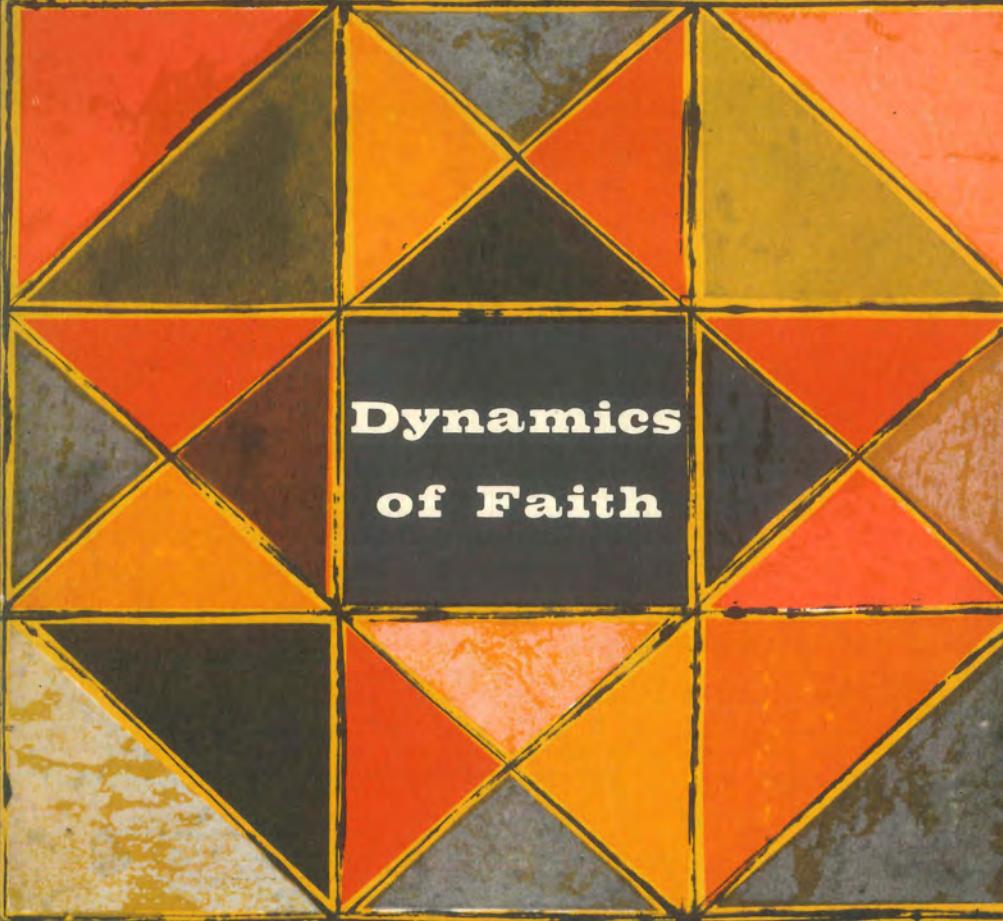


PAUL TILLICH



**Dynamics
of Faith**

**What Faith Is • What Faith Is Not • Symbols of Faith
Types of Faith • The Truth of Faith • The Life of Faith**

*ad usum
per locum*

DYNAMICS OF FAITH

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DYNAMICS OF FAITH

BY PAUL TