest sagacity from the earth to heaven*, and then *again descend* to the earth, and *unite together the powers of things superior and things inferior*. Thus you will obtain the glory of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far away from you . . .
12. Therefore I am called Hermes Trismegistus, possessing the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world. *knowledge*
13. That which I had to say concerning the *operation of Solar deity the Sun* is completed."

(Words characteristic of all medieval symbolic thinking have been italicized.) See Redgrove, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

Cf. with (8) above, Boehme's statement of the desire of the hermetic philosopher "to arrive at the unity of vision" "by entering fully into the will of our Saviour Christ, and therein bringing the eye of time into the eye of eternity; and then descending by means of this united through the light of God into the light of nature." J. Boehme, *Of the Signature of All Things*, etc. Everyman ed., p. 250.

107. Cf., for example, such an alchemical statement as:

"The spirit of Sol may tincture Mars and Venus, and change them into the highest metalline perfection, viz. into gold; which cannot so easily be effected in silver, unless it be reduced into the first materia, where Saturn, Mars, and Mercury are together in the Sulphur, and then it can be done; Venus receives its toughness from Saturn, and its redness from Mars as the fire. Now the desire of Venus is only eager, and longing after Sol, as after her first mother, from whence she springs forth in her birth in the first original; for the love comes forth originally from God, and so it is likewise in the eternal Birth in the figure: The desire of Venus goes into Sol, into the Sun, and receives in its desire the property of the Sun, and shines from Sol. . . . For God the Father generates the love through his heart; now the sun, by way of similitude, betokens his heart; for it is a figure in the outward world according to the eternal heart of God, which gives strength and virtue to every life and essence. And understand it right; all things proceed from the word and heart of God (which is the divine Sulphur) in the birth of the Holy Trinity, and manifest themselves in and through the proceeded (or egressed) essence, which is God's wisdom; and they again do eagerly force and press out of the egress, in and toward his heart and power, and vehemently long after it, as Paul saith, all creatures groan and pant with us to be delivered from vanity." Boehme, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

monde et l'humanité, sont entièrement liés. Les séparer, c'est amoindrir l'art. L'art est, comme la poésie, comme la philosophie et la science, et comme notre vie matérielle même, une attraction vers la création, qui à nos bornes manifeste le Créateur.¹⁰⁸

For the Middle Ages the only possible creation was in symbolism. Craftsmen and scholars, artists in stone or in language, worked alike with the *verba Dei*.^{109, 110}

It is to be regretted that the study of medieval science is too often undertaken by those who fail in appreciation of its dual nature, of which the basis is analogy, the basis of all symbolism. The scientific, like all other phases of medieval thought, becomes intelligible only with the comprehension of the symbolic method. Though brevity forbids dallying in the chaos of alchemical lore—and the greater chaos of attempted elucidations—interest in the medieval quest demands recognition of its genius. Whether the secret code descriptions of alchemical experiments represent actual laboratory directions, unsafe to publish openly, or whether they represent rather the hidden secrets

108. Baes, *Le symbole et l'allegorie*, p. 3.

109. Cf. with the statement by M. Baes given above, the *five principles of mysticism* listed in M. Hugonin's *Prolegomena* to the works of Hugh of St. Victor (Migne, P.L., t. 175):

- "1. Toutes les œuvres extérieures de Dieu sont la manifestation de sa pensée et de son verbe, comme la parole est la manifestation de la pensée de l'homme. Nous sommes associés à cette grande révélation, et c'est le but de la loi du travail imposée à tous.
2. Cette manifestation s'est faite par la création: c'est le monde naturel; par l'incarnation, c'est le monde surnaturel.
3. Pour arriver à la vraie science de Dieu par ses œuvres, il faut avoir le cœur pur, parce que la vraie science unit l'âme à Dieu, et que la péché est un obstacle à cette union . . .
4. Le but de la science étant la perfection de l'homme, c'est-à-dire le plein développement de son activité et de sa vie . . .
5. La science est toujours imparfaite sur la terre; ce n'est qu'au terme de notre pèlerinage que nous trouverons, dans notre fin, cette pleine et paisible possession de la vérité par l'intelligence et par l'amour."

110. Lactantius points out this view in the words of "Hermes Trismegistus": "For Trismegistus, who by some means or other searched into almost all truth, often described the excellence and majesty of the word . . . he acknowledges that there is an ineffable and sacred speech, the relation of which exceeds the measure of man's ability." "Ante-Nicene Library," XXI, 226.

The doctrines of the occult sciences, including alchemy, are based on the ancient writings ascribed to "Hermes Trismegistus" (cf. p. 437 n. 106), for which see the translations by G. R. S. Mead. The name of the supposed author, meaning Thrice-greatest Hermes, is obviously mythical. It is not known to whom the Hermetic writings are to be ascribed, if indeed they are not the work of many hands.

of the spiritual quest, is no longer a subject of discussion. That both types of alchemical writing and thinking existed has been well established. Confusion will remain, however, so long as the student of the Middle Ages fails to recognize that for all those in the tradition of the fourfold method both types, of necessity, were valid *in the same treatise*.

On the basis of the mystic hypothesis of essential unity in the universe, just as all creation is of the Sun and ultimately unified in it,¹¹¹ so all metals are potentially gold:

Since . . . the substance of the metals is *one*, and common to all, and since this substance is (either at once, or after laying aside in course of time the foreign and evil sulphur of the baser metals by a process of gradual digestion) changed by the virtue of its own indwelling sulphur into GOLD, which is the goal of all metals, and the true intention of Nature—we are obliged to admit, and freely confess that in the mineral kingdom, as well as in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, Nature seeks and demands a gradual attainment of perfection, and a gradual approximation to the highest standard of purity and excellence.¹¹²

The search for the stone that should accomplish this perfection in nature was undertaken with as great ardor and enthusiasm as ever was the quest for the Grail;¹¹³ though its literature is of necessity far less readable. In no magic forests and lakes of the Land of Faery, but in the very elements of the universe, took place the mystic marriage and the mystic death and burial recounted in alchemical lore.

In a series of pictures a drama of this strange realm is represented. In the first a noble king, Gold, is beheld enthroned in state surrounded by his son Mercury and five servants—Silver, Copper, Tin, Iron, and Lead. The son, incited by the servants, stabs his father, catching the blood in his robes. Immediately a grave is dug, and the son, in an attempt to throw his father into the grave, falls in with him. The sixth picture shows him in vio-

111. So states Irenaeus Philalethes, in the *Golden Tract Concerning the Stone of the Philosophers*. See the *Magical Writings of Thomas Vaughan*, edited by A. E. Waite. Thomas Vaughan, George Starkey, and others used the pseudonym of Irenaeus Philalethes. The identity of the author here quoted remains a subject of dispute. Cf. Redgrove, *op. cit.*, p. 79, and footnote.

112. Quoted by Redgrove, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

113. Even the equipment of the alchemist had its symbolic significations like the armor watched by the youth on the eve of his knighting (and like the habit of modern initiates in the secret orders).

lent but unavailing struggle to escape. In the seventh picture, however (note the mystic number seven), the father is restored to life completely purified; and son and all five servants are exalted to kingship by his power. In this strange comedy of medieval life is represented under figure the preparation of an amalgam¹¹⁴ of gold and mercury; the former, apparently dying, covers the paler metal with its blood. The grave is the furnace in which the preparation must remain sealed until a change is observed. This story is purely and simply an allegory, a code to conceal from those of alien mind that which through lack of understanding might be confused with practices judged illicit. But both the story and the process it represents had at the same time mystic interpretation by the fourfold method.¹¹⁵

It is very likely that early ideas of transmutation within the realm of the inanimate were the outgrowth of accidental chemical experiments, probably with mixtures. When the alchemist first mingled the elements of the universe he was generally in a state of delightful uncertainty as to whether the result would be an inert and innocent mess, a new and surprising substance unlike either of its generators, or an upheaval which would effectively end his earthly experiments, sending him to render account in the presence of the Great Alchemist. More than one experimenter, hiding from the stake and faggots ever in readiness for his reception, spent within his cavern considerable periods prone in unconsciousness from the learning of the lessons which nature had to teach.

It was early discovered that gold was of all known metals the least subject to the action of any acid. Through its permanence it was in character as well as in appearance a fit symbol for him whose symbol was the Sun, and for all that was like him. The quest for the secret of the golden touch, the philosopher's stone which should make of base metals gold, was then of significance for moral progress also, the transmutation of fallen man into the likeness of God. To the alchemist philosopher, analogy ex-

114. The origination of this term is ascribed to Thomas Aquinas. The ascription to him, and to Albertus Magnus, of alchemical works, is, however, probably mistaken.

115. Cf. the mystical and psychoanalytical interpretation of a similar story by Dr. H. Silberer in his *Problems of Mysticism and Its Symbolism*.

isted between the transmutation of base metals into gold, the perfection of man physiologically, and the transfiguration¹¹⁶ of spiritual man. "These three problems were one; the same problem on different planes of being; and the solution was likewise one. He who held the key to one problem held the key to all three, provided he understood the analogy between matter and spirit."¹¹⁷ The secret of moral progress, however, lay in the Incarnation and its sacramental extension. Here was the great alchemical experiment in the realm of the soul—by the touch of water and of oil properly applied, a man received "character,"¹¹⁸ that mysterious change in the soul which could never be lost, whether in hell or heaven; and by feeding on the bread of angels, he became transhumanized.¹¹⁹ It was a foregone conclusion then that whenever the agent of chemical transmutation should be discovered, it would be a symbol of Christ, acting in its sphere as he in his.

Characteristic is the alchemical statement in regard to Christ, that he

had no need to die but he died voluntarily and rose again to make us live eternally with him as his brethren without sin. Thus gold is without stain, fixed, glorious, and able to undergo all tests, but it dies for its imperfect and sick brethren, and soon, rising glorious, it delivers them and colours them for life eternal; it renders them perfect in the state of pure gold.¹²⁰

The transmuting principle was appropriately named the Philosopher's Stone, Stone of the Lover of Wisdom, the Spiritual Rock which is Christ.¹²¹ In the *Sophic Hydrolith* it is written:

116. Cf. Chap. V.

117. Redgrove, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

118. The assertion that certain sacraments, and in particular baptism, confers "character" is not to be taken as meaning that a moral change is produced by a physical or non-moral means. The word character denotes in this connection rather a metaphysical change, by which the soul is made other than it was, possessing powers which it previously did not possess. Thus the moral possibilities are greater, and the responsibility likewise greater.

119. According to Athanasius, "God must be made man that man may be made God."

120. Basil Valentine, to be found in John E. Mercer, *Alchemy, Its Science and Romance*.

121. Similarly the Elixir of Life, quintessence composed of Gold and Light, the perfect medicine for all bodily ills, must bear symbolic relationship to him who as Truth was cure for all mental ills, and as Reason and Justice was cure for all ills of the soul,

"Thus . . . I have briefly and simply set forth to you the perfect analogy which exists between our earthly and chemical and the true and heavenly Stone, Jesus Christ, justly termed 'the stone which the builder rejecteth' whereby we may attain unto certain beatitude and perfection, not only in earthly but also in eternal life."¹²² It was explained by many writers that "stone," even in its physical signification as applied to this principle, was a figurative not a literal term.¹²³ Some alchemists even named it definitely as a powder:

Know then that it is called a stone not because it is like a stone . . . in species it is gold, more pure than the purest . . . very fine powder, impalpable to the touch, sweet to the taste, fragrant to the smell, in potency a most penetrating spirit.¹²⁴

There was, however, in all this no confusion of thought through an intermingling in the same sphere of the spiritual and the physical. The autonomy of each was maintained. Philalethes for example goes on to say: "If we say that its nature is spiritual, it would be no more than the truth; if we described it as corporeal, the expression would be equally correct."¹²⁴ The modern interpreter who attempts to see the Stone's spiritual significances as in the same order of truth as its physical qualities, commits an absurdity. Not a few students have puzzled their heads over what chemical substance could be described as equally spiritual and corporeal, bringing "all metals to the perfection of gold and silver . . . and that by natural methods which yet in their effects transcend nature."¹²⁴ It is surprising that one familiar with the ecclesiastical tradition¹²⁵ should fail to recognize here a perfect description of the sacramental mode of action. In regard to the bread of angels, such a one would scarcely stigmatize as an exaggeration Lull's¹²⁶ statement that the smallest

122. Redgrove, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13, quoting from the *Sophic Hydrolith*.

123. Compare, for example, the following statement: "Stone which is not a stone, precious thing which has no value, thing of many shapes which has no shape, unknown which is known of all." Zosimus, cf. Mercer, *op. cit.*

124. Philalethes, excerpt in, *op. cit.*

125. As, for example, Bishop Mercer, author of a standard work on alchemy.

126. The identity of the alchemist who wrote under the name of Ramón Lull is uncertain. That he is the same as the mystic writer to whom earlier reference has been made (cf. pp. 387-428) is usually doubted. It was, however, the earlier assumption.

amount of the Stone can transmute an ocean full of base metal into itself, and Salmon's claim that its transmuting power is infinite. Christ's efficacy is not diminished by the number of souls who receive of his transforming power.¹²⁷

It is necessary then to distinguish from the literal sense of alchemical writings the spiritual analogy to be given man should he discover a physical power through which the natural universe should openly declare its unity with the sun. One must, moreover, respect the scientific temper which could expect such transformation of the physical universe to be accomplished not by vaguely miraculous powers, but only by a physical substance, acting in accord with natural laws.

In brief, that the details of scientific experiment should fail to have a spiritual meaning was inconceivable to medieval thinking. Albertus Magnus might find interest primarily in the actual physical experiment, but it was an interest comparable to that of Jerome in the textual exactitude of scripture. Every symbolist must rightly comprehend the literal before he proceeds to spiritual interpretation. On the other hand, just as it would have occurred to no one to reject physical sequences as demonstrated by experiment, so it would have occurred to no one to reject the spiritual analogies of those sequences in the soul of man. It is declared in the *Sophic Hydrolith* that "the practice of this Art enables us to understand, not merely the marvels of Nature, but the nature of God himself, in all its unspeakable glory. It shadows forth, in a wonderful manner . . . all the articles of the Christian faith, and the reason why man must pass through much tribulation and anguish, and fall a prey to death, before he can rise again to a new life."¹²⁸ In the medieval tradition divorce of physical expression from spiritual meaning was impossible. The physical was the means of the quest for wisdom.

The quest motif dominated all aspects of medieval expression, learned and popular. The object of the quest was the ultimate anagoge within which was contained the pattern of the

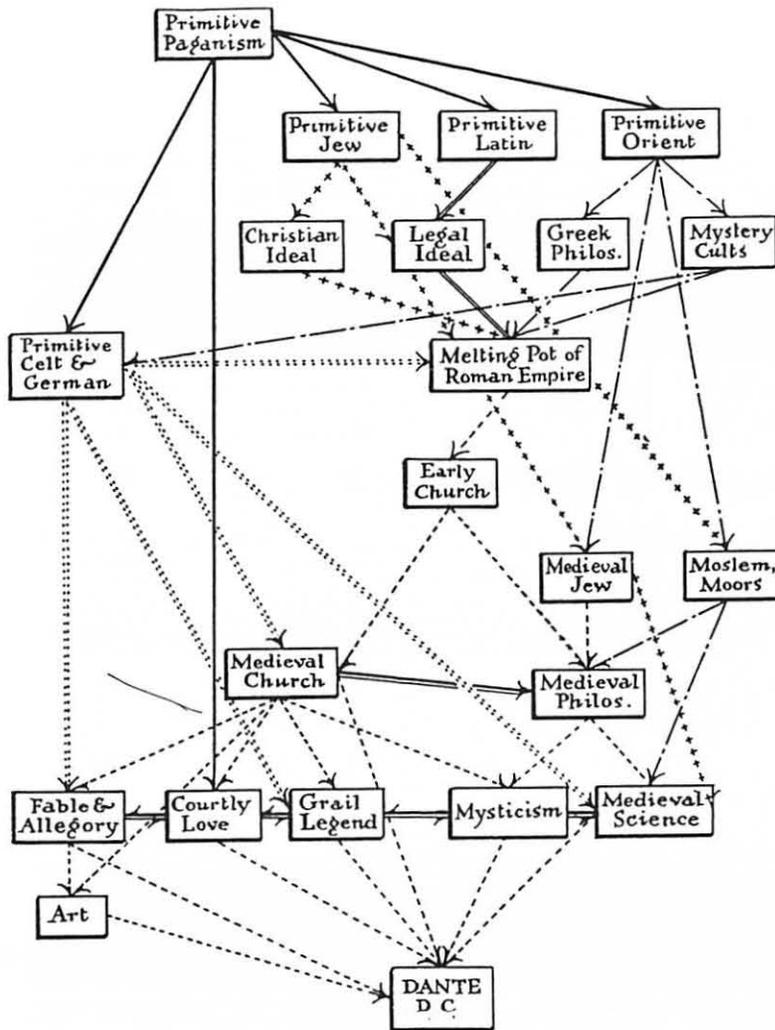
127. Interestingly enough, modern science has presented the world with physical substances sharing in this apparently unlimited efficacy of the Philosopher's Stone. The activity of small amounts of radioactive substances seems to be practically inexhaustible.

128. Excerpts in Redgrove, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

whole, apprehensible to man only through study of nature and scripture in the light of reason and the inspiration of the infinite. The study demanded, moreover, consideration of particulars in their interrelationships, with ultimate reference to the whole. The function of the *Speculum* in the Middle Ages, whether it were tome or cathedral, was to display within apprehensible compass the tremendous range of the known, through the unification of which the quest progressed. Of all *Speculae* the greatest in its reflection of the divine light was, as Dante had declared it, the sun itself.¹²⁹

Thus for the Middle Ages man's age-long search for consistency in experience, fused in the Roman Empire under the power and the lightning flashes of the *Sol Invictus*, had defined the quest for the Infinite in whom all opposites found unification. This definition was given expression and brought within the reach of the people chiefly through the symbolism of the liturgy. The quest was a dual quest, not only of man for reality, but of God for man, involving an inevitable metamorphosis. Of this the people were made aware and in it they were trained by the *Significationes* of cathedrals, sermons, bestiaries, and of their own varied experimental literature; while the more aristocratic were charmed by the troubadours' discovery of the power of metamorphosis resident in the love of woman. In the fresh idealization of reality, which grew out of medieval social development and love awakening, was the motivation of the quest. For alchemists in vicissitudinous search, the metamorphosis was accomplished by the Philosopher's Stone, symbol of Christ acting through love; for the Knights of the Quest achievement lay in the Grail with its gift of mystic union with the sacramental Christ, mediated by the Holy Spirit; for Dante on pilgrimage, attainment came in that all-revealing communion with Beatrice in which she, as symbol of Love, manifests herself sacramental symbol of Christ at the consecration of the Eucharist. Such, also, was the supreme moment in the drama which is the heart of the cathedral. The desire of the individual became the placing of himself in such right relationship to the powers of attraction in the universe that the inevitable metamorphosis and the ultimate

129. Cf. *Purg.*, iv, 62.



MEDIÆVAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
SCHEMATICALLY REPRESENTED AS CONSUMMATED
IN THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

union and spiritual marriage might take place in the Beatific Vision amid the music of the spheres, rather than in the loss of the *ben del l'intelletto* amidst mockery and negation of fire and cold.

In the intimate relationship of individual and Infinite was consummated the mystic marriage, the activity of the Infinite on the Nothing; spiritual fruitfulness was essentially individual in its accomplishment and social in its effects. Such was the experience which brought forth the *Commedia*, to present in ninefold symbolism given unity in the ten,¹³⁰ not only solution of the specific problem bound up with each source of human knowledge, as interpreted through the fourfold method, but fulfilment of the medieval quest for wisdom. Dominating both the work of the learned and the great quests of the people, in the Mass, in their literature, in the Grail cycle, and in the esoteric venture of the alchemists, the quest demanded from each his utmost in creativeness. Motivated and achieved through the Solar Tri-unity, all creativeness, whether of carpenter and mason, or of poet and philosopher, was primarily for the all-seeing eye¹³¹ and had its *raison d'être* not in its effect on man, however great might be its economic or aesthetic value, but in its direct expression of that Reality which is truth and beauty: truth in Itself, and, since harmonious expression is the law of Its nature, inevitably beauty.

130. Cf. p. 339 n. 19c.

131. For example, the many beauties of the cathedral which are, by position and interest, invisible to human observers.

CHAPTER VII. SCHEMA

Terminus *ad quem*. Modern medievalists. Quest of knowledge. Essential duality in symbolism. *Mysteria*. The pattern of the whole. Terminus *a quo*.

CHAPTER VII. SYMBOLISM IN LETTER AND ANAGOGE: ALPHA AND OMEGA

Oh abbondante grazia ond' io presunsi
ficcar lo viso per la luce eterna,
tanto che la veduta vi consunsi!
Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
sustanze e accidenti e lor costume,
quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo
che ciò ch' i'dico è un semplice
lume.

Oh, grace abounding, wherein I presumed to fix my look on the eternal light so long that I consumed my sight thereon! Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe; substance and accidents and their relations, as though together fused, after such fashion that what I tell of is one simple flame.

I. TERMINUS AD QUEM

DANTE ALIGHIERI died in Ravenna in 1321, in his lifetime having beheld ingathered and bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe; and their eternal meaning in a sunlit rose. He died in exile because Florence shared not in his character. Having chosen that the leaves of the universe should remain scattered, she was held separated by her florin pasturage, not only from the Rome of the Empire, but from that Rome where Christ is a Roman. One vision for Dante had included, against the background of the universe, the long history of humanity from Eden to the Last Judgment; the sweep of its varying transformations under allegiance to Christ or to Satan; and, in the drama of human history, the organic position of all aspects of contemporary life in their interrelationships—from mathematics to courtly love, from mysticism to politics. All had their place in the search for reality of which the most complete intellectual formulation was in the conception of Infinite Tri-unity expressed through duality and quaternity, bound up in the One and the Nothing of the mystic Ten.

Of all this the story is told in the journey of Dante's troubled life, yet even with his death he ceased not to be a figure in political controversy, and men were not inclined to allow his body rest. While Florence strove with her sister state for the body of her exiled prior, a band of cowed figures removed it stealthily in the night from the stone under which it lay, leaving Florence, Ravenna, and the pope himself, to continue a dispute of centuries over an empty tomb! Even more a center of age-long dispute than the body which his spirit left silent, has been the *Com-*

media, the body from which his spirit still might speak. While the first commentators were engaged in altercation, the spirit of a new age took surreptitiously from beneath the monument of the words they prized, that which had given those words their meaning, and left the poem as it were a cenotaph. So, like the contents of the tomb in Ravenna, the philosophy of insight symbolism was hidden away. It was only after the secret for a time handed down from initiate to initiate had been forgotten, and the walls of the monastery had begun to crumble, that a chance workman on a mission of repair revealed to the astonished inhabitants the body of the Florentine exile which had lain so long concealed within their walls. With similar discovery on the part of those absorbed in the strengthening of the civilization of the new age, may come the fulfilment which will make Dante's death like the anagoge of his journey, not only a terminus *ad quem*, but a terminus *a quo*.

II. MODERN MEDIEVALISTS

FOR centuries modern medievalists, ignorant of the philosophy and method of medieval symbolism, have labored in a confusion even worse than that of Babel. The builders of the tower, speaking in many tongues, knew that they failed to understand each other; but those today whose interest is in medieval literature, because elements of the vocabulary are familiar, are inclined naïvely to suppose that they understand. Whittier, for example, said that nature speaks in signs and symbols. This, although a true statement of the medieval position, was made without the slightest comprehension of that position, or sympathy with it. As a matter of fact, understanding is impossible until words are recognized as symbols, each bearing its heritage from the past¹ and governed by laws of interrelationship in present life.

As to the fundamental truths in the *Divina Commedia*, it may be noted by way of exemplification, there has been dispute even among the greatest of Dante critics. One scholar, criticizing a triad already suggested as light, music, and motion, insists that

1. "A word has a symbolic association with its own history, its other meanings, and with its general status in current literature." Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect*, p. 84.

Dante's three and only leading ideas in the *Paradiso* are Light, Life, and Truth. He sees truly that motion is but a symbolic expression of life, and adds:

With rare artistic skill and spiritual discernment he [Dante] chose his materials; the religious life is the life with God, and God is light, life and truth . . . the spiritual life is to know God, and to receive his light, life and truth. Surely there was no other material than these three elements out of which the divine poet could construct his stately paradise.²

Yet a child in the tradition of Catholicism would realize that just as motion and life are aspects of the same Person of the Trinity, so are truth and light (indeed, the writer just quoted, himself apparently unconsciously used "light" as symbolical of truth). Thus from both triads—that criticized and that suggested—there has been omitted the third element, which is the Primal Love. The omission of an element such as love, which is as fundamental in the universe as both truth and life, was impossible even to the least educated among those brought up in the symbolic tradition, and in no sense harmonious with the atmosphere of medieval thought or congruous with its method. But more than this, love was the very motif of Dante's century. The sun, most perfect symbol of deity, all knew, gave heat as well as life and light.

In ignorance not only of the philosophy and method of medieval symbolism, but even of the great scripture in which it centered, even more astonishing mistakes are made. For example, a recent critic speaks in shocked censure of the "medieval legend" which made Rahab an ancestress of Christ. The statement in Matthew's genealogy of Christ: "And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king" is scarcely a medieval legend.³ The only salvation for the student of the *Divina Commedia* lies in the visualization of Dante in his setting amid the thought currents of his time, and against the background of all that had produced them.

2. Charles Allen Dinsmore, *Aids to the Study of Dante* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1903), pp. 341-345.

3. Even the more radical of higher critics do not date any portion of Matthew, even the genealogical material, later than the second century.

The researches of the most careful scholarship will multiply confusion unless a framework is realized in which each detail may be given its proper position. In an age of specialization this fact causes difficulty. The expansion of knowledge having made it impossible that anyone should know all of its every phase, the assumption has arisen that to know anything, more than superficially, outside one's chosen field, is unnecessary. Dante wove his *Commedia* on a background of understanding, not only of the principles of every field of knowledge, but of every phase of life, using symbols which had increased in meaning since the time when, back of the horizon of history, man first began to walk erect and direct his gaze toward the sun.

III. QUEST OF KNOWLEDGE

As the modern world reviews past cultures, it has that degree of sympathy with classicism suggested by the pilgrimage of tourists to Olympia to worship according to their lights before the shrine of the Praxitelean Hermes. Those who, with apologies to Puritan ancestry, are gently disengaging themselves from the bonds of the Roman virtues, turn often for relief to Greek paganism, but overlook the Middle Ages, or, more literally, glance hurriedly past. It was an age of Christianity, with which is associated asceticism, and superstition with its fruit in magic.

As it happens, the human sense of humor is so constituted that that which is unfamiliar is likely to appeal to it as absurd. The first impression gained in a study of the medieval quest for knowledge is likely to be one of childishness and inconsistency. The quest cannot appear otherwise to one ignorant of the hypotheses with which it was consistent. On the other hand, firmly convinced of the seriousness and logic of the modern search, the critic is left little perspective for the smile of kindly indulgence. Strange as it may seem, however, the dominant ideas of this much descried period are cropping out in various fields of modern inquiry. Perhaps strangest of all, it is in the development of science that the recurrence of medieval principles is most marked.

Biology has long pointed out the unity underlying all forms of life, and now it "discloses the organism partaking of its en-

vironment and the environment interpenetrating the organism . . . becoming not merely elementary material of its sustenance and growth, but part and parcel . . . of its life."⁴ At the same time, physical science has demonstrated that every atom in the universe is impressed with the pattern of the spheres. The all-pervading unity has been given striking expression in a description of the whole physical universe as but "differentiated sunshine."⁵ Furthermore, after decades of scientific experiment with reconstruction of the world from empirically analyzed details, men are coming to realize that whether or not the unity underlying all things be infinite, at least their task in the study of it in the discrete is endless. Physicists among others are struggling at present with the reconciliation of opposites, having found themselves dependent on two mutually contradictory theories of light. Until a few decades ago, they had discarded one of them in favor of the other; now they use both frankly:

No known theory can be distorted so as to provide even approximate explanation. . . . For the present we have to work both theories. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays we use the wave theory; on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays we think in streams of flying energy, quanta, or corpuscles. That is, after all, a very proper attitude to take.

4. H. O. Taylor, *Freedom of the Mind in History* (London: Macmillan, 1923), p. 6.

5. Phrase used by John Fiske in his *Cosmic Philosophy*. A recent article by Dr. Pupin well illustrates such use of symbolism:

"The prosy modern piston," said I, 'imitates the Olympian deities; it transforms a chaos into a cosmos.' . . . Yes, the modern inventor may be said to have stolen a secret from golden Helios, the sun-god. His steam-engine imitates the operation of the central star of our planetary system. Where the ancient worshippers of Helios saw a resplendent sun-god radiating his breath of life to the terrestrial waters, the modern inventor saw a celestial fire, and imitated its action upon the terrestrial waters by fire under the boiler. Where the ancients saw the blessings of the sun-god manifesting themselves by the rising vapors lifted on high from rivers, lakes, and oceans, and forming clouds which, journeying to higher elevations of the terrestrial globe, carry the waters to the thirsty continents, there the modern inventor saw the motion of steam from the boiler to the condenser and on its journey driving the piston."

He continues: "But neither the poets of ancient Greece nor the modern inventor detected in this cyclic motion of water a fundamental process of nature. . . . This beautiful cyclic process is a transformation of a solar chaos into a terrestrial cosmos by the co-ordinating forces which reside in the primordial granules of water, in its atoms and molecules, and it was revealed by modern science." Michael Pupin, "Creative Co-ordination," in *Scribner's* for August, 1927.

As a matter of fact, this revelation of modern science is but a fulfilment of that which Dante's symbolism taught. Cf. p. 460 n. 14.

We cannot state the whole truth since we have only partial statements. . . . Some day we shall piece all the maps [i.e., statements] together.⁶

Not only this, but in the application of statistics to the quantum theory, they have found themselves obliged to admit the operation of chance! More than this some tend to retrograde so far as to perceive in chance, if not the law-abiding revolutions of Dame Fortune's wheel, nevertheless the operation of a law.

In the modern quest for knowledge, while science is working out anew a philosophy of interpretative symbolism, the people are using relics of interpretative symbols left by the earlier tradition. Had the understanding persisted which showed the name "Father" with reference to God to be but an insight symbol, under necessity of correction not only by other equally true symbolisms from the realm of human relationships, such as Lover or Babe, but also by the whole nexus of solar symbolism in its majesty, thinking men of the present generation would have been spared an embarrassing task—the necessity of ousting from the most sacred precincts of their minds the hoary-headed and arbitrary dispenser of rewards and punishments who, for all his benignity, they cannot but feel unfit to preside there.

Although it is in the sciences that today is to be found the closest approximation to the medieval symbolic spirit, through the belief in such elements as unity, reconciliation of opposites, and meaningfulness of total environment, yet it was the growth of the scientific method which made impossible further hold on the symbolic method among the people. The literal-minded scientist is no better off than the literal-minded artist, and science itself gives its choicest gifts of insight only to the very few. To the average man, science means practical inventions and the life of action, shutting out contemplation altogether. Thus, in a materialistic age, those unable to share in the joys and glory of the scientific method, tend to seek the lost values in reactionism, in vagaries and fads, or else in the great secret orders, where truth is "veiled in allegory and illustrated in symbols." This would suggest that symbolism, with or without basis, is with difficulty ousted from life.

Although in modern literary movements now and then there

6. Sir William Bragg, in *Discovery*, September, 1921.

is displayed an uneasiness over the loss of the symbolic tradition of the past, the attempt is to recover its emotional power in disregard of its intellectual basis. Of this there could be no better example than the symbolist school in France, nourished on the writings of the Latin decadence. A writer of this school in discussing important features of symbolism in opposition to naturalism, states that symbolism discards mathematical precision in description of events, and stiff and dry exactness in their development, and second that it shakes off the yoke of the law of cause and effect.⁷ When it did so, symbolism lost its grip. In accord with the philosophy which gave symbolism its greatest development, it was felt not only that there could be no more precise statement of truth than the symbol, but that the immutability of the law of cause and effect was the only basis for its use.

Another writer of the same school, however, in discussing the difference between the primitive poet and the symbolist of today, writes with more penetration: "Le poète primitif se sentait en contact perpétuel avec le surnaturel, tandis que le poète d'aujourd'hui proteste contre l'opinion de ce temps que les choses sont 'toutes naturelles.' . . . Aussi le rôle du poète symboliste consiste-t-il, en quelque sorte, à reconstituer dans l'esprit moderne une faculté perdue: le sens du mystère."⁸ This passage would imply a decrying of the modern tendency to dismiss a fact with such simple understanding as is involved in a knowledge of its name, untouched by the mystery of its relationships in the unity of the universe. Yet this writer, too, like most of those newly awakened to the power of symbolism, is more interested in the aesthetic or emotional than in the thought value which is necessary to complete its power as a tool for the furtherance of human development and the ordering of human minds.

While science, albeit without intent, is engaged in a reformulation of the philosophy which once gave meaning to the symbolisms of the people, its newest child, modern psychology, with full intention is pointing out principles which underlie such en-

7. Albert Schinz, "Literary Symbolism in France," *Modern Language Association Pub.*, Vol. 18, pp. 273-307.

8. André Beaunier, *La poésie nouvelle*, p. 22.

deavors as those of the French symbolist school. From observation of the place of symbolism in the thought processes of the perennial twins, the genius and the madman, students of the human mind have sought for its roots in human nature. Although the first students saw mainly materials of symbolism as centered in sex, the microcosm, much time was not required for some to see also the macrocosmic center in the sun. With this new conception came the attempt to see in symbolism not only the expression of elemental instincts, but also the means of solution of personal problems. With appreciation of the necessity of studying the materials of symbolism as they appear in history and before it, came a recognition that the most careful analysis of the problems of the individual falls short unless in them be recognized also the problems of the race. Thus, like Dante, from an analysis of individual problems against the background of the natural universe, some psychologists are finding the necessity of a deeper order of symbolism. At present their philosophy of humanity and their symbolic method are still in process of formulation, and in consequence they can scarcely penetrate to the deeper level, the analysis of inner experience with reference to the ultimate quest. Yet that toward which they are working is clearly a philosophy of insight symbolism through which, in the bringing together of thought and emotion, unification of personalities may be accomplished. From the increasing prevalence in this field also of solar symbolism it would seem apparent that barring some cosmic catastrophe the sun is not likely to lose its symbolic prominence. For scientists the sun still, through the shadows which it casts, makes possible the measurement of high mountains and objects otherwise practically non-mensurable. For the psychologist the sun is becoming an aid in the sounding of the most inaccessible depths of human personality through the shadows which it casts in symbols. By these shadows the Middle Ages hoped also to grasp the inapprehensible.

One could go on at length to point out similarities between the medieval and the modern quest for knowledge. Until, however, existent groups of specialists become inspired with a desire not only to know thoroughly their fragments of the totality of

human knowledge, but also to understand them in their interrelationships, modern thought will lack that integration through which its prophets may be understood.

IV. ESSENTIAL DUALITY IN SYMBOLISM

THROUGH this very lack of integration in the modern quest for knowledge, multiplicity of symbol now seems a Dark Wood from which escape, even through hell, is a blessing. Relief is sought in the cold clear light beneath which is never meant other than that which literally is said, or if other meaning become expedient, then one definite unchanging significance. If an eagle always represents St. John, and if St. John is represented always (if not in his own form) as an eagle, then all is well. But if an eagle may be St. John or the empire or contemplation in the abstract or a sinner seeking baptism, then symbolism becomes apparently a wilderness in which anything may mean anything, in a shape-shifting as lawless as that of any fairy tale.

This feeling results in part from the verbalism of modern learning. The word itself is not the symbol, but merely a symbol of the symbol. As Hugh of St. Victor warned, that which signifies Christ is not the word "leo" but the animal, so also it is not the word "eagle" but the soaring bird that is the source of eagle symbolism. Whatever, wherever seeks to look directly upon the sun is symbolized by the eagle, whether a great saint, an organization, a sinner seeking the waters of baptism, or contemplation itself. Such levels of symbolism are not unconnected, nor are they arbitrary. The discerning reader passes in rapid association from one meaning to the next, finding each enriched through the presence of the others.

The meaning of all human language is given by a grammar which lies back of the words, made by no one yet governing and ordering all that words express. Similarly, the meaning of the language of the universe lies back of its symbols in a nexus of laws beyond individual power of determination, yet governing the message which is perceived and conveyed. Through these laws men may grasp fundamental relationships in the universe long before they can express them in the language of science. The frequent anticipation of the findings of science as it were

by instinct, in some apparent fairy tale or bizarre symbol of primitive man, is a source of constant comment:

What instinct was it led ancient peoples to worship the sun as the giver of all life? Are savages and primitive peoples endowed with strange powers that enable them to anticipate the findings of modern science? These ultra-violet rays now prove to be the life principle of the earth. Without them there would be no vegetation, and therefore no food, no animals, no men.⁹

A study of the function of insight symbolism in human development leaves this no matter of marvel. The hypothesis of a correspondence between the sensible and the supersensible, the finite and the infinite, has given birth to many anticipations of modern science much more surprising than that just noted. In order to understand the functioning of the hypothesis that the infinite or supersensible is represented in the finite and the sensible according to laws of relationship as definite as those which govern mathematical projection,¹⁰ there is necessary only a constant distinction between the literal symbol and the anagoge which gives meaning to all that is symbolized.

It is not true that one thing representing another thing can be, in the strict sense, insight symbol. In dreams and in poetry, unconsciously and consciously, man may symbolize the external events of his life with their effect on him (Dante's personal political level). He may also symbolize the movements and developments of his inner life (Dante's personal moral level). So to interpret the *Divina Commedia* is as it were to psychoanalyze the poem in the simplest sense. Either of these interpretations is of little practical value, whatever its value to the diagnostician.¹¹ In this fact lies the reason for the medieval conviction that the root of reality is not the letter but the anagoge. In the same fact lies the rationale of the demand made by the primary order for a second order of levels. That is, to interpret the *Divina Commedia* as a story of no more than Dante's political

9. Waldemar Kaempffert, "Invisible Light Is Put To Work for Man," article in magazine section of *New York Times* for May 8, 1927.

10. "Chez les scolastiques, l'analogie ne designe nullement une ressemblance plus ou moins imparfaite entre plusieurs êtres; elle porte exclusivement sur des rapports." Bernard Landry, *La notion d'analogie chez St. Bonaventure et St. Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 1.

11. As Dr. Hinkle points out of symbolisms traced merely to their origin.

adventures and doings or of his inner life, lacks the spirit of insight symbolism characteristic of the Middle Ages unless there is first, constant remembrance that his life is directed by the Triune Sun God and has meaning only in that light, and second, application to all humanity. The medieval idea is not inaptly illustrated by cryptographic codes. The solver, indeed, starts with the puzzling, complex, superficially meaningless and confused letter of the cryptogram. The maker, however, started with the solution, whence he then constructed the outward form as expression; and the origin as well as the value of the cryptogram lies in the meaning, by which the letter was determined. Allegory and trope both receive their full significance only with consideration alike of the letter and of the anagoge, between the balance of which they lie.

So eager were men of the Middle Ages in their quest of knowledge through symbolism that philosophic thought centered interest in things not in and for themselves, nor even in and for man, but as revelation of universal unity. The place of fire in thought, for example, was primarily dependent not on its chemical nature as a process of combustion, and not on its economic utility, but on its value as an expression of aspiration to God. Nevertheless, fire was to be studied in all its physical attributes, for only by such knowledge of the letter could man attain to a true knowledge of the figure.

As soon as man ceases to reverence the physical—not as apart from the spiritual, but as the form through which the spiritual manifests itself—there occurs a dichotomy in his life from which springs the necessity of choice between two irreconcilable and eternally warring philosophies: materialism, and a spiritualism divorced from reality and taking refuge in fancy. Insight symbol becomes meaningless.

As soon, on the other hand, as man ceases to reverence the spiritual, coming to feel that the physical act of building a fire, for example, in itself constitutes and accomplishes prayer and divine union, the ruin of the symbolic tradition is imminent.¹²

12. Ozanam has commented on the two methods used in criticism of medieval thinking, according to one of which the argument is from the symbolized against the symbol, according to the other, from the symbol against the symbolized. He says: "Both these methods begin with a vicious circle, since the two elements

It were better to conclude that the act has none save its physical and economic significance.

In this balance between the symbol and the symbolized, for the intellectual tradition of the Middle Ages, lay the solution of the problem of duality which made of human experience such a torture of inconsistency and contradiction. Yet so delicate was this balance and so difficult of maintenance that only through the Logos could it be accomplished. Such was the significance of the Cross. As it has been seen, such was the basis for Dante's solution of all the warring opposites of his experience, the *crux* of the *Commedia*. Had medieval symbolists in general realized, as did Thomas Aquinas and his great teacher Albert,¹³ the necessity of accurate experimental knowledge of the discrete, as the *materia* of their symbolism, a modification of the symbolic method might have paralleled and assisted the development of the methods of science.¹⁴ In the actual course of events, how-

whose incompatibility they assume, to wit, the ideal and the real, on the contrary, form by their union the essence of true symbolism. The robust intelligence of the men of yore readily admitted the presence of two conceptions under one and the same sign. Our analytic habits of thought scarcely allow us fully to grasp either one." Ozanam, *Dante and Catholic Philosophy*, p. 406.

13. It is not meant to infer that Thomas Aquinas was himself of the temperament which is drawn irresistibly to personal experimental inquiry, as were his teacher Albertus Magnus, and the somewhat later founders of the empirical method. But Thomas' philosophy was built around a concept of the infinite, for whose existence and nature he saw proof not in an analysis of human ideas and inner experience, but in the data of the material universe as furnished by the senses—such as the existence of motion, and the individuality of perceived objects. Such a shift in philosophical emphasis was a true harbinger of the new experimental era.

14. There are endless examples of the fact that the symbolism of the mystic, when given free play, leads to scientific truth, even though starting from an untrue conception. For example, medieval astronomy corresponded to the Dark Wood in which the Worm is still the center of the universe. To the mystic for whom the Divine Sun was the center, the apparent position of the physical sun and the physical structure of the universe as then conceived must have required explanation, in order to accord with the laws of analogy. Yet the mystic maintained the centrality of the Divine Sun, because the other laws of his symbolism demanded it; and however difficult of justification was the belief that the earth moved around the sun, no other was consistent with the harmony of his system. That mystics failed to develop a heliocentric astronomy showed their respect for the scientific thought and the physical facts regarded as true in their day; a respect in which they differed from many modern mystics.

Indeed, in this possible interplay with the scientific imagination might be an added validation of the symbolic method, when exercised in accord with its own laws. For example, had the alchemists, following the mystic principle, returned always from contemplation to active analysis and observation, it is possible that the alchemical quest (to which modern chemistry promises essential fulfil-

ever, the medieval symbolist grew to understand less and less the function of the literal level in his symbolism, and modern thought in its revolt has come to consider that the truth of the literal level invalidates all symbolic meanings. That is, each has revered one member of the opposing pair, in disrespect to the other. Both courage and genius are required for the maintenance of that position which politically made Dante a party by himself.

V. MYSTERIA

It is lack of understanding of the letter, with its possible trope and allegory, in its relation to the anagoge, which has restrained modern interest in the Middle Ages to its popular rather than its learned tradition, and modern study of the *Commedia*, to the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*.¹⁵ To one unfamiliar with the anagoge, the *Commedia* must appear static, lacking, except in the *Purgatorio*, any real progression¹⁶—progression being the basis for the usual modern preference for this canticle. To appreciate the *Paradiso*, it has been said, a state of quiescence and submission is necessary. It is true in a sense that progress has no place in the *Paradiso*, which in its representation of infinity, contains the ground of all progress; on the other hand, neither has quiescence and submission, except as one of two opposites which there are unified, where contemplation and action are as it were

ment) might have found earlier an achievement. It is a familiar fact today in scientific circles that some scientists have become so familiar with analogies that they can anticipate experience.

Cf. also Harris, *Spiritual Sense of Dante's Divina Commedia*, p. 160.

15. Even in the current revival of interest in mysticism, there has not been realized the importance to it of its medieval prototype. The medieval prototype itself is known only in the works which constitute its popularization; for example, the work of so little learned a mystic as Rolle has been translated for modern thought from a Middle English rendering in which, moreover, much of the symbolism has been altered. Latin *scripturae*, in which are both the root and the trunk of medieval literature, remain not only untranslated, but to a large extent unknown, while the attempt is made to learn from the scattered leaves. Yet medieval Latin is unique among the languages of the world in being practically univocal. In it a writer can scarcely avoid saying what he means. In this literature there is no such thing as "mystic vagueness." It is little wonder that modern mysticism is not only strikingly lacking in all that was fundamental to the medieval tradition, but often greatly adds to the confusion concerning it.

16. The basis of this difficulty lies in the perennial confusion between *Infinitas* and *Unendlichkeit*.

the inbreathing and outbreathing of the soul, equally exigent to life and to each other.

There is a picture by Henri Martin in the museum at Bordeaux which may well arrest attention for the quality of its movement—*À chacun sa chimère*. Out of the mists of the distance comes a dense procession, in the full blaze of the sun, marching westward in the noonday. In the fore is a monk in habit, gazing upward toward the source of light, and beside him walks a naked wrestler in the games, eyes fixed on the symbol of victory in his outstretched hand. Back in the procession of humanity in its varied preoccupations, appear shapes of angels and of beasts. So, as life progresses into death, the endless transmutation is in progress. Had Henri Martin been attempting an illustration of Dante's *Commedia*, scarcely could he have achieved greater success. Yet that which he would have been representing is the progressive transformation of individuals, with no intimation of the anagoge other than that hinted in his shadows with their suggestion of the sun.

In such a picture as *l'Adorazione dell'agnello*, by the brothers Van Eyck, in which the same metamorphosis is indicated, the quality of dramatic motion is not perceived, because of the attempt to bring together the letter with its symbolism relating to progress, and the anagoge which supplies their meaning. Against the background of the beauty of natural landscape and the suggestion of the spiritual city, there is in progress the worship of the Lamb through whom is mediated the Divine Sun in all his aspects (cross and dove being present, amid various forms of the life he gives). On one side of the fountain of life kneel catechumens, and on the other hand those who, with varied interests as indicated by their postures, reveal their attraction toward sun or *lupa*; while beyond, around the sacrifice, kneel angels. Here the reciprocal forces of God's search for man and of man's search for God are in creative equilibrium. Because this is not understood, that which is presented appears static. Dr. Grandgent has written:

We of the present generation are so devoted to perpetual betterment that a state of perfection is almost abhorrent to us. It is the approach that concerns us, not the attainment. An eternity of absolute but un-

changing and unproductive happiness does not attract mankind now as it did of old.¹⁷

So Henri Martin rested content with a superb detail of the metamorphosis of the approach, perhaps, like Dr. Grandgent, really believing that the attainment could be but an unchanging and an unproductive happiness. To believe, however, that such an attainment could have been satisfying to men of old, though unsatisfying in this generation, is to believe in a complete subversion of human nature. A devotion to perpetual betterment with no tolerance for a state of perfection was, to the initiate in the symbolic tradition, a mark of immaturity. Only with some degree of attainment did adult activity begin. It was the primal force of creativity in the anagoge which caused the symbols that approached it most nearly, to manifest themselves in the simplicity of the most elemental symbolism.

Mystery, it will be remembered, St. Chrysostom defined as that which is everywhere proclaimed, but is not understood by those who have not right judgment. He who has never considered things in their interrelationships in the fundamental unity, and he who has never meditated on the nature of the infinite, will have no grasp of reality. But this is not all. The experience of unification is not rare, and in it ultimately is not the greatness of Dante or of anyone else. That which is rare is definition of the experience, the ability with no sense of disappointment, regret, or anticlimax, to return from the supreme vision to the limitations of expression, not merely through suggestive imagery, but likewise in terms of intellectual consistency and of practical action. Than symbolism, culminating in anagoge, there is known no form of expression of greater potency for drama and for progression. It is symbolism which is regarded as arbitrary and not understood in its levels of meaning, which never escapes a static quality.

In modern life perhaps there are none more capable of realizing this truth than those initiates of the secret orders who have been admitted to higher degrees. In this very fact there is much of significance. Not only did the secret orders first come into prominence amid the collapse, through abuse in church and

17. Grandgent, *La Divina Commedia*, p. iii, note.

laboratory, of the medieval tradition, but the whole symbolism of these great orders draws from the same sources of inspiration, finding its unification in the sun, its quest in the Logos. There are, then, close resemblances to the thought with which Dante was familiar: for example, the miracle nine of which the root is the three of the trinity, the symbolization of the points of the compass, the use of symbolic positions as in the Mass, and of symbolic furnishings. Fundamentally, those of lesser progress as in the Middle Ages understand only the moral signification of the ritual forms and ceremonies in which they participate, whereas with admission to the higher degrees there comes usually deeper penetration into the farther levels. It is the existence of the "thirty-third degree" that gives meaning to the symbolic progress in initiation.

It is the dual reverence alike for the inviolability and for the essential peril of the anagoge which has engaged all true symbolists (whether of the tradition of medieval mysticism or of the modern Mason) in the solution of the same problem—the guarding of symbolism from abuse and misunderstandings. Because the center of the life of symbolism in the Middle Ages was on principle open, in the Mass, to all who could perceive, the sole means for avoidance of abuse was warning and education.¹⁸ There is necessary, however, to bring in the atmosphere of the secret order, no recourse to esoteric writings, but only the recall of such a typical medieval preface as:

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost! I charge thee, and I beseech thee . . . whatsoever thou be that this book shall have in possession, either by property, either by keeping, by bearing as messenger, or else by borrowing, that as much as in thee is by will and advisement, neither thou rede it, nor write it, nor speak it, nor yet suffer it to be read, written, or spoken, of any or to any but if it be of such one, or to such one, that hath by thy supposing in a true will and by an whole intent purposed him to be a perfect follower of Christ not only in active living, but in the sovereignest point of contemplative living the which is possible by grace for to be come to in this present life . . . and thereto that doth that in him is, and by thy supposing hath done long time before, for to able him to contemplative living by the virtuous means of active living. For else it accordeth nothing to him.

18. Except among alchemists, who to guard their lives and reputations adopted code.

And over this I charge thee . . . that if any such shall read it, write it, or speak it, or else hear it be read or spoken, that thou charge him as I do thee, for to take him time to read it, speak it, write it, or hear it, all over. For peradventure there is some matter therein in the beginning, or in the middle, the which is hanging, and not fully declared where it standeth; and if it be not there, it is soon after, or else in the end. Wherefore if a man saw one matter and not another, peradventure he might lightly be led into error; and therefore in the eschewing of this error, both in thyself and in all other, I pray thee for charity do as I say thee.¹⁹

In such various sun-illuminated forms as liturgy, cathedral, Grail legend, and the *Divina Commedia*, the Middle Ages gathered up its symbolic heritage. Liturgy has ceased to be the force in daily life that once it was; the cathedral without its drama loses its power; the Grail cycle is a jungle of romances little understood; while the *Divina Commedia* is prized for the moral lessons which may be drawn from it rather by example than through symbolism. All this has resulted from the downfall of the symbolic tradition. Perhaps the secret orders have been right in guarding their symbolism through secrecy.

VI. THE PATTERN OF THE WHOLE

THE ultimate revelation of symbolism is essentially esoteric, as Dante explained at length to Can Grande in his letter of dedication. Insistence on the unspeakable yet dynamic and productive nature of the anagoge has marked both symbolic traditions, that which sought its protection in secrecy and that which strove for self-revelation. In Dante's tradition bound up with essential productivity was expression of the vision beneath the form of beauty, that others might be lured from beneath the spell of the *lupa*.

To reveal anything of the supreme venture into the unknown demands the utmost of symbolism—the central symbolism of the universe in the sun, corrected by the central symbolism of human life in love and marriage, both supported in the inevitable framework of the symbolism of number. Dante in the symbolism of his *Commedia* gave especial attention to the symbolism of number. The poem wherein all the knowable universe

19. Prologue of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. Evelyn Underhill.

was to be set forth in its ultimate relationships as the stage whereon is enacted the drama of life, of necessity in its very structure must bear witness to the mystery of number on which alone depends the harmony of all that is. Not only does Dante tell of number in the very construction of his tercets and his cantos, within the canticles of the *Commedia*, but he renders that number perceptible in the music of his tercets and in the increasing of celestial harmony as he penetrates deeper into reality.²⁰

The deepest mystery of reality is its quaternity, the three of the Trinity plus that on which it acts, while within the ten is the totality of all that is. In Dante's system that produced or expressed by the symbolic meaning of a number was represented by the number's square, and Dante's *Commedia*, which was to be the expression of the totality of reality, was composed of one hundred cantos, the square of the ten.²¹ Again, the life of Christ being central as in scripture, each canticle represents the thirty-three years of Christ's life on earth, which, multiplied by the three of the Trinity, makes ninety-nine, to which then there must be added for the complete expression of reality, the all-pervading One and Nothing. Finally, in the ten divisions of each of the three regions is the miracle nine (whose only root is the Blessed Trinity) plus the fourth. Thus, fittingly, Beatrice as a nine dominates the three realms of Dante's journey to the Beatific Vision, where beyond her he perceives the Ultimate Truth. It is then appropriate that the interpretation should include nine levels, united and summed in one (triune) pervasive anagoge.

Thus, not only does the eternal basis of the universe analyze itself into a threefold Reality, Giver of life, light, and love, and therefore imply the essential "nineness" of the universe of which this threeness is the sole "root"—but the problems of the temporal world demand the solution of innumerable dualities (of which the most familiar are good and evil, pleasure and pain), and in the solution tend to evolve a quaternity in two

20. The closest derivative of mathematics, in medieval thinking, was music. (It is of course true that harmony depends on mathematical ratios between notes.)

21. For the symbolism of ten, cf. pp. 339 ff., also Appendix V, Pt. I, i, and V, Pt. I, ii.

ways, first by setting the universe as a fourth after the Three of the Trinity, second by seeing in written scripture four meanings. Within the Ten is bound up the full significance of the One, the Two, the Three, and the Four. To a symbolist of Dante's caliber such apparent details^{22a} as the number of letters in a word may become significant. In the closing lines of that poem from which the *Commedia* was born, Dante declared his goal to be ultimate communion with her who is *benedetta* (a nine), absorbed in contemplation of him who is *benedictus* (in whom is the ultimate ten of all that is).

Though reality be fourfold and the problem of existence be threefold, the problem of living is twofold, and Dante has declared the aim of his *Commedia* to be practical. The means of relief for humanity in the agony of the tension between Beatrice and Circe, Dante finds in the eternal Logos, Radiance of the Divine Sun, whose symbolism is like a keystone in the *Commedia*. It is the two natures of Christ in their autonomy and their relationship^{22b} which to Dante form the pattern for the solution of the problems inherent in the warring pairs in whose conflict he is involved. Reflecting in the coöperation of their guidance the perfect harmony of opposites in Christ, Virgil and Beatrice guard Dante through the bitter struggle between Guelph and Ghibelline, leading him to solution in a theory of ideal church and empire. The same pattern is the key to the dilemma of free will and mechanism. Moreover, the dual nature of the Incarnate Logos is not only pattern for the compromise of rival claims, but the only possible means of understanding the true relationship of empire to church and philosophy to theology. Finally, the same pattern governs the three phases of the mystic way making of it, like the other stories, a comedy with its initial catastrophe and ominous triumph. Here the stern pattern is shaped partially by the sin of the individual, but even more significantly it is the fruit of his union with the Logos. Of

22a. Details have not been stressed throughout the preceding pages because the object has been to give the broad outlines of Dante's symbolic pattern. Nevertheless, one among innumerable minor points of interest in connection with the dominance of Beatrice as a nine, is that her name ends a line nine times throughout the *Commedia*.

22b. A matter of faith, determined at Nicaea and at Chalcedon.

all these comedies the story of Christ is unique in that, in it, the conflicting pair are in perfect harmony from the beginning. But the whole of this comedy was written through the Word of God solely to resolve the age-long conflict. The cross is inevitably the *crux* of the *Commedia*.

With this solution of the perennial conflict between finite and infinite, is given potentially the solution of all rival claims. On every level the conflict formed by a pair of which the more heavenly or spiritual member, under the frailty of human conditions, tends to encroach on the territory of the more earthly member, receives ideal solution in their harmonization as autonomous in independent spheres. It will be noted, moreover, that those warring pairs which appear on a level pertaining to allegory stand out as distinct from all the rest. They have their places within the realm of history and are enacted in a sphere external to as well as internal to any individual self. The allegorical level of Dante's personal story has reference to the conflict between Guelph and Ghibelline. The three levels pertaining to the symbolism of Christ, which constitute the allegory of the whole of the personal order, refer to the conflicts between divine and human natures, church and state, theology and philosophy, all of which have their setting in history. Finally, in the order which follows as trope, after Dante's personal story and the allegory centering in Christ, the level which is allegorical has reference to the conflict between the suprarational and the rational, revelation and reason. Though they reflect conflicts which are historical, the remaining levels have their setting not in history, but within human minds: their pairs are Beatrice and Virgil,²³ human will and natural law, grace and effort, contemplation and action. If reference be made to the diagrammatic representation of symbolic levels²⁴—or if the reader but write them out for himself, holding to the order of the fourfold method and recognizing that no spatial representation of the

23. As in the story of Christ the conflict was unique in that no disharmony existed within him, his effort being directed to restoring the cosmic harmony between divine and human; so in the personal story of Dante the conflict is unique. Beatrice and Virgil in themselves never conflict; it is within the arena of Dante's life that harmony must be made between his attitudes toward the one and toward the other.

24. Given p. 98.

anagoge is possible other than as a point, perhaps the apex of a pyramid the square base of which is made up by the spatial levels—it will be observed that these allegorical historical levels form a cross in the center of the square. They are thus marked as of special reference to the Incarnate Logos in whom is the meaning both of allegory and of history. The earthly life and suffering of Christ, perfectly presented in the cross, is both pattern for the solution of all conflicts and catastrophes and key to the symbolic pattern of the *Commedia*.

The pattern for the explication of the *Commedia* then becomes one in which all possible interpretations take their appointed places.²⁵ That it should be ninefold seems appropriate alike to Dante's honoring of Beatrice and to medieval thinking in regard to the sources of knowledge and the ways of knowing. Yet the aim of this study in so far as it relates to Dante has been no more to assert a new interpretation than to exhaust the infinite meaning of the *Commedia*, but simply to remind that according to the poet's own words it is only through multiplicity of interpretation that approach to the truth is gained. Any single line of reading unparalleled and uncorrected by many others marked by the same pattern is, like all fractional truths, pernicious. Yet, corrected by the pattern all must be included. By no other method than the polyseme could one in the intellectual

25. As was noted in the preface, a number of interpretations (e.g., the comedy as merely poetical fiction, as symbolizing Dante's political fortunes, his struggle with philosophy and religious faith, the history of church and empire, the moral development of the typical Christian) have been at one time or another suggested and partially elaborated. The elaboration has been undertaken, however, in the main apart from (1) consideration of the implications with which Dante's heritage had weighted the materials of his symbolism; (2) consideration of the method shaped by tradition to his use and employed by him with full intent—according to his own declaration; and (3) recognition of the unification of the multiplex whole dictated by the nature of the medieval search for knowledge. In consequence, (1) even the fundamental opposition of the trinities of light and darkness which forms the background for the entire drama, however interpreted, has been incorrectly grasped (cf. pp. 450 ff.); (2) the various interpretations have not been worked out as mutually corrective in a definite scheme and all essentially true at one and the same time; and (3) the triple strand of the mystic way has not been given its appropriate place in a pattern determined by the bases of the medieval quest for knowledge. In the development of such previously stressed factors as the above there has appeared, furthermore, as central in the whole multiplex pattern an interpretation overlooked in the past perhaps because so obvious, Dante as type of Christ, Logos, and Solar Radiance. Cf. p. 98.

tradition of the Middle Ages have hoped to bring "men from a state of misery to a state of bliss." Such was the verdict of centuries of philosophic conflict in a syncretism formed under the surveillance of the ideal of Roman citizenship by thought from all corners of the world.

VII. TERMINUS A QUO

STRANGELY was completed the *Comedy* of Dante Alighieri, through those stars so potent in his thought, which in the eyes of Beatrice and in the demonstrations of philosophy had inspired his journey and had marked the completion and the promise of each canticle of his vision. Frustrated at every turn and to the last an exile, though in contemplation of the Rose, Dante met his death among those who could see but scattered lights. Born under Gemini and the protection of Venus, on Good Friday entered on his crusade, he died under Virgo on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. As in his vision so in his life he had progressed from paler to truer symbol—from the symbol of Primal Love to the virgin symbol of Divine Power exercised in Mercy, from the foreshadowing of Christ in the divine-human Twins to the full revelation of the Logos in the exaltation of the fiery cross of the sun god.

Not only is the solar cross the pattern upon which Dante's ninefold drama is built, but upon the cross all the elements in his tradition depend. Through the cross of the Logos, in whom is the very existence of insight symbol, was won in the period of syncretism the triumph of the tradition that was to be medieval. In this cross is the solution of all personal problems, as through it is accomplished the union of the great materials of symbolism. Through the radiant Life lived beneath its shadow men were given the fourfold method for the solution of the problems of humanity whose prophets know the way of knowledge as the way of the cross. The cross is the mark of the knight on quest. Inevitably it impressed itself on the medieval comedy—cross against sun's disk yielding, in the poem which aimed to apprehend the whole, a ninefold pattern: nine which is number of the whole circumference and very self ("questo numero fue ella medesima") of Her who mediates the Courtly Love of Heaven;

a ninefold pattern to be interpreted by fourfold method, as the circumference itself is cut by the cross of the Logos.

Yet the vision of the cross was fraught with peril to all who gazed upon it with eyes unstrengthened by long gazing on the sun. Dazzled by its glory, even Constantine had erred, leaving humanity in a darkness which was to last a thousand years, till the coming of the five-hundred-ten-and-five. In this hard riddle, propounded by Beatrice, is perhaps cipher for Dante's title of dedication, *Dominus Kanis Victoriosissimus*,²⁶ given meaning through the ultimate truth "Deus Xristus Vincit, in hoc signo Dux."

The stars, Dante believed, in harmonious expression of the will of the Prime Mover, had arranged for Christ that he, the true Sun God, should be born at the winter solstice, and that his death should be accomplished, through the instrumentality of a legal symbol of the eternal Cross of the Heavens, at the vernal equinox the time of the solar sacrifice. Dante's own star-directed life from birth to death in its very natural setting marked him also as solar mediator. In the fictive passage through the center of the earth was shadowed forth the union and solution within the Threefold Light, Alpha and Omega, of those most antagonistic of all opposites, birth and death, the end and the beginning. The Poet of the Middle Ages, in life as in vision, passed from seedtime to the autumnal equinox of harvest and fruition, symbol of absence and return in accord with the circling of the spheres.

26. *Epistle VIII (X)*, superscription.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I, ii.

TYPES OF ASSOCIATION: DEFINING EXTRINSIC OR ARBITRARY-ASSOCIATION SYMBOL, AND INTRINSIC DESCRIPTIVE SYMBOL

ASSOCIATION may be arbitrary, a kind of shorthand, as is the case on the one hand with symbols of science and with literal language; and on the other hand with personifications, conventional symbols like insignia, and emblems. Whereas in the development of such emblems as are invested with a strong affective factor, perhaps the anchor for hope or the olive branch for peace, there is involved more than invention or arbitrary choice, yet fundamental are such mechanical laws of mind as depend on observation of contiguity and succession. The symbolism is dependent, not on intrinsic or objective similarity, but on extrinsic, often fortuitous association, although the association may be so deeply buried beneath consciousness and so heavily shrouded by emotional tone as to be scarcely distinguishable from similarity.¹

When objection is made to the classification of emblems as arbitrary-association symbols, the reason is that frequently they are felt to have deep appropriateness and powerful emotional connotation. It is true that with the symbol which is purely an arbitrary sign² there is recognized no meaning except through previous agreement to understand by it some definite object or idea. Yet it should not be forgotten that although the artist may find in such a symbol as *epsilon* (ϵ) nothing to capture his imagination, to the mathematician it may hold the highest emotional content, as a result both of its associations since the time the mind of man first used it, and of the fact that it has become an emblem of that unique quantity of which the rate of change is equal to itself, on which the harmony of all natural law depends. Here is a real likeness to those emblems which because of the wealth of their traditional associations or the nobility of that which they denote have great emotional and pictorial value. It remains true, however, with all these symbols that, although they may give atmosphere, they are not intrinsically descriptive. In spite of the subjective nature of all emotional connotations, there is an obvious distinction between the symbolism involved when a sensation or an element of sense data is brought into fortuitous relation with a personal emotion, and that involved when two objects of sense data are compared because of likeness between them. For example, white lilacs and calla lilies have become associated with funerals in the experience of some persons in such a way as of themselves to arouse all the emotions connected with death and grief.³

1. The much-discussed dream symbols of psychoanalysis are frequently of this type, although many depend rather on an objective similarity.

2. It has been said of such symbols: "None of these symbols attempt to produce the original, or have any other meaning than to suggest it. They are signs which have meaning because we agree to understand them beforehand."

3. Here the emotion has attached to itself external objects fortuitously present, but not essentially related to it. Ribot has pointed out that "Joy, sadness, love,

In brief, then, even though at first sight it may seem anomalous to class emblems with the symbols of mathematics and science, yet in reality their origins and their functions within their respective spheres are similar. Arbitrary-association symbolism is to be distinguished by its basis, which is extrinsic, and by its aim and function⁴ which are apt representation, or expression of *multum in parvo*, rather than descriptive enhancement of either symbol or symbolized.

When, on the other hand, the aim and function is enhancement of that which is symbolized, through a comparison of qualities, to give vividness and individuality,⁵ the symbol is to be classed as comparative or descriptive. Basic to the association will be such laws as depend on the observation of similarity and contrast. Here the literary device is typical. The artist uses comparison or descriptive symbol when his interest is in some datum of experience for its own sake, and his desire to communicate his impression of it. Obviously the reality which is described is thought of as being less great, less true in kind (even if not intrinsically) than the figure which is to enhance it. In calling a man a tiger, the intention is to enhance the impression of his ferocity. Although intrinsically superior to the tiger, the man is not greater in tigerhood, he is not a supertiger. Thus, the reality described is less great in kind: the meaning above is neither that the man has all the qualities of the tiger nor that he surpasses the tiger in ferocity. Descriptive symbols have then as basis, an intrinsic likeness rendering possible a comparison, and as aim, the description of something else for the purpose of its enhancement or adornment.

ALTHOUGH objects appearing commonly in these two classes may themselves become or suggest interpretative symbols (see text, pp. 6 ff.), the distinction between them is definite. For example, the sail in ancient watermarks is properly emblem (arbitrary-association symbol) of the Holy Spirit, through its association with the wind.⁶ The wind, however,

hatred, surprise, boredom, pride, fatigue, etc., can each become a center of attraction, grouping representations or events which are devoid of any intellectual interconnexion, but which have the same emotional tinge,—joyful, melancholy, erotic, etc." Ribot, *Essai sur l'imagination créatrice*, 1900, p. 31.

Very different from this is the description of a lady's eyes by comparison with the blue of the sky, or of her lips by the red of the rose. If an emblem is discovered to have a real similarity to that which it signifies, then it really is a descriptive or an interpretative symbol.

4. The fact that many symbols now used conventionally or even arbitrarily, had originally another significance, is irrelevant, since in present usage the aim is that of this class.

5. Johnson says: "A simile to be perfect must both illustrate and ennoble its subject; must show it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it."

6. Cf. Harold Bayley, *The Lost Language of Symbolism*.

is an interpretative symbol of the Holy Spirit, due to such similarity as that expressed in the Fourth Gospel: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Thus, interpretative symbol, like descriptive symbol, is distinguished from arbitrary symbol by the existence of an intrinsic and objective similarity.^{7a}

7a. Brief study of dictionary definitions of symbol brings out these same three types. Of dictionaries, the *New English* (Murray's) is the most thorough in its presentation of definitions of symbol, and although all of the other important dictionaries have been consulted, in them were found no valuable additions to the definitions there listed:

I. (a) "A formal authoritative statement or summary of the religious belief of the Christian church, or of a particular church or sect; a creed or confession of faith."

(b) "A brief or sententious statement; a formula, motto, maxim; occas. a summary, synopsis." (Obsolete.)

Brief analysis will show that symbol, even in this restricted usage, can be discussed according to the classification just given. (For example, the Creed may be either an arbitrary association symbol in the sense of a coat of arms or standard, or insight symbol in that it is considered the most adequate verbal symbol of an inexpressible reality.)

II. (a) "Something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation); esp. a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition; a representative or typical figure, sign, or token; occas. a type (of some quality)."

(b) "An object representing something sacred; spec. (absol.) either of the elements in the eucharist, as representing the body and blood of Christ."

(c) "A small device on a coin, additional to and usually independent of the main device or 'type.'"

(d) "Symbols collectively; symbolisms (rare)."

In this definition is included meanings of symbol belonging to three classifications. In (b), an object representing something sacred is properly insight symbol (specifically, in Catholic usage it differs from other symbols by conveying that which it symbolizes, and in Protestant usage it differs from other symbols by its use in connection with sacred service).

III. (a) "A written character or mark used to represent something; a letter, figure, or sign conventionally standing for some object, process, etc."

Such symbols as the letters of the alphabet, arabic or Roman numerals, astrological signs of the planets, characters denoting chemical elements and compounds, characters denoting operations and quantities in chemistry or in mathematics, characters denoting the faces of a crystal, letters as used in algebra, dots and dashes in the Morse code, etc., are obviously arbitrary-association symbols, although not necessarily so in origin. But cf., e.g., pp. 326, 470, Chap. VI, iv, Appendices V, Pt. I, i and ii (2).

Allegory, as defined by the *New English Dictionary*, is:

I. "Description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance."

II. "An instance of such description, a figurative sentence, discourse, or narra-

When experience of a physical object has suggested a suitable comparison through which to describe it, comparison symbol is used. On the other hand, insight symbol is employed when the physical object^{7b} has suggested something larger and more abstract which that object may help to express. For example, the sight of a river may suggest description of it as a silvery ribbon flung across the green tapestry of the countryside; or, on the other hand, use of it to express man's life flowing like a river from its source to its known yet unknown end. That is, a river may be described by a lesser object such as a ribbon (which still may be superior in the quality compared); or it may be used to express a deeper meaning in such a way that it becomes a symbol of that meaning. In the first instance it is comparison symbol, in the second it is interpretative.

ive, in which properties and circumstances attributed to the apparent subject really refer to the subject they are meant to suggest; an extended or continued metaphor."

III. "An allegorical representation, an emblem."

Although the mark of the allegory may be suggestiveness of resemblance (as in definition I), it may be purely conventional (as in definition III). Allegory as in these definitions, according to the present classification may be of any one of the three types, having as distinguishing mark chiefly the narrative or time element. The dictionary includes, indeed, examples of allegory used in each of the three ways. Cf. also p. 500.

7b. In this discussion there is made no such arbitrary distinction as that (cf. Webber, *Church Symbolism*, pp. 243-244) of confining the word "symbol" to "animals, birds, and inanimate objects" and using the word "symbolic types" when human beings are in question. In the broad sense an insight symbol is any physical object, living being, or event which is used to convey a deeper meaning. Within this general field, however, is a twofold division. A symbol is called a *type* when it gains its symbolic value from some event, historical or supposedly historical (roughly scriptural vs. natural). Types are almost but not quite invariably human beings, since history deals in the main with the deeds and fortunes of human beings. (Cf. pp. 288-291 and n. 149.) Symbols which gain their symbolic value from their nature and invariable activities (e.g., the sun in its daily and yearly cycles, gems with their distinctive properties, animals with their customary habits) are not called types. The author quoted actually uses the terms in these senses rather than according to the distinction stated formally in his book. For example, he states twice that the brazen serpent uplifted upon a tau cross in the wilderness is a "type" of the crucifixion (*op. cit.*, pp. 61, 104). Thus, although types are usually human beings, yet animals and inanimate objects are termed types whenever the symbolic value is connected with a definite event rather than with nature and recurring activities. Similarly symbols which are not types are usually animals or inanimate objects, yet the human body and certain of its parts when used as symbols belong to the non-typical class.

THEORIES AS TO SYMBOLIC CONTENT OF MYTHUS

WHILE a world soberly literal, desiccated by rationalism, was being refreshed by romanticism with its exuberant imagery, and while at the same time conservative minds were holding tenaciously to the literal Bible and a worship purged of idolatrous admixtures, a significant discussion was in progress. Paralleling the philosophic preoccupation with epistemology, was a renewed interest in the source of religious knowledge. Did the beginnings of non-Christian religion lie, as had been understood from St. Paul, in an original and later perverted revelation, or did they lie in the struggle of primitive man toward knowledge and expression of life experience? The first position was taken by such men as Jacob Bryant in England and Creuzer in Germany. On the other hand, scientific and historic foundation was given to the study of mythology by C. Ottfried Müller.⁸ As the adherents of the naturalistic interpretation gained standing, comparative religion, gradually established with a scientific basis, became bold enough to include within the field of its investigation Christianity itself.

Interest soon centered on the irrational aspects of myths, such as the immoral and zoöomorphic elements.⁹ A number of suggestions as to their origin were offered, many of them echoing theories propounded centuries before. Among these, Euhemerism, a theory of some two thousand years' standing, won great popularity¹⁰ and éclat for its daring and novelty. It seemed logical that the gods should have been originally folk kings and heroes.¹¹ Unfortunately, this theory fails to answer the real question as to the origin of the irrational elements in the stories gathered about them.¹² The Euhemerist obviously is right in identifying the central figure of the greatest of modern mythical cycles, the Arthurian, with the petty Celtic chieftain who defended the Welsh fastnesses against the oncoming Anglo-Saxons. The question remains whence came the Grail, Merlin, Morgan le Fay, the ship of Solomon, and many other elements¹³ which, whatever their ultimate origin, are known to

8. C. O. Müller, *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology*. The English translation appeared in London in 1884.

9. It seemed incredible that, unless the hypothesis of a period of insanity of the whole race were to be admitted, peoples could have connected with the beings for whom they felt the highest reverence the forms of even the lowest animals, and immoral acts which would have been censured in any individual. Thus the problem as to the source of Jupiter's love affairs, as well as of the animal forms of Osiris or of Pasht, became acute.

10. It had indeed been popular in the early Middle Ages. St. Cyprian, for example, assumed the king origin of gods.

11. By a kind of extension of this theory, some modern criticism treats folk heroes and leaders as symbolizing tribal groups and movements.

12. "The euhemerists, as Cox expresses it, have rationalized Jack the Giant Killer by leaving out the giants; and have thrown away good myth to obtain bad history." F. C. Prescott, *Poetry and Myth* (New York: Macmillan [1927]), p. 96.

13. These factors scholars like Lang derive from a stage of culture in which

antedate the historical Arthur. Stories that gather around a popular hero present an almost universal similarity of incident and outline.¹⁴

The other theories agree in treating of myth as symbol and close to the origin of symbolism, regarding it as representative of man's earliest attempt at expression of his experience in the endeavor to find beneath it some fundamental truth.¹⁵ There is, however, disagreement as to whether in myth is symbol of physical experience or of an imagined deeper reality glimpsed through it. On the one hand, myth has been thought to symbolize facts observed about the physical universe, such as the behavior of sun, water, winds, and the like, or the more or less conscious impulses of man, such as his nutritional and reproductive desires.¹⁶ On the other hand, myth has been thought to symbolize crude explanations of the origin and development of the universe; or human moral and social struggles; or the psychic and dream life, including intuitions as to life after death; or finally that ill-defined body of experience which is termed mystical.¹⁷ Sponsors of these two groups of symbolic theories have little patience with one another. A myth for them must represent *either* the material experience *or* the philosophical or religious abstraction,¹⁸ that is, its basis must be in arbitrary or descriptive symbolism. These theories have been criticized as crediting the savage with more intellectual curiosity than anthropological study warrants. Myth, therefore, is regarded as formulating legal charters, expressing or justifying social organization, and directing coöperative enterprise.¹⁹ The medieval thinker was spared all such conflict. In accord with his understanding of symbolism and his use of it as interpretative of reality, since every element in man's physical and social experience, whether of the surrounding world or of himself, is symbolic of the infinity underlying all experience, myth is as it were a symbol of the second order: it is man-made expression of an experience, itself by hy-

their rationality was taken for granted. Indeed, the assumption is made that the primitive mind works on different principles from the modern, and psychopathologists are at present pointing out similarities between the thought processes of the mentally diseased and those belonging to the so-called "pre-logical level" of primitive man. Cf., for example, Levy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*, and Alfred Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms of Inner Experience and Thought in Schizophrenia*. Even this as an explanation simply pushes the problem a step farther back.

14. Cf. pp. 108 ff.

15. Cf. pp. 15 ff., 106 ff., 243 ff.

16. Compare such writers as (a) Cox, Nicole; (b) Goldsmith, Freud, Storfer, Crawley. The subject is treated in sec. iv of Chap. I.

17. Compare such writers as (a) Max Müller; (b) Durkheim; (c) Lang, Wallis; and (d) Marie.

18. Although an occasional psychologist has gone so far as to assert that a dream symbol may be at the same time a wish fulfilment and a serious attempt to solve a moral problem. For example, van der Hoop.

19. Theory of Bronislaw Malinowski. It should be noted that not all symbolic theories imply intellectual curiosity or "armchair activity" on the part of the savage.

pothesis symbolic of fundamental truth. Myth thus represents *both* the material *and* the philosophic or religious fact. This fact should be borne in mind by the student of medieval thought.

Closely related to those theories which agree in treating of myth as symbol was the philological hypothesis which gained considerable prominence in the nineteenth century, and is popularly expressed: "A world grown grey has learned to regard the gods as diseases of language, conceived it may be in fevers of fancy, perhaps originally they were but deified words."²⁰ Lang has given a summary: "People had originally said something quite sensible—so the hypothesis runs—but when their descendants forgot the meaning of their remarks, a new and absurd meaning followed from a series of unconscious puns." Basic to philological theories is the well-known fact that the physical (including verbal) embodiment of an idea or emotion lasts longer than the meaning originally conveyed. It has been said that a general idea becomes stable in the word which symbolizes it. This stability is, however, relatively transient. Indeed, the word serves a little as a portfolio, which succeeding generations choose to employ as covering for ever changing material.

Critical discussion of this last theory brings in a further implication in the definition of insight symbolism as opposed to symbolisms of the other two types. In myth regarded as insight symbol there is represented not only both the material and the philosophical or religious fact, but also a definite relationship between them in a universal pattern. For this reason, although the word be considered but a portfolio which succeeding generations choose to employ as covering for ever changing material, there is a perfectly definite evolution governing the materials so included. As a result there is never falsification, but always inclusion and fuller elucidation of earlier meanings. If, on the other hand, myth be regarded as fundamentally arbitrary or comparison symbol in contradistinction to insight symbol, such is not the case. This is the second point to be borne in mind by the student of the medieval symbolic tradition for which the handling of its heritage in mythus constituted a major problem.

20. Edgar Saltus, *Lords of the Ghostland* (New York: Brentano's, 1922), p. 7.

APPENDIX II, i.

COMPARISON OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN ASTRONOMICAL SYSTEMS¹

	<i>Actually Seen</i>	<i>Apparent Motions</i>	<i>Medieval Explanation</i>	<i>Modern Explanation</i>
THE SKY	Daily revolution, noticeable only at night.	East to West in 24 hours.	Rapid revolution of great sphere, the Primum Mobile, around earth.	Daily rotation of earth on its axis.
FIXED STARS	No apparent change other than above; records show slow retrograde motion.	East to West 24 hours. West to East in 36,000 years.	Sphere containing stars fails completely to follow Primum Mobile; a lag or W. to E. motion.	Precession of the equinoxes: motion of solar system among stars.
ZODIAC (The "signs" are star groups within zodiac.)	Sun, moon and planets move among stars, but always within a belt extending from 8° north to 8° south of the ecliptic. Ecliptic forms angle of 23° with celestial equator.	Winter solstice sun 23° south. Vernal equinox sun on equator. Summer solstice sun 23° north. Autumn equinox sun on equator.	Sun, moon, planets, each fixed on a sphere. Spheres fail completely to follow P.M. around earth: lag more than stars: motion vs. star background.	Revolution of earth and planets. Sun changes apparent direction. Orbit of earth inclined to that of sun 23°.
SATURN	Changes position in reference to the fixed stars.	East to West 24 hours. West to East in 40 years.	Lag of sphere next within that of the stars (around earth).	Revolution of Saturn around sun in 40 years.
JUPITER	As above.	East to West 24 hours. West to East in 12 years.	Lag of sphere next within that of Saturn (around earth).	Revolution of Jupiter around sun in 12 years.
MARS	As above.	East to West 24 hours. West to East in 2 years.	Lag of sphere next within that of Jupiter (around earth).	Revolution of Mars around sun in 2 years.
SUN	As above.	East to West 24 hours. West to East 1 year.	Lag of sphere next within that of Mars.	Revolution of earth around sun in 1 year.
VENUS MERCURY	As above, but always within 45° of sun, ² being either Evening or Morning Stars.	West to East 7 months. West to East 3 months.	Lag of spheres within that of Sun. Motion of planet on epicycle upon sphere.	Revolution around sun with orbits <i>within</i> that of earth.
MOON	"Rises" nearly one hour later each night and near different stars.	East to West 24 hours. West to East 28 days.	Lag of sphere next within that of Mercury (motion around earth).	Revolution of moon around earth in 28 days.

APPENDICES

1. For purposes of calculation, accurate results can be obtained with either system. The numbers in the above table are approximate only.

Fresh insight into the apparent behavior of the heavenly bodies in the detail with which it was analyzed in medieval times may be gained from the *Elementa astronomica* of Alfraganus, which Dr. Moore among others has stated to have been Dante's chief astronomical source. Of its thirty chapters, four are occupied with the spherical shape of heavens and earth, the centrality and minuteness of the earth, and the dual motion of the stars, all of which every twenty-four hours, are carried in a complete east to west revolution by the heavens, in regard to which they nevertheless slowly recede west to east. Another six chapters are concerned with the "climates" of the habitable earth, and with the relation of the length of day and night to the time of year and the distance from the equator (discussed by Dante in *Convivio*, 3, Chap. V, where it is of interest that he names the poles *Mary* and *Lucia*). The next seven chapters deal with the eight spheres (the earth is the strict center only of the eighth sphere—fixed stars—the others being slightly eccentric); and with the special motions of the stars. The longitudinal (east-west) motions of sun, moon, and fixed stars are first considered, then that of the five "wandering stars" (that is, planets). This involves an analysis of the meaning of the occasional backward (retrograde) motion of the planets in respect to the Signs of the Zodiac. One chapter deals with the latitudinal (north-south) motions of sun, moon, fixed and wandering stars.

The succeeding chapter lists the fifteen stars of greatest magnitude by their Arabic names, and states that the total number of stars is 1022. The next lists the division of the zodiacal circle into twenty-eight "houses of the moon," favored by the Arabs; after which two chapters deal with the size and distance from the earth of the heavenly bodies, and the next with rising, setting, and passage of the meridian. Further subjects for consideration are the "occultation" of stars by the rays of the sun; the waxing and waning periods of the moon; the "conjunctions" of planets with the sun; and the correction to be made in relation to eccentricity of the inner spheres. The final three chapters deal with eclipses of moon and of sun, and of the length of time elapsing between eclipses. This treatment, although untrue as to basic scheme in space, is far more detailed as to the appearances, the data on which astronomical knowledge is founded, than is the (schematically truer) knowledge possessed by the modern non-astronomical student.

Cf. Alfraganus, *Il 'libro dell' aggregazione delle stelle*.

2. Mercury is seldom visible, since always within 25° of the sun and therefore obscured by its light. Cf. *Par.*, v, 129.

MATERIALS OF SYMBOLISM AS THEY VARY IN THE TRADITIONS OF AGRICULTURAL AND NOMADIC PEOPLES

THE wide prevalence of solar imagery indicated in Chapter III is less evident to the student of comparative mythology than at first thought one would expect, and has been subjected frequently to well-warranted questionings.¹ The situation of the inquirer into problems of symbology resembles that of the explorer in a forest which is sometimes a dense jungle. That which first demands his attention is the varied foliage and fruit, and the scarcely less varied types of growth. Moreover, that which is first explained to him by the native, at home in the forest, relates likewise to this luxuriant overgrowth. The very character of solar symbolism, as root and life of lesser imageries, results in its obscuring of itself.

Just as few Christians are conscious of the solar implications of their religion,² not merely as origin away from which it has developed, but as the unifying power which has ordered its ritual and made possible its most philosophical conceptions, so it is frequently with the savage. This was expressed effectively by a modern writer of fiction, in a conversation between a maiden educated by a Mayan priest, and a youth of the Church of England. The latter, with a keen sense of his religious superiority, questions her as to whether the sun, which plays such a rôle in the religion of the Mayans, forms also a large part of her own religion. Her response is simply to assert that the sun plays a large part in the religion of everybody, and to refer him to his prayer book, especially in regard to the time of Easter.³

Man has hesitated to leave records of the deepest probings of his thought into the mystery of reality, just as he has been loath to name God in anything but vaguely suggestive code. He has been more free in the handling of superficial symbolisms. This quality of the human mind has complicated the task, not only of him who would penetrate below the horizon of history, but also of the student of primitive tribes today. The alien will tell first the exceptions, not the rule, in his religious life, and superficialities of his symbolism rather than its abiding presuppositions.⁴ Not only this, but as has appeared already minds of

1. "The worship of the sun has been by no means so widely diffused among primitive peoples, as on purely abstract grounds, we might at first sight be tempted to suppose." Sir J. G. Frazer, *Worship of Nature*, I, 441.

2. Cf. Chap. III, Pt. I, iii, also Chap. VI, i.

3. As the story proceeds, the youth, for the first time in his life, and in a tense situation, being required to spend a whole night out of doors in complete darkness, discovers deep within his own nature the significance of solar worship. Just before dawn, he hears "loud cries and chantings and intoned prayers . . . to let the sun rise once more. Light, light, the universal cry—the cry that a short time since had almost broken from his own lips." From Alice Duer Miller, "Sunrise," in *Saturday Evening Post*, March 27, April 3, and April 10, 1926.

4. One may wonder how true an idea of the deeper presuppositions and phi-

lesser grasp will worship creatures near at hand, which their instinct and their leaders have made precious through some pale analogy to, or symbolic representation of, great truths in the fundamental mystery. Although conscious that such mystery exists, it is for them either inexpressible or axiomatic. True apprehension and use of sun symbolism demand sufficient mentality to desire and to attempt a real unification of experience. Sir J. G. Frazer has well said:

Whatever the reason may be, a solar religion appears to flourish best among nations which have attained to a certain degree of civilization, such as the ancient Egyptians, and the Indians of Mexico and Peru at the time when they were discovered by the Spaniards. . . . A higher degree of intelligence is needed to ask whence comes the marvellous uniformity of those operations of nature whereof the courses of the heavenly bodies are at once the most easily observable and the most splendid examples.⁵

Many attempts have been made, during the conflict of the sun-sex hypotheses, to broaden each by giving as its basis in the external world the whole firmament in its motion rather than simply the sun, and in man's inner experience all of his fundamental instincts rather than sex alone. The fact still remains that the sun seems to be the most appealing center for the organization of external experience, and similarly, although hunger and self-preservation may be the more fundamental, these are more frequently in imagination associated with and subordinated to sex, than given in the primary position.

Whatever be the reasons, even where in the mythology the god of the heavens is recognized as ultimate,⁶ and the sun god is but one

losophy of the Christian religion was obtained by the Chinese student who, on his visit to a Christian chapel service, asked of a chance worshiper the meaning of the song to "God's little goat" (O Lamb of God, I come). Through its habit of proselytizing, Christianity has acquired in the matter of self-expression a decided advantage over primitive religions; yet it is fairly safe to assume that the Chinese inquirer from the minister himself would receive but a dissertation on ethics, or an admonition to model his life on the noblest life ever lived on earth, instead of an answer to his real question as to what Christians thought to be the nature of the universe and the meaning of existence. Were Christians now as little able to voice abstract and exact spiritual concepts as was man in the early days of civilization, one hesitates to conceive the travesty of religion which this inquirer might have presented to his people as the result of his researches into goat worship among Christians. Mr. Kipling, in *Kim*, has given an illustration of such a misunderstanding, in the meeting of the saintly Tibetan lama with two British clergymen. One of these ministers of God was trained in symbolisms, and understood the significance of the lama's search for a river that should wash away sins; yet the other, able to see in it nothing but insanity or imposture, desired to have him put under guard.

5. Frazer, *op. cit.*, I, 441-442. Cf. Renan's statement. "Before religion had reached the stage of proclaiming that God must be put into the absolute and ideal, that is to say, beyond this world, one worship alone was reasonable and scientific: that was the worship of the sun." Renan, *Dialogues et fragments philosophiques*, translated in Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, p. 501.

6. Cf. Ouranos and Dyaus pitar. Not infrequently descriptions of a god leave

among many children, he is the fated child, and invariably accedes to power. Sometimes he is the favorite son, the only son, the chosen representative of the gods,⁷ and sometimes by continuous access of strength he at last slays his father and usurps his throne—indeed, not merely his throne, but his personality. The tendency has been to regard the revolving firmament as the dwelling of the god rather than as itself a more fundamental entity. The god is more likely to be a hero represented by the sun, dwelling in a great house, the sky (which, during his absence at night, revolves, since the apparent motion of the heavens is visible at night), than to be represented by the overarching sky itself.

Study of the origin of religions, however, reveals facts which in this connection are significant. Among nomadic peoples, the sky father and earth mother⁸ are more likely to appear dominant. Among herdsmen and hunters, frequently abroad at night, it is the cosmic phenomena of storm and sunshine, fair weather and foul, and the motion of the heavens visible at night, which claims most attention, making possible consideration of the sun-storm combination as expression of the sky god himself. Night and winter for the hunter are not, as for the agriculturist, times of enforced idleness and dependence on the harvest of the preceding summer, but conditions favorable to his livelihood. Certain animals are abroad only at night. Conditions of storm unfavorable to the agriculturist are favorable to the fisherman. Winter is the time for trapping, and its storms may facilitate the capture of animals. It is of significance that these peoples are slow to develop a refined or philosophical conception of immortality, while in their thinking there persists tension between the one and the many, leading to duality with but very late solution in ideas of trinity.⁹ The supreme example lies in Hebrew monotheism, with its tardy reconciliation of its ideas in regard to individual and national continuance of life. Although even here sun symbol is frequent, it but late becomes important in unification.

On the other hand, agricultural tribes whose attention follows eagerly the changing seasons and their relation to seedtime and harvest soon feel the power of the dramatic career of the Lord of the Heavens, and advance quickly from fanciful tales of quest and rebirth to an increas-

one at a loss as to whether he is sky god or sun god. For example, many of the terms applied to Zeus, on which Mr. A. B. Cook relies to establish his identity as sky god, seem even more naturally to apply to a sun god. (Name "Bright One" from root meaning to shine, term "rays of Zeus" for light of day, etc. Cf. A. B. Cook, *Zeus, a Study in Ancient Religion*, pp. 1-68.)

7. For example, Marduk, to whose election as representative of the gods reference has been made, was called "firstborn son," "only-begotten," and "only Son." Mithra and Vishnu-Krishna are other examples. It is invariably these sun gods who become saviors or incarnate.

8. For example, the first ceremonial painting of the main rite of the Navajo (Mountain Chant) represents Sky-Father and Earth-Mother as the begetter of all things.

9. Cf. pp. 118 ff.

ingly abstract conception of eternal life. As thought progresses toward definition, the sun appears as giver of life on earth (realized first perhaps in connection with the growth and ripening of fruit, but soon generalized), giver of light which makes possible all noble activity, and source of heat, associated with which there is an element both of beneficence and malignity as in the storm aspect are both the beneficence of life-giving rain and the terror of the lightning flash. Consideration of the sun both in his nature and in his career shows him to be lord of vegetation, lord of storm, and lord of the underworld itself. Through the manifold nature and career of this glorious being, man finds the supreme expression of his every experience. While the worshiper of the sky god must wander in the wilderness of polytheism, able only through wearing discipline to preserve the supremacy of the unity, the worshiper of the sun god finds taken up into his deity all the creatures of which humanity has stood in awe, as well as all the human heroes whom it has worshiped. With him, the inevitable process of apotheosis leads not to a devastating polytheism, but to a constructive theory of the god's incarnation for the sake of men, as the *one* in its struggle against the *many* readily finds solution even of duality, through the solar trinity.¹⁰

For all the stable grandeur of the skies, the sun exhibits a persistent vitality far more potent to supply dynamic in the thought of man.¹¹ Meditation limited to the overarching heavens may well supply such impetus to living as is demanded by the rock on the hillside, but man has found his life harrowingly subject to sudden change, too stirring a vibration between comedy and tragedy, not to seek a more dramatic inspiration for his living. Though he find necessary, likewise, such stability as characterizes the heavens, he finds its values in the character of the usurper sun, through the development of some such concept as that of Ananke, the inevitable destiny (that power which holds the sun to his course),¹² or through the unity back of the trinity in the sun's nature. There would appear, then, to be truth both in Cox's observation that the deities of the wandering Semites were cosmical, whereas those of the more settled Aryans had been phenomenal, and in Nicole's assertion that the sun myth is basic both in Aryan and Semitic religions.¹³

For man's first differentiation of the indefinite heterogeneous homogeneity of his experience, sun or sky may equally well assume power over the multitudinous demons of the natural world—which one will become central in his thought may depend on the manner of his life. In the general rendering coherent of life experience, that is, in the progress toward definite homogeneous heterogeneity, philosophic thought de-

10. Cf. Chap. III, Pt. I, iii, Chap. IV, Pt. I, i.

11. Cf. the myth pattern, discussed on pp. 108 ff.

12. Cf. Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

13. Nicole states that JHVH is an old god with the attributes of other gods added. Among all the rest, he is the god of light.

mands some unification of the values of both of these. To this fact the gradual usurpation by the sun god of the throne of his father and the inclusion within himself of the strongest elements in the sky god's personality, bear witness, as does the unanimous development of trinities by each of the great cultural traditions.

Among the Hindus the great impersonal god of the skies was Brahma and the gloriously personal god of the sun was Vishnu. Yet there was demanded a religion which contained the possibility of becoming general, the trinity of Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, while an ultimate Brahma remained in the background as a symbol of the all-pervading unity.¹⁴ Similar has been the development of all of the great ethnic trinities.

Similar facts are to be noted in the development of sex symbolism, the complement of solar symbolism. That which becomes most deeply impressed upon the mind of the nomad is veneration not of fertility, but of the power of killing. His livelihood depends not on giving life, but on taking it. Plants and animals breed by themselves. Some years there are plenty, some years not enough, but to this very day, it never occurs to the primitive hunter to regulate the supply by breeding and care.¹⁵ Moreover, in the human community that which is demanded is men of warlike temper, hardy and keen to kill. Women become temptations only too likely to sap man's strength, leaving him unprepared for the moment of sudden danger. Their social position is thus one of degradation, unless, as frequently becomes the custom with the progress of culture, they are vowed to virginity to tend the sacred fires of the war god.¹⁶ God comes to be revered not as creator and life giver, but as mighty Ruler and dealer of death—the Lord, the Lord of Hosts is his name.

When such nomadic tribes as the Beni Israel are brought into contact with agricultural peoples in a fertile land, the sudden shock to their moral code finds immediate expression in the attempt to exterminate these depraved and effeminate worshipers of fertility. As a matter of fact, just as the hunter to live must kill, the agriculturist to live must give life, and his highest ideal becomes that of fertility in regard to plant, animal, and the human family itself. His deity becomes the Life Giver, frequently in female form (cf. the Great Mother, and other goddesses of fertility). Since woman with her lure to the fulfilment of sex desire and her nourishment of the child both before and after birth,

14. Cf. Paine, *Ethnic Trinities*; R. E. Hume, lecture at Union Theological Seminary.

15. The pastoral stage of herd keeping is a transition from hunting to agricultural life, and contains elements of both.

16. For example, the Vestal Virgins of Rome, vowed to the service of the sacred flame of Mars. Even among Indians, the Sun Dance is formally initiated by a woman who must be a virgin, and who, if proved not to be such, is slain by the warriors for polluting a religious ceremony.

becomes the embodiment of the ideal on which all life depends, religion urges not to virginity, but to fruitfulness.¹⁷ Its symbolisms become those not of cataclysm, but of generation, in which connection the generative organs themselves, endowed with apparently independent life, become the objects of special veneration. Their association is not with weakness and effeminacy, but with strength and prosperity; not with pleasure and sin, but with the mysterious power of life incarnate in them. The advent of the nomad with his keenness for death and his morbid perversion in regard to the mysterious source of life, can be regarded by the worshiper of fertility as nothing less than demoniacal. As a matter of fact, a different sex code on the part of either agriculturist or nomad, without a corresponding change in life conditions, would threaten the extinction of the race.

Out of the conflict of the two, however, may be born the love ideal, as it was for Israel, tenderly loved bride of the great JHVH. Whereas with the agriculturist the tendency was to stop with the fact of fertility, the nomad, still horrified by such an attitude, developed none the less a sex ideal, characterized in his case by the devotion and companionship of man and woman.

In the medieval tradition, the compromise between agriculturist and nomad wrought in the period of syncretism, found expression in solar symbolism dominated by the attitude of the agriculturist and sex symbolism dominated by the attitude of the nomad, each ultimately enriched and given balance, beneath the levels of conscious thinking, by the opposing ideal. Such were the materials of symbolism out of which Dante wrought his ideal of the love of the Court of Heaven. In the learned tradition of the Middle Ages, the symbolism of sex is readily considered as the sublimated complement of the symbolism of the sun. Only in hidden byways lurked the magician and the witch, terrible and tragic reminders of the agricultural insistence on the sacredness of fertility,¹⁸ in a society dominated by the Lords of War.

17. Cf. the discussion on this whole matter in John Langdon-Davies, *A Short History of Women*, New York, 1927. He tells of a savage tribe, for example, who, when asked by a missionary for a word for *Virgin*, to use in the translation of the Gospel into their language, suggested *Nolumba*, which means a woman who has lost her characteristic virtue. The natives were "quite incapable of imagining that 'virgin' could be anything but an opprobrious epithet; the great god Bunzi believes too strongly in the virtue of fruitfulness." *Op. cit.*, p. 111.

18. As Payne-Knight, in the nineteenth century, and Miss M. A. Murray, more recently, have shown, the worship of the generative powers in the Middle Ages, though furtive, had considerable vigor. Statues of priapus are to be found at Aix, Nîmes, etc. In Martene and Durand, *Vet. scrip. ampl. coll.*, t. 7, p. 35, is printed an eighth-century ecclesiastical tract against incantations before the fascinum (phallus). Adam of Bremen, eleventh century, relates that the Teutonic Freya was represented in Upsala with an immense priapus.

For a discussion of the witch cult, viewed as an organized religion of the worship of fertility, cf. Margaret A. Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*.

BASIS OF SYMBOLISM IN FUNCTIONAL TRUTH OF LETTER

FOR all the unanimity with which insight symbolism came to be sponsored in different schools of thought, it became subject of bitter controversy as a result of a misunderstanding which has persisted to the present day. The assumption was made by those alien to the development of the philosophy of insight symbolism¹ that in the matter of interpretation only two possibilities existed, those two possibilities being diametrically opposed. Either the literal truth is absolute, exact in itself, and of sole importance, or the literal sense is a deliberate veil for hidden meanings. It cannot be too frequently reiterated that these to the insight symbolist² are not oppositions, but two aspects of one truth. The literal sense, even though true, can never be exact and adequate in itself, and similarly it must always be a medium through which deeper meanings may be perceived.

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth."³ "His hand is stretched out still."⁴ "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."⁵ Thinking men were not so naïve as to believe the infinite prime mover of the universe actually possessed eyes, hands, and feet as men were familiar with eyes, hands, and feet. Even greater *naïveté* would be required of him who would interpret literally the Greek religious myth.⁶ The most literal-minded of theologians hastens to explain that "hands, feet, arms, eyes," and other physical organs as referred to Deity, are figures not to be taken as literally true. On the other hand the symbolist declares them to be not figures literally untrue, but figures conveying the supreme truth of analogy.⁷ Analogies, moreover, are defined by the symbolist in

1. For the relationship of insight symbolism to the personification type of allegory of which Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War* are the household examples, cf. pp. 278 ff.

2. Cf. Appendix I, ii.

3. II Chron. 16. 9, and Zech. 4. 10.

4. Isa. 5. 25; 9. 12; 10. 4; 14. 27.

5. Nah. 1. 3.

6. Cf. the argument of Arnobius, an early Christian writer, against the common pagan ascription of male-ness to the deity.

7. Father Poulain explains analogy: "With the mystics, the words to *see* God, to *hear*, and to *touch* Him are not mere metaphors. They express something more; some close analogy. . . . By metaphor, we mean either a distant or a restricted resemblance to a single quality; as when we speak of a warrior as a *lion*, or say that we are recipients of a *torrent* of abuse. Analogy, on the other hand, is a very close resemblance, as when we say that God has intelligence, will, justice, etc. Primarily, it is true, the words are confined to the mental representation of things that we have observed in the creature. Then we apply them to God, although they are not verified in Him in exactly the same way. . . ." *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, p. 90 and footnote.

Cf. also the medieval statement: "All the statements made about God that imply body have some hidden meaning and teach us what is above us by means of something familiar to ourselves, with the exception of any statement concerning the bodily sojourn of the God-Word." John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 11.

accord with the biologist's formula: "cases in which organs have identity of function, but not identity of essence or origin." Insight symbols are functionally, not necessarily literally true, but they are true functionally as well as figuratively, that is, it is only through study of true functional relationships of such symbolisms in the natural universe that any grasp may be gained of their figurative sense.

Like the sun, to whose rays the whole world is exposed, the eyes of the Lord pass to and fro throughout all the world, having vision not only of the eternity of things as they are, but also of the intimate life of each soul, a power which, like the sun, he expresses in man's world through earthly agency.⁸ Like the sun, the Lord is ruler of the natural world and lord of men, becoming their suffering redeemer and their judge—his hand is stretched out still. Like the sun, he is present to the whole world, of speed surpassing that of the wind, bringing aid and punishment, and extending even his life to men through prayer and sacrament—his way is in the whirlwind and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

A writer of the tradition⁹ placed emphasis on the true and necessary function of the literal meaning (even where the literal statement is not necessarily true). The lion, he illustrates, represents Christ; not, however, as a matter of secret convention, by which the word *leo* denotes Christ. On the contrary the word *leo* must always denote a certain animal. It may represent Christ never in itself, but only through this literal signification. "Intelligit igitur quod cum leo Christum significare dicit, non nomen animalis, sed animal ipsum significat"—"It should be known therefore that when Leo is said to signify Christ, not the name of the animal, but the animal itself signifies him." Thus there would be no advantage in substituting for allegorical method a plain statement of meaning, although such is likely to be the recommendation of the critic in response to the assertion that allegory means *something other* than what is said in literal terms. Because of the unity of essence underlying all things, the animal means something in regard to Christ that all the abstractions which might be used to convey the same thought, nevertheless could not quite convey, since they lack the associations from all aspects and levels of racial experience which are called into play by the word "lion."

The literal truth, however, in any other sense than of truth in func-

8. For example, Boethius says: "Homer with his honeyed lips sang of the bright sun's clear light; yet the sun cannot burst with his feeble rays the bowels of the earth or the depths of the sea. Not so with the creator of this great sphere. No masses of earth can block his vision as he looks over all. Night's cloudy darkness cannot resist him. With one glance of his intelligence he sees all that has been, that is, and that is to come. He *alone* can see all things, so truly he may be called the *sun*." (There is a pun involved in the original Latin, between the words *alone* and *sun*.)

9. Hugh of St. Victor.

tion, is of minor importance.¹⁰ The theology of Dante's tradition has never had a theory of the literal truth of the Bible¹¹ and has never been disturbed when this or that aspect of its literal meaning has been proved contrary to the highest that is known.¹² Social development under the empire, enlightened by the church, guides man in his understanding alike of the message of scripture and of the message of nature. The church under the guidance of Christ's sacramental life, may decide for the literal-minded which part of scripture is to be interpreted literally, and which figuratively only; but in this there is never conflict with that far more important truth, that the literal meaning is essential, and forever functionally true as basis for the insight interpretation.

Although it is not the present purpose to maintain that there were none who were literal-minded among medieval symbolists, it is true that among those in sympathy with the development of the tradition which Dante used, no question of "either—or" could arise in connec-

10. Cf. this typical utterance of a modern Roman Catholic scholar:

"It is undeniable that the literal meaning and truth of the Old Testament is today clouded by the difficulties raised even by a moderate historical criticism. To what degree the Old Testament is historical truth of the letter can only be decided, if at all, by the consensus of competent scholars. Without anxiety we may abandon to them a question devoid of religious significance. The mystical interpretation is the primary sense intended by the Holy Spirit . . . we can leave the minor matter of the letter to the solution of future scholarship. Whatever be the final verdict, if a final verdict be attainable, on the literal sense of the Old Testament writers, the sense of the Divine Author, the mystical or typical sense, remains unaffected. And it is this sense which possesses religious value for us. It is certain from authority and reason alike, that every event, whether or no it be historical, is certainly an allegory, that the Old Testament history is a series of inexhaustibly significant types of Christ and His mysteries. Christ and His mysteries are thus the substance of the Old Testament." Watkin, *Philosophy of Mysticism*, p. 364.

A similar spirit pervaded medieval utterances, though less explicit, since biblical criticism was not then to the fore. But cf. Origen as quoted on p. 265.

11. Catholic persecutions for heresy have been in all cases not because the literal sense of scripture was contradicted, but because definite church doctrine was thought to be imperiled; as could be shown by an analysis of cases. Cf. also p. 264 n. 69.

12. "There is no trace in Dante of that crude anthropomorphism which even in our own day cried out against the recognition of Evolution as an agency in the creative or providential energy of God, as being a doctrine which could 'not be taught without arrogancy and impiety.' Dante would not think God dishonoured by the discovery or by the belief that he had chosen some *modus operandi* other than that of an actual *δημιουργός* for the execution of his purposes. We have seen that even in the operations of creative power attributed immediately and directly to him no outward act is assumed, it was 'solo intendendo,' merely by an act of thought. . . . I am not one of those who seem to think that Dante was infallible . . . or that he anticipated . . . the discoveries of Copernicus, Newton, or Harvey, still less those of Darwin. But I do say there is nothing in his theory of Creation which would constitute such a barrier to his acceptance of some form of evolutionary teaching such as we have seen operating in our own day." Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante, Fourth series*, pp. 164-165.

tion with symbolic levels of meaning. Beatrice is not *either* a real girl *or* a symbol of Love, but a real girl *and* a symbol of Love *and* of the Holy Spirit *and* of the Divine Sun.

The symbolist maintains the supreme truth in function at the same time of all these levels of emphasis. The fact that in a passage which is to be understood figuratively the literal meaning generally is assumed *ipso facto* to be untrue, is the result of different understandings of symbolism. To return to the definitions given in the introductory material, with arbitrary and comparison symbols there can be no question of literal truth or untruth. But the insight symbol is by definition in some sense true in itself, as a basis for the truth of all its meanings. With insight symbol it is not a matter of saying one thing and meaning another, as in cryptograms and secret codes. "Either—or" comes more easily to the adolescent mind than "both—and" but "both—and" states the truth of traditional insight symbolism.

There was question, especially in regard to the Bible, as to which of two possibilities on the literal plane should be accepted; but this question was never vital in the method. Whether Beatrice, for example, was a real girl, or that which in life experience fulfilled her function, such as, for example, an ideal of Dante's imagination—whether the literal level was literally or only functionally true—whichever of these two alternatives were accepted, the truths, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical, remained unaffected. Thus Dante, in his *Divina Commedia*, though it be fiction, may hope to fulfil that same mission which was the mission of scripture, to bring men from a state of misery to a state of bliss.

APPENDIX IV, Pt. I, ii.

IMAGERY OF THE SUN-STORM GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN the synoptics and Acts, the conception of the sun-storm god is prominent as a means of expression,¹³ and was particularly suited to the incidents in the life of Christ which were to be noted. For Matthew, Christ's birth is announced by a star in the east, and for Luke his coming is compared to the dawn:

The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Luke 1. 78-79.

Again, in all of man's experience there is no symbol with so great power to express the glory of the Transfiguration as that of the sun; and similarly the subjective experience of Christ's followers at the time of the Crucifixion belonged to the realm of the storm god.

Mark, in his account of the Transfiguration, gives but a hint of the

13. Cf. pp. 255 ff., also Count Goblet d'Alviella, *La migration des symboles*.

symbolism (Mark 9. 3) which Luke elaborates (Luke 9. 29) and Matthew makes explicit:

Jesus . . . was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. Matt. 17. 2.

All three, moreover, associate with this scene the cloud out of which comes the divine voice, in Luke's account striking terror into the hearts of the disciples. (In this connection the voice from the cloud, after the Fourth Gospel account of the raising of Lazarus, should be remembered for the association with thunder [John 12. 28-29].) Similar imagery describes for Luke Paul's experience on the Damascus road:

Suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. . . . And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. Acts 22. 6-11.

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me. Acts 26. 13.

This description, making the sun a mere object of comparison, indicates the significance of the spiritual experience as far greater than can be conveyed in any physical terms.

In the description of the Crucifixion the imagery of the sun god is still implicit, as opposed by the more tumultuous aspects of the power of darkness (Luke 22. 53). The Parousia is described in the traditional terms of Hebrew eschatology through language deriving from the storm-god aspect.¹⁴

Such description as this has led to the declaration that the whole story of Christ is but the ubiquitous and perennial myth of the sun god retold.¹⁵ (The Fourth Gospel leads even more readily to such interpretation.) So long as the instrument of human expression is human language, terminology containing solar suggestion is unavoidable. The part played by the universe in the formation of man's vocabulary is beginning again to be realized, as it was in the Middle Ages. Although all language in the final analysis is symbolic, definite symbolic levels may be discerned, and on these depend the significance conveyed.

Through association (which will be discussed later) sun-storm god imagery attaches itself in the New Testament, not only to God, but also to his messengers, angelic and human, and to virtues and good works, in fact to practically every aspect of the relationship between God and

14. Cf. Matt. 24. 27-30; Mark 13. 24-27; Mark 14. 62.

15. Reaction to the evident solar elements in the life of Christ has ranged from the extreme of denying his historicity on that ground, to the opposite extreme of assertion that no one around whom sun myths failed to gather could be considered a true ambassador of God to men. Of interest in this connection is the fact that solar elements in the story of Troy caused people to consider the Trojan city and war alike fictitious, till archaeological evidence for them was unearthed.

man. Such association was to be especially prominent in the *Divina Commedia*.

Paul himself, first exponent of Christianity, in recognition of his skill in the method of allegory, was given like his rival Apollos the epithet mighty in scriptures. Against the background of his personal experience and of such facts as he had gleaned as to the life of Christ he made forceful use of symbolism. He is remarkable first of all for the complete omission of storm-god characteristics in his use of sun symbolism. His interest being preëminently the life lived in God's service, his greatest elaboration of light symbolism appears in this connection. Nevertheless, in some passages is a foreshadowing of the identification of Christ with God's enlightening power. All the other epistles of the canon treated as a group exhibit the same omission of storm-god imagery. Furthermore, attention is called to this omission of the volcanic character of God:

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest. Heb. 12. 18.

It will be remembered that later thought, and ultimately Dante, returned to the complete sun-storm imagery transforming as did the author of the Fourth Gospel, that which some of these writers had omitted, probably as not in the spirit of the God Christ revealed. This transformation of the storm-god aspect was accomplished through the recognition of it as the inevitable expression of infinite love contemplated. These writers allow themselves greater elaboration of sun-god imagery than did Paul, although again the imperfection of the symbol as against the thing signified is made clear. God is more than the physical sun.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Jas. 1. 17.

In Hebrews, Paul's foreshadowing of the identification of Christ with the sun's brightness is developed:

God who at sundry times and in divers manner spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the *brightness of his glory* and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Heb. 1. 1-3.

The importance of this passage is obvious in view of later trinitarian development, and the symbolism through which it triumphed.¹⁶

Savoring, even more than the later epistles, of the melting pot from which it came, the Johannine Apocalypse has turned many heads with the riotous wealth of its symbolism. The sun-storm god reigns in cata-

16. Cf. pp. 144 ff.

clismic splendor, but the silken thread to guide through the maze of associated symbolism is here difficult to find. Usually descriptions of the god include, in accordance with the mythological tradition, attributes of both aspects:¹⁷

A throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices, and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. Rev. 4. 2-7.

Here the sun-storm god sits enthroned amid reverberation of thunder, a rainbow around his head, and at his feet the sea reflecting his glory.¹⁸ He is surrounded by seven planets and four mythological beasts.¹⁹ Nowhere in the New Testament is there greater confusion of associated sun imagery or greater complexity of alien influence. To trace such influence or to argue as to interpretation in the light of symbolic traditions a tome would be inadequate. The number symbolism alone would demand a dissertation, and could be treated only against a background of Chaldean astrology.²⁰

The writer of the Fourth Gospel retains sun-storm god symbolism.²¹ Immediately attention is called to the main thesis of the gospel, the identification of Christ with Light: that is, the Logos has become the Radiance of the Divine Sun:²²

That was the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. John 1. 9.

17. Cf. Dante's use.

18. Cf. also Rev. 15. 1-2, and *Par.*, xxx, 61-63, 88-90, 100-105.

19. For the seven spirits, cf. the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas. The four beasts are associated with the sun god (cf., e.g., the work of Goblet d'Alviella), although by the author of this apocalypse they were derived probably from the Book of Ezekiel. For later interpretations cf. text p. 338. Cf. also the description in Rev. 1. 12-18, where the two-edged weapon of the sun-storm god appears (cf. p. 213). Cf. also the description in Rev. 19. 11-16; also 21. 22-25, and 22. 5.

20. Cf. also pp. 119 ff. of this study. It may be mentioned here that Dr. Arthur S. Peake has a theory concerning the woman clothed with the sun, that her story is a variant of the same myth which gave rise to the birth-stories of Apollo and of Horus, "describing how the god of light was successfully born in spite of the attempt of the dragon of darkness and chaos to prevent his birth." *Commentary on the Bible* (New York: Nelson, 1919), p. 936.

21. John 12. 28-29.

22. A development foreshadowed in the Stoic tradition.

He is enlightening and life-giving:²³

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. John 1. 4.

I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8. 12.

Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. . . . I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. John 12. 35-36, 46.

Of the phrase "children of light" more is made by this author than by any other New Testament writer. The life-giving and light-giving character of God is the preoccupation of this gospel, and there is little interest in elaboration to include minute teaching as to God's service in the world.

Light imagery in the Fourth Gospel, however, cannot be dismissed with a treatment of this nature. Solar symbolism is the basis for the motion of the whole—a fact understood and powerfully expressed by Godet:

Imagine a spring day with the sun rising in a bright sky. The ground, moistened with the snows of winter, greedily absorbs his warm rays; everything which is capable of life awakes and is renewed; nature travails. Yet, after some hours, vapors rise from the damp earth, they unite and form an obscure canopy. The sun is veiled; a storm is threatened. The plants, under the impulse which they have received, nevertheless accomplish their silent progress. At length, when the sun has reached the meridian, the storm breaks forth and rages; nature is given over to destructive powers; she loses for a time her quickening star. But at eventide the clouds disperse; calm is restored; and the sun, reappearing in more magnificent brilliancy than that which attended his rising, casts on all those plants—the children of his rays—a last smile and a sweet adieu.²⁴

The full significance of this gospel is indeed in the victorious power of light: "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not," giving to the whole a triumphant sweep unequalled even by the more lurid and compelling symbolism of the celestial drama of the apocalypse.

APPENDIX IV, Pt. I, iii (1).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOURFOLD INTERPRETATION

As has been noted in the text (pp. 263 ff.) the method of reading under the letter of scripture not one but three types of "spiritual" meaning (relating to events in the historical revelation of God, to factors in the moral development of the individual, and to the heavenly life) was

23. Cf. the implied symbolism in John 11. 9-10, and 9. 4-5.

24. Frederic Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, tr. Crombie and Cusin, I, 312.

used in practice by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and to a less extent by others of his time. The first clear statement of the method, however, is that of John Cassian's (fifth century; quoted on p. 270). By the time of Rabanus Maurus (ninth century) statement of the method is made as of a commonplace.²⁵

The usual rule given for the four meanings of each text was to the effect that the letter told of past events, while in allegory was to be found instruction as to belief, in trope as to duty, and in anagoge as to the eternal goal toward which led the faithful keeping of creed and commandments. These four meanings were not considered as of equal depth and value; for example, Rabanus Maurus writes:

Has namque quatuor intelligentias, videlicet historiam, allegoriam, tropologiam, anagogiam, quatuor matris sapientiae filias vocamus. . . . Mater quippe Sapientia per hos adoptionis filios pascit, conferens *incipientibus* atque teneris potum in lacte *historiae*: in fide autem *proficientibus*, cibum in pane *allegoriae*; bonis vero et strenue *operantibus*, et operibus bonis insudantibus, satietatem in sapida refectioe *tropologiae*; illis denique qui et ad immis per contemptum terrenorum suspensi, et ad summa per coeleste desiderium sunt proveci, sobriam theorieae contemplationis ebrietatem in vino *anagogiae*.²⁶

This statement expresses one of the roots of Dante's stress on the value of esoteric meanings intelligible only to the few.

In the Middle Ages proper, the fourfold method had come to be so widely known that definitions and discussions either are omitted or follow the familiar lines already laid down. In exhaustive theological treatises, however, the subject is considered. For example, Thomas Aquinas thus discusses the question as to whether in Holy Scripture the Word has several interpretations:

The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify his meaning not by words only, as man also can do, but also by things themselves. . . . Therefore that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first interpretation, the historical or literal. That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual interpretation, which is based on the literal interpretation and presupposes it. This spiritual interpretation has a threefold division. As the Apostle says, Heb. 7, the Old Law is a figure of the New Law and the New Law itself, Dionysius says, is a figure of future glory. In the New Law, whatever our Head has done is a type of what we ought to do. Therefore so far as the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law, there is the allegorical interpretation. So far as the things done in Christ or so far as the things which signify Christ are types of what we ought to do, there is the moral interpretation. So far as they signify what relates to eternal glory, there is the anagogical interpretation. Since the

25. An interesting analysis of the fourfold interpretation occurs likewise in the Zoharic tradition, where the Sacred Law, with its multiplicity of meaning, is compared to a woman in love. She reveals herself to her lover, first, by signs (*ramez* or literal meaning); next, by whispered words (*derush* or allegory); third, by converse with her face veiled (*hagadah* or moral signification); and, finally, grants the full revelation of the *sod*, or anagoge.

26. Rabanus Maurus, prologue to his *Allegoriae in Scripturam sacram*.

literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by his intellect, it is not unfitting if even according to the literal sense one word in Holy Writ should have several interpretations.²⁷

In response to the first objection he adds that multiplicity produces no ambiguity or equivocation:

seeing that these interpretations are not multiplied, because one word signifies several things, but because the things signified by the words can be themselves types of other things. Thus in Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the interpretations are founded on one, the literal. . . .

The insistence was general throughout the medieval tradition that in symbolic interpretation words signified things exactly as in ordinary usage, but that these things in turn had significations. Not the word *leo*, but the animal *lion*, in the allegorical interpretation of the phrase "Lion of the Tribe of Judah," signifies Christ.

Variation from the usual threefold subdivision of the spiritual interpretation was uncommon, but not unknown. For example, Hugh of St. Victor returned to a threefold classification much like that of Origen (cf. pp. 263-264) save that he included anagoge by subdividing allegory. Moreover, he included Junilius' time classification (see p. 270) as a subdivision under allegory. His scheme follows:

- (a) Historical or literal:
"Habet enim sacrum eloquium proprietatem quamdam ab aliis scripturis differentem, quod in eo primum per verba quae recitantur, de rebus quibusdam agitur, quae rursum res vice verborum ad significationem avarum rerum proponuntur."
- (b) Allegorical:
"Cum per id quod ex littera significatum proponitur, aliud aliquid sive in praeterito sive in praesenti sive in futuro factum significatur."
 - I. Allegory "simplex":
"Et est simplex allegoria, cum per visibile factum aliud invisibile factum significatur."
 - II. Anagoge:
"Anagoge id est sursum ductio, cum per visibile invisibile factum declaratur."²⁸

It would seem that to Hugh the trope, which he omits from his list of interpretations, was rather a moral lesson drawn from the passage than a symbolic interpretation of it. It is clear, however, that Dante used the more generally accepted fourfold division (cf. his statement in the Epistle to Can Grande).

27. Aquinas, *S.Th.*, 1, Q. 1, art. 10, respectively. The second quotation is from the same article, *ad primum*.

28. Hugh of St. Victor, *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris*, cap. ii.

APPENDIX IV, Pt. I, iii (2).

ALLEGORY *VERSUS* PERSONIFICATION

THE difference between allegory as the second level of the fourfold interpretation, and allegory in the sense of personification of psychological abstractions, is fundamental, and depends on the medieval criterion that in symbolism, not the word, but the thing represented by the word, is to be regarded as the symbol. Even suppose, for example, that Matilda was not a real person. Still, like a fictional character in a novel, she *might* be a real person. One might know her; and on what she is as a woman, real or possibly-real, depends her revelation of the manner of the soul's progress. The better one knows her, the deeper one can read into her symbolic meaning. The sun is apprehensible by the senses. The more that is known about the sun's course and relationships, the more intelligent basis is given for meditation on the relationship of the universe to that power on which it depends. This symbolism has, then, for foundation, objective or possibly-objective (functional) realities, not fictions of the imagination. The personification allegory, on the other hand, lacks this basis in the world of scientific reality. One does not meet on the street such figures as My Lord Understanding and Captain Patience,²⁹ nor does one expect through study of their personalities to learn more of understanding and of patience, because that which constitutes their personalities is that which is known already about understanding and patience. Their relationships to each other, moreover, are not such relationships as are either literally or functionally existent in the universe. Their relationship is rather a fictitious one based on that which might or should happen, could Understanding and Patience be abstracted completely from living human beings.

In the *Faery Queene* the two methods appear side by side. The first book, with its action concentrating in the real Una, is a Renaissance form of the medieval allegorical method. The symbolism of the subsequent books, however, is related to the personification allegory, although here the form appears not as simple personification, but as the representation of real or fictional persons, not primarily in their whole characters, but in their action illustrating some abstract vice or virtue which may or may not have been actually their most prominent characteristic.

29. The same is true of such figures as Giant Despair, etc.

APPENDIX V, Pt. I, i.

BASIS OF NUMBER SYMBOLISM*

PYTHAGOREAN philosophy gives the first theory of numbers, making three, seven, and ten outstandingly sacred. Philo developed this theory in great intricacy, making three and four stand for the incorporeal or intellectual creation of God and the corporeal or earthly creation, respectively. He bases this on a truth stated in higher mathematics as: One point determines itself alone;¹ two points determine a straight line; three points determine a plane; whereas four points in general require a solid. Philo, living before the elaboration of modern mathematical methods, used more words to explain:

There is also another power of the number four which is a most wonderful one to speak of and to contemplate. For it was this number that first displayed the nature of the solid cube, the numbers before four being assigned only to incorporeal things. For it is according to the unit that that thing is reckoned which is spoken of in geometry as a point, and a line is spoken of according to the number two, because it is arranged by nature from a point, and a line is length without breadth. But when breadth is added to it, it becomes a superficies, which is arranged according to the number three. And a superficies, when compared with the nature of a solid cube, wants one thing, namely depth, and when this one thing is added to the three, it becomes four. On which account it has happened that this number is a thing of great importance, inasmuch as from an incorporeal substance perceptible only by intellect, it has led us on to a comprehension of a body . . . which by its own nature is first perceived by the external senses.

It is of interest also that the cube, or typical example of matter extended in space as distinguished from abstract intellectual concepts, is said to have been sacred to the sun god Apollo, probably because it looked in all directions, and in its nature combined the three and the four. (There were also four "elements" of which three, earth, water, air, belonged to the material world, and one, fire, to the spiritual. The distinction is real, stated in modern terms as three states of matter, solid, liquid, and gaseous, plus the mysterious chemical processes, of which combustion is typical, by which their alterations occur.) It is from the summation of the Three that signify the Realm of Pure Ideas, and the Four that signify the World as we know it, that the sacred number Seven is formed.

It is to be noted that much of this number symbolism, which seems so puerile to the chance reader, represents really an attempt to express facts fundamental in the universe and in the number system. Facts in theory of numbers were often discovered by number symbolists. Philo states, for example (in a necessarily roundabout way, since algebra was not within his knowledge), that in a geometrical progression whose first term is one, with any ratio, the seventh term will be both a cube

* Cf. Appendix V, Pt. I, ii (2) for Hebrew number symbolism.

1. It has been suggested that a point, with neither substance nor extension, but merely indicating a focus, is the most spiritual conception of Being. Cf. *Par.*, xxviii, 16, 41-42.

and a square. (Let the ratio be k , and the first term one. The seventh term is then k^6 , which is the square of the cube of k , and the cube of its square. Philo suspected, without being able to prove, the universality of this rule, which he tried out with some numerical ratios.)

Number symbolism aimed at the expression of deeper truths than those of mathematics as generally understood today. The significance of One in religion and in philosophy is clear, in the persistent strivings of the human mind for monotheism and for monism. Two expresses the fundamental dualities of the universe, which make monism and monotheism alike seem so beset with contradictions. Three (to give one among innumerable instances of its presentation in the world of thought), expresses the great problem of modern philosophy, the knowledge relation, with its factors of the known, the knower, and the relation between them; and Four, as Philo justly pointed out, is the mathematical number of extended matter.

When Arabic numerals were introduced, new possibilities were seen in number symbolism. To give but one example: if it be assumed as the rule of operation, that a number less than ten is to be equated to the sum of itself plus all units less than itself, and that a number greater than ten is to be equated to the sum of its digits, the process being carried out as far as possible, then, no matter how many times three is added to unity, the result is unity. That is,

$1 + 3 = 4$; $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10$; $1 + 0 = 1$
 $4 + 3 = 7$; $7 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 28$; $2 + 8 = 10$; $1 + 0 = 1$
 $7 + 3 = 10$; which reduces to unity as has been shown (in the first line)
 $10 + 3 = 13$; $1 + 3 = 4$, which reduces to unity (see first line)
 $13 + 3 = 16$; $1 + 6 = 7$, which reduces to unity (see second line)

and so on throughout the number series. That is, in mystical interpretation, whenever trinity is added to any unity, a higher and more inclusive unity is reached.

It is uncertain whether Dante was familiar with this interesting trick of Arabic numbers, but it would have accorded well with his symbolism, since it is grounded in the fact that ten, the base of our number system, is not only the sum of 4, 3, 2, 1 (that is, the equivalent of four in the above rule), but is also the sum of unity and Dante's miracle nine.

APPENDIX V, Pt. I, ii (1).

Plotinian and Augustinian Conceptions of the Trinity

The philosophic trinity of Plotinus, including, as already noted, nothing of myth and nothing of history, nevertheless for its expression was dependent on those same materials of symbolism through which other trinities had been developed. Further, these materials were employed in accord with that philosophy of symbolism, which the conflict of

earlier trinities was bringing to increasingly conscious definition. In the One of Plotinus, superb definition is given to the infinite unity underlying reality, in which all opposites are unified. Plotinus declared one identical essence to be everywhere entirely present,² and, moreover, that this essence is divisible only if thereby not diminished. For all the carelessness of Plotinus' writing, the infinity of the One was not more accurately expressed until the time of Boethius. Dean Inge, albeit with enthusiasm, gave a true explication of Plotinus' position, when he wrote:

In the relations of $\mu\upsilon\sigma\varsigma$ and $\nu\omicron\eta\rho\acute{\alpha}$ we see a complete reconciliation of the One and the Many, of Sameness and Otherness. . . . Reality is not to be identified either with Thought, or with a kind of transcendental physical world which is the object of Thought: nor can we arrive at it by forming clean-cut ideas of these two, and saying that they are "somehow" joined together. Reality is eternal life; it is a never-failing spiritual activity; it is the continual self-expression of a God who speaks and it is done, who commands, and it stands fast.³

The trinity of Plotinus is a series of emanations which, though not coequal, nevertheless bear striking resemblance to the Christian trinity.⁴ As Augustine, after his conversion to Christianity, stated: The Neoplatonists voiced all spiritual truths except the supreme truth of the Incarnation. The significance of this statement was appreciated fully only centuries later in the reawakening of the Middle Ages proper. During the early period of thought evaluation neither Christian nor Neoplatonist made much reference to the system which inspired the other, although presumably conscious both of the similarities and of the differences in the Neoplatonic and Christian conceptions of the universe.⁵

For both, the One ($\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \nu$) is self-manifested in trinity. Plotinus, however, describes this Trinity as subordinate to the One, in the contemplation of whom it receives its being. Augustine describes the Trinity as completely identical with the One.⁶ The real confusion, however, resulted from the Plotinian designation of this triune manifestation as the Logos,⁷ a term which to Christians meant the Second Person with

2. *Ennead*, 6, 4.

3. W. R. Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, II, 48-49.

4. Cf. text, pp. 150, 350 ff.

5. Plotinus is strangely silent concerning Christianity, although he had been a fellow student of Origen's, and must have been in reasonably intimate touch with Christians. Augustine gives great praise to Plotinus as a philosopher, considering him as it were another Plato, although disagreeing sharply on some points.

6. Augustine states that the Trinity is simple and unitary, "because it is what it has, with the exception of the relation of the persons to one another. For in regard to this relation it is true that the Father has a Son and yet is not himself the Son, and the Son has a Father and is not himself the Father. But as regards himself, irrespective of relation to the other, each is what he has; thus, he is in himself living, for he has life, and is himself the life which he has." *De civitate Dei*, 11, 10.

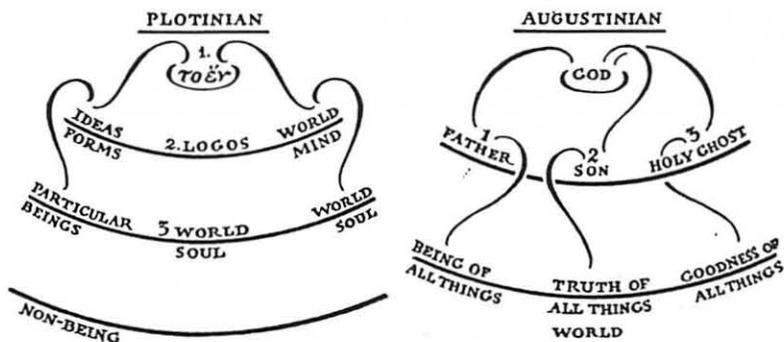
7. Plotinus places the eternal archetype of that trinity involved in the knowl-

his two natures. The difficulty was increased with regard to the realm of the World Soul, most nearly analogous in the Christian system to the impress of the Trinity on the world in goodness, truth, and beauty, although understood by Augustine and by Christians generally to be the analogue of the Holy Spirit.

Plotinus, according to Augustine's understanding, speaks first of God the Father, second of God the Son,—whom (ignoring the Incarnation) he terms the intellect or mind of the Father,—and third of the Soul of Nature.⁸ Augustine comments: "But we assert that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit not of the Father only, or of the Son only, but of both."

edge relation, that is, "the dichotomy of thinker and thought and their inescapable noëtic connection" (Irwin Edman, *Logic of Mysticism in Plotinus*, p. 58) within the realm of his Second Hypostasis, the Logos. It is this fact which renders his Three Hypostases not analogous to the Christian Trinity, which as a whole serves as the eternal archetype, not only of this, but of every other trinity involved in Subject and Object, for example, lover, beloved, and love. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 8, 10, and 9, 1.

The Three Hypostases of Plotinus, in so far as they are analogous to elements in the Christian *Weltanschauung*, correspond not to the Three Persons of the Christian Trinity, but to the Unity, the Trinity, and the Divine imprint on the world of nature. This is readily seen in the diagrams subjoined:



It must be borne in mind that these two diagrams are not equally true to the conceptions they picture. The first, while not complete, is true as far as it goes to the conception of Plotinus. The diagrammatic form of the Augustinian theory, however, does not give a true picture of the Catholic universe, in that wrong implications result from the omission of the inter-Trinity relations on the second level. The Greek form of the Nicene Creed tends to picture a universe more nearly of the Plotinian form, but the western church, especially subsequent to the time of Charlemagne, has been strenuously insistent on its own *schema* of the divine. A difficulty was felt in the realm of deity, comparable to the problem in our world of the relation of being, truth, and goodness, or of physics, psychology, and ethics—which, indeed, Augustine makes its counterpart.

8. Cf. *De civitate Dei*, 10, 23, and 10, 29.

APPENDIX V, Pt. I, ii (2).

HEBREW MYSTICISM AND NUMBER SYMBOLISM

THE *Zohar* or Book of Splendor, based more or less on the earlier *Sepher Yetzirah* (attributed to Abraham in the usual manner of apocryphae) and its commentaries, was attributed to R. Simeon ben Jochai of the Antonine period. It was first generally known, however, in the latter half of the thirteenth century,⁹ and on both internal and external evidence it is assumed to date from that time and (by some) to have been the work of Moses de León or perhaps of someone whom he, in circulating it, represented.¹⁰ To the universality of the reaction which this work represents, there could be no better witness than the number of authors to whom it has been ascribed.

As in the Christian solution, numerical relationships were fundamental. The four and the ten were the numbers of reality, and the stamp of solar symbolism was on it in conscious association with the correlate in sex. Much, however, was included with a definitely esoteric bearing. Through four realms the unknown ineffable Name was manifested (in accord with the Neoplatonic theory of emanations) in a series of ten principles. The first or divine realm contains the ten Sephiroth, the second contains ten Archangels, the third, ten angels, and the fourth or spatial heavens contains the heavenly spheres (the same through which Dante journeyed). In the schematic arrangements in which these were diagrammed, the central position (number six, Tiphereth or Beauty) is occupied in the four realms, respectively, by the sacred Tetragrammaton (JHVH), Raphael, Michael, and the *Sun*.

Three cryptographic methods of scriptural interpretation came into use in the Kabalistic system: the *Gematria*, the *Notarikon*, and the *Temura*. According to the *gematria*, or Hebrew numerology, verses in the scripture are given new meanings through the numerical values of their letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The principle is that for any word or phrase there may be substituted another word or phrase which adds to the same number. According to the *notarikon*, a new text is formed from a single scriptural word, through the use of each letter as the initial of a new word, in a manner similar to that by which the Greek ΙΧΘΥΣ was read by the early Christians.¹¹ Again, the initials or finals of sentences were used to form words after the manner of the acrostic. The

9. The Latin version of the *Zohar*, in which (and in its translations) it is easiest for modern English-speaking people to gain a knowledge of the work, is imperfect and somewhat confused, being the translation made by a Lutheran Kabalist with propagandist intentions—Knorr von Rosenroth. Cf. A. E. Waite, *The Doctrine and Literature of the Kabalah*, pp. 380 ff.

10. Cf. Waite, *op. cit.*, pp. 103 ff., and 115 ff.

11. Cf. p. 141. For a discussion of this example of Christian use of *notarikon*, with a transcript of Neale's translation of the prophecy of the Erythrian Sibyl, see Bernhard Pick, *The Cabala*, pp. 87-90.

temura was a kind of cryptography in which, according to fixed rules, certain letters were substituted for others, in some twenty-two combinations. Whereas only those skilled in the Kabbalah read the Bible chapter after chapter according to numerological methods, their application to individual texts of especial difficulty was common among all philosophers and theologians of the period, Jewish or Christian. It is thus a possibility for the solution of Beatrice's "hard riddle."¹²

The Kabbalah contained more of the oriental than the western world had known for centuries.¹³ Into it penetrated but little of the clear-cut thinking of Maimonides, and its meeting of the problems raised by the new philosophy was in a language which failed to meet the intellectual demands of the day. After a brief but far-reaching influence on Christian mysticism,¹⁴ during which certain of its symbolisms were ordered by scholastic philosophy, it fell into disrepute alike in Christian and in Jewish circles.

12. Cf. pp. 326, 470.

13. Of necessity the Jews were more sensitive to Islamic influence than were Christians, who opposed strenuously the unrelieved, non-trinitarian monotheism of both Mohammedanism and Judaism. To orthodox Christianity it was heretical to speak of the Father, or even of the Trinity, as *solus Deus*—"God alone,"—unless the context made it clear that the meaning was not that God is a "lonely God." Christianity insisted in finding social relationships in the very nature of God himself. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *S.Th.*, 1, Q. 31, art. 3.

14. Among Christian mystics contemporary with Dante and supposed to have been influenced by the Kabbalah is Ramón Lull. Even after it had fallen into general disrepute, it influenced Picus de Mirandola (1463-94), Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and many later students. There are still occultists who establish themselves under the mantle of Kabbalism, which in its development became connected with alchemy and affected the "Cambridge Platonists," the "Rosicrucians," and many others.

APPENDIX VI, i.

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT REFLECTED IN SYMBOLISM IN MEDIEVAL HYMNS

LUMEN DE LUMINE noted earlier as the dominant emphasis during the period of philosophic synthesis, was during the first six centuries, the favorite concept of hymnographers, likewise. It is stressed in all hymns wherein the sun symbol is used directly and in many more in which the imagery is implied. An instance from the third century, or earlier, is the following:

O gladsome Light, O grace
Of God the Father's face,
The eternal splendour wearing;
Celestial, holy, blest,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Joyful in thine appearing.¹

In the fourth-century hymn "Lucis largitur splendide" of St. Hilary, is a favorite form of expression:²

Lucis largitur splendide,
Cuius serens lumine
Post lapsa noctis tempora
Dies refusus panditur,

Tu verus mundi lucifer,
Non is, qui parvi sideris
Venturae lucis nutius
Angusto fulget lumine

Sed toto sole clarior
Lux ipse totus et dies,
Interna nostri pectoris
Illuminans praecordia

Adesto, rerum conditor,
Paternae lucis gloria,³

Reference should be made also to the hymn by St. Ambrose, "Splendor Paternae gloriae" (quoted, p. 409).

Finally, for the doctrine of the Trinity as a whole, note may be made of St. Ambrose's hymn "O Lux Beata Trinitas" (quoted on p. 510). The Trinity here symbolized by the sun is a Trinity of light. God's light is, moreover, nearly always associated with his knowledge, and both with his power.

1. Translation from the Greek taken from the *English Hymnal*, No. 269. The *English Hymnal* was edited by a committee of English liturgiologists, including W. J. Birkbeck and Percy Dearmer, and was compiled with especial intention to include ancient hymns written for use in religious services.

2. *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, Vol. LI ("Feria secunda ad matutinas laudes," Cluniac MS, ninth century, No. 6, p. 9).

3. Translation of last lines quoted from *Great Hymns of the Middle Ages*, compiled by E. W. Brainerd:

Far brighter than our earthly sun,
Thyself at once the Light and Day,
The inmost chambers of the heart
Illumining with heavenly ray;

Thou Radiance of the Father's Light,
Draw near, Creator Thou of all. . . .

Eternal Glory of the sky,
 Blest hope of frail humanity,
 The Father's sole-begotten One. . . .

Uplift us with thine arm of might. . . .⁴

The pagan worshiped power or wisdom, and to these early Christians, concern with the power of knowledge is a natural step in the elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity. But interest in God as Love is still subordinate. One of the few instances of the use of light or flame imagery for the Third Person of the Trinity occurs in the fourth-century hymn, "Jam Christus astra ascenderit":

From out the Father's light it came,
 That beautiful and kindly flame,
 To kindle every Christian heart,
 And fervour of the Word impart.⁵

Characteristically, even though this was written for Whitsuntide, interest is still rather in the Word than in the Spirit.

The darker temper of the succeeding centuries, furthermore, was at once apparent in the hymns. It is not surprising that in that time of trial, Fortunatus and some anonymous writers of the sixth century should add to the idea of pure joy in the light of God for his Wisdom, the idea of rescue from spiritual death: "Jesus has harrowed hell; he has led captivity captive; Darkness and chaos and death flee from the face of the Light," is the theme of an Easter processional ascribed to Fortunatus.⁶ As has been said, brightness gathers round the cross. (Cf. the familiar hymn "Vexilla Regis.")⁷ The interest in the Day of Judgment is expressed in another hymn of Fortunatus:

Judge of all! when Thou descendest
 Throned in awful majesty;
 When aloft Thy Cross effulgent
 Beams amid the Milky Way,
 O be Thou, Thyself, our refuge,
 And the dawn of endless day!⁸

In apprehension of the Day of Judgment the idea of purification became dominant, as in Gregory's hymn, "Primo dierum omnium,"⁹

Let all before the dawn arise
 And seek by night th' Eternal Light,
 As bids the prophet, timely wise. . . .

4. A sixth-century hymn, "Aeterna caeli gloria," tr. J. M. Neale, contains these words. *English Hymnal*, No. 56.

5. *Ibid.*, No. 150.

6. *Ibid.*, No. 624.

7. *Ibid.*, No. 94.

8. From *Great Hymns of the Middle Ages*, compiled by E. W. Brainerd, p. 24.

9. From *ibid.*, p. 27.

Father of might, enthron'd in light,
 Thee with o'erflowing lips we pray,
 Oh, quench the fire of low desire,
 Each deed of ill drive far away.

Anatolius, in the eighth century, shows the Divine Light freeing men from trials.

Sorrow can never be,
 Darkness must fly,
 Where saith the Light of Light,
 "Peace, it is I!"¹⁰

With this hymn it is interesting to compare a similar hymn taken from an Irish MS:

Christe, qui lux es et dies, Noctis tenebras detegis, Lucifer, lucem praeferens, Lumen beatum praedicans,	Precamur, sancte Domine, Defende nos in hac nocte . . . ¹¹
--	--

In the same century, St. John Damascene associates the symbolism of the sun and the seasons with the feast of the Resurrection, interpreting winter as the state of sinfulness to be banished by the Sun which is Christ (hymn quoted, p. 414 n. 45). All through these centuries the ideas of healing, cleansing, and redeeming become associated with the Divine Sun who is now appealed to as the "Light of souls distressed."¹²

O Unity of threefold Light, Send out thy loveliest ray, And scatter our transgressions' night, And turn it into day. ¹³	Trinity sacred, Unity unshaken; Deity perfect, giving and forgiving, Light of the angels, Life of the forsaken, Hope of all living. ¹⁴
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In short, the Light of the Trinity is desired to free the soul from transgressions, rather than to illumine the understanding, and so, as in the earlier period, there is a summing up of the feeling of the age.

Finally, in the hymnology of the Middle Ages proper appears the preoccupation of the time:

Sweet Jesu, now will I sing
 To thee a song of love-longing;
 Make in mine heart a well to spring
 Thee to love above all thing.
 Sweet Jesu, mine heart's true light,
 Thou art day withouten night;
 Give to me both grace and might
 That so I may love thee aright.¹⁵

10. *English Hymnal*, No. 388. Tr. J. M. Neale.

11. *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, Vol. LI (*ad completorium*, No. 22, p. 21), ninth century.

12. From St. Bernard's "Rosy Sequence," given in the *English Hymnal*, No. 238.

13. *Ibid.*, No. 163. Tr. J. M. Neale.

14. *Ibid.*, No. 160.

15. *A Song to Jesus and Mary in the Passion*. From early English sources. Given on p. 72 of Benson's *A Book of the Love of Jesus*.

The Holy Ghost is known as Love, and symbolized by heat. Bianco da Siena says, in a hymn ("Discendi, Amor sento") to the Holy Spirit:

Come down, O Love divine, Seek thou this soul of mine, And visit it with thine own ardour glowing;	O let it freely burn, Till earthly passions turn To dust and ashes in its heat consum- ing;
O Comforter, draw near, Within my heart appear, And kindle it, thy holy flame bestow- ing.	And let thy glorious light Shine ever on my sight, And clothe me round, the while my path illumining. ¹⁶

Hymnography abounds in praises of Mary and of saintly women:

De stella sol oriturus
Stellae matrem profert prius
Ut radium lucis novae
Summae Deus clementiae

Annam, filiam Abrahae
Quae fulsit ex Aaron stirpe
Quasi stella matutina
O gloriosa domina,

Ex qua caelorum degina
Mundique clemens domina
Ut haereses interimat
Aurora lucis rutilat.¹⁷

Often, however, in the same hymn are used all the ideas previously associated with the sun:

Jesu, joy of hearts, most bright, Spring of truth and inward light	Oh what sweet and holy fire, Oh what ardent blest desire, Oh what rich refection, Loving Thee, eternal Son.
With us stay, Redeemer dear, On us shed Thy brightness here; Chase the darkness of the night, Fill the world with sweetest light.	King of glory, King of might, King of victory most bright. . . .
Thou, the Truth, the Life, the Way— Thou, the Sun of endless day. ¹⁸	

Furthermore, the sun symbol of the Trinity finds now its fullest development. Three hymns which show roughly the stages which have been pointed out are:

O Trinity of blessed light,
O Unity of princely might,
The fiery sun now goes his way,
Shed Thou within our hearts Thy ray,¹⁹

16. *English Hymnal*, No. 152. Tr. R. F. Littledale.

17. *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, Vol. LII (No. 104), p. 100.

18. These selections are from the "Jesus Dulcis Memoria" of Bernard of Clairvaux, tr. Alfred Edersheim. In *Great Hymns of the Middle Ages*. See also the "Hora Novissima" of Bernard of Cluny, included in the same collection.

19. *English Hymnal*, No. 164.

of which the author is St. Ambrose, 340-397 A.D., and

O Unity of threefold light,
Send out thy loveliest ray,
And scatter our transgressions' night,
And turn it into day,²⁰

written about the year 900 A.D., and

There the Trinity of Persons
Unbeclouded shall we see;
There the Unity of Essence
Perfectly revealed shall be,²¹

from the hymn, "Quisquis valet numerare," ascribed to Thomas à Kempis, who wrote in the fifteenth century. Earlier there was the emphasis on one phase or another of the Trinity; but here an age intensely interested in personal relations indicates its consciousness of the Three Persons as distinct.

APPENDIX VI, ii.

THE IDEALIZATION OF COURTLY LOVE

It has been said by M. Faure that "everywhere in the Middle Ages, and whatever the aspect of the revival, the peoples were ignorant of the real object they were pursuing; everywhere their conquest of the life of the universe was accomplished under the pretext of religion, always with the support of the letter of the dogma, always against its spirit. It is this which emphasizes so powerfully, in the art of the Middle Ages, its confused liberty, its drunken and fecund plunges into the fields of sensation, . . . its disordered mixture of feelings springing from the contact of the soul with the world in the naked strength of instinct." Many passages in Ruysbroeck and others might seem to lend themselves to such an interpretation, but it is to be remembered that Loki and his knavery no longer belong to the heat or love symbolism of the sun. At this time the world was in the travail incident to the birth of a new social morality.

The relation between the sexes, like that between thane and overlord, was ceasing to be a property relation. Crusades and changed economic conditions were bearing their fruit. It had been long since the world had been able (if, indeed, it ever had) to spiritualize marriage. But now marriage was becoming a symbol of the union between God and the soul. The illicit amours of the period were a veritable advance toward a higher moral plane, on which marriage was no longer to be contracted on a business basis between father and husband. Of course, but few realized what they were doing in making the lover the ideal of the age.

20. *Ibid.*, No. 163. Tr. J. M. Neale. See also No. 160.

21. *Ibid.*, No. 250.

Still, whatever the practice undoubtedly was, the ideal was never an undisciplined love.

Courtly love, then, may be regarded as an idealistic revolt against a social system in which marriages were contracted in childhood and for political and economic reasons. The medieval marriage was essentially an immoral relation.²² The natural revolt against such a condition was the prevalence of extra-marital love-relations.

The troubadours and their patronesses, of whom the greatest were Eleanor of Aquitaine (granddaughter of the cynical old William) and her daughter Marie de Champagne, developed extra-marital love into a cultural system, idealizing constancy, sacrifice, bravery, and defense of women and of the oppressed. Andreas Capellanus, probably at the court of Marie de Champagne, wrote *De arte honeste amandi*, in which are given the famous thirty-one laws of love, of which the following are typical: (1) Marriage is no proper excuse for not loving; (10) Love is always accustomed to avoid the domiciles of avarice; (13) Love that is revealed and subject of rumor rarely endures; (15) Every lover is in the habit of turning pale at sight of his beloved; (23) He whom the contemplation of love harasses sleeps and eats less; and (26) Love can deny nothing to love.

Even when this love was frankly physical, it was the source not of the worst, but of the best in the lovers' lives. Indeed, it has been said, and with much probability, that the superiority of modern marriage over feudal marriage is the direct result of the ideals of courtly love.

The connection between this exuberant human passion and religious devotion has been well expressed by Mr. Chesterton, in his discussion of St. Francis of Assisi:

As St. Francis did not love humanity but men, so he did not love Christianity but Christ. Say, if you think so, that he was a lunatic loving an imaginary person; but an imaginary person, not an imaginary idea. And for the modern reader the clue to the asceticism and all the rest can best be found in the stories of lovers when they seemed to be rather like lunatics. Tell it as the tale of one of the Troubadours, and the wild things he would do for his lady, and the whole of the modern puzzle disappears. In such romance there would be no contradiction between the poet gathering flowers in the sun and enduring a freezing vigil in the snow, between his praising all earthly and bodily beauty and then refusing to eat, between his glorifying gold and purple and perversely going in rags, between his showing pathetically a hunger for a happy life and a thirst for a heroic death. All these riddles would easily be resolved in the simplicity of any noble love; only this was so noble a love that nine men out of ten have hardly even heard of it. . . . The reader cannot even begin to see the sense of a story that may well seem to him a very wild one, until he understands that to this great mystic his religion was not a thing like a theory but a thing like a love-affair.²³

22. According to the principles of the church, strictly interpreted, a forced marriage is held invalid, that is, nonexistent. Needless to say, this principle was not pushed to its logical conclusion in the day of feudal marriages.

23. G. K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi*, pp. 21-22.

Such writers as Dante and Ramón Lull, like St. Francis, notably spiritualized the conception of courtly love.²⁴ Beatrice, though she be a real girl, is as ethereal in her guidance of Dante as is Lady-Philosophy-of-Love in relation to Lull. Both these heavenly ladies, representative of the Holy Spirit, in a deep sense signify the earthly presence of him toward whom was directed the love of St. Francis and of all the great mystics—the Eternal Wisdom, Radiance of the Divine Sun.

24. Cf. pp. 428 ff. *et al.* The whole love motif in all of its elements is well summarized in the following: "There appeared in the world, after a long and complex transition, the elements of a new kind of love; something not without sex, yet directed in a new way to the inward essence of the individual. In this kind of love there is a metaphysical element; to be seen, under its various modes, in Dante. . . . This metaphysical element, which communicates a new excitement to the emotion of love, seems to appear first in the late Middle Ages, and to arrive at an expression not yet exhausted in modern times." T. Whittaker, *Macrobius*, p. 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

FOR the sake of convenience this bibliography is divided into two sections of which the first contains the principal medieval texts consulted, and the second modern studies dealing with the problems considered. In neither section has it been possible to list all the works of which use has been made.

Those who may desire to delve further into medieval material are referred to the collections and series listed as introductory to Bibliography I. Small space has been given to the more popular literature of the middle ages both because for this phase of medieval literary development selected bibliographies are readily available, and because much of it is well known to students in the field (to whom only too frequently it comes to represent the whole intellectual activity of the middle ages). Throughout this work endeavor has been made to consider the convenience of the student in giving reference to the more available editions of works cited. In general there has been departure from this rule only when from the point of view of symbolism such editions in some way seriously misrepresent the original.

As to modern studies many of the most valuable have appeared in periodicals: *Review of English Studies*, *Romania*, *Revue de l'art chrétien*, *Giornale dantesco*, and the newly established *Speculum*—to mention but a few in differing fields. Very little of the periodical material, however, has been included in this bibliography since to make adequate reference to the relevant articles consulted would increase the list beyond manageable compass. Reference has been made also to the encyclopedias, especially: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by Hastings, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, and the encyclopedias of philosophy and psychology, together with the *Cambridge Medieval History* and standard works on the early literatures in the several European tongues, especially Italian, French, Provençal, Spanish, German, Dutch, English.¹

Furthermore, in selecting the titles for Bibliography II there has been an attempt to list the more important works together with a few of lesser import but significant of the development of interest in symbolism.²

1. Suggestions for the student are: *Cambridge history of English literature*, ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, New York, 1907. vols. 1-3; Lanson, Gustave, *Histoire de la littérature française*. 19 éd. Paris, Hachette [1926]; Flamini, Francesco, *A history of Italian literature, 1265-1907*, tr. E. M. O'Connor, with an introduction by W. M. Rossetti. New York, 1907, and Petrocchi, Polycarpo, *La lingua e la storia letteraria d'Italia dalle origini fino a Dante*, Roma, 1903; Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte*. 6 ed. 1920. 20 vols.; Vooys, C. G. N. de, *Middel nederlandse legenden en exempelen. Bijdrage tot de kennis van de proza-litteratuur en het volksgeloof der middeleeuwen. Herziene en vermeerderde uitgave*. Groningen, Wolters, 1926; Dozy, Reinhart Pieter Anne, *Recherches sur l'histoire et la littérature de l'Espagne pendant le moyen âge*; 3. éd. rev. et augm. Leyden, Brill, 1881. 2 vols.; Hurst, George Leopold, *An outline of the history of Christian literature*, New York, Macmillan, 1926. Certain useful works of smaller scope are listed in Bibliography II lettered G.

2. Many, for example, of the nineteenth century treatises cited in Bibliography

rather than every book consulted. A bibliography compiled for the purpose of presenting material representative of the widely different approaches to the study of symbolism (no one or two of which apart from some knowledge of the others can give the student a true conception of the symbolic tradition) by necessity must be extensive. To lessen this factor certain cuts have been made. Because most work has been done in the field of the static arts, as well as for the sake of brevity, many valuable references with regard to this phase of medieval symbolism have been omitted. These may be found in the bibliographies of the works cited, especially those of Mâle, Didron, Molsdorf, Webber, Auber. A similar omission has been made of much valuable material with regard to the mystics which is to be found in the bibliographies of Underhill and Waite (these studies of course being not primarily from the point of view of symbolism). Again, reference has been made to the official missal, breviary, and Holy Week office book of the Roman Catholic Church (which the student may consider with profit in connection with the titles listed under Catholic church. Liturgies. in Bibliography I), and to much liturgical material not listed, although working through the titles lettered E in Bibliography II the student interested may find most of it for himself.³ The works of the classical authors used extensively by Dante have not been included in the bibliography. What these are, should be clear from the footnote material, and various lists are available.⁴ Considerable omission has been made in the field of Dante criticism which the reader may remedy for himself by reference to Moore, Grandgent, Toynbee, Scartizinni, and many others. The Annual Reports of the Dante Society (Cambridge, Wilson, 1882-date) and especially the bulletins of the *Società dantesca italiana* (Firenze 1890-date) are worth consulting. For a comprehensive listing of Dante literature see Cornell University, *Catalogue of Dante collection and Supplement*.

For the convenience of students who may wish to refer more particularly to works on a given phase of the subject, each title in Bibliography

II have been supplanted, yet they are included in order to facilitate an understanding of the gradual recurrence of interest in symbolism.

3. Of interest in addition to the Roman Catholic material are: Church of England. *Liturgy and ritual*. The ancient liturgy of the Church of England according to the uses of Sarum, York, Hereford and Bangor, and the Roman liturgy, arranged in parallel columns with preface and notes by W. Maskell. 3d ed. Oxford, Clarendon press, 1882; Greek church. *Liturgy and ritual*. Service book of the Holy orthodox-Catholic apostolic church, comp., tr. and arranged from the old church-Slavonic service books of the Russian church, and collated with the service of the Greek church, by Isabel Florence Hapgood. Rev. ed., with indorsement by Patriarch Tikhon. New York, Association press, 1922; Greek church. *Liturgy and ritual*. The liturgies of S. Mark, S. James, S. Clement, S. Chrysostom, S. Basil: or, according to the use of the churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople. Ed. by the Rev. J. M. Neale. 4th ed. with preface by Dr. Littledale. London, R. D. Dickinson, 1896.

4. Cf., for example, Charles H. Grandgent, *Divina Commedia*, introduction, xxiv-xxvi. For fuller discussion see Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante. First series*.

II is followed by a key letter or letters denoting in general the aspects in which its treatment has been of interest for the present study.

KEY LETTERS

- A Dante criticism
- B Philosophical discussion and criticism
- B' Symbolist School
- C Psychological discussions
- D Mysticism
- E History of worship; liturgiology
- F Medieval and ecclesiastical art
- G General discussions of medieval conditions and literature
- H Discussions of Arthurian and Grail cycle
- I Discussions of medieval science and pseudo-science
- J Comparative religion and anthropology*
- K Some works suggestive for interpretation of symbols

* Considered for bearing on materials and development of medieval symbolic tradition.

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5. For further hagiographic material cf.: *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis. Ediderunt Socii Bollandiani.* Bruxellis, 1898-1901. 2 vols.

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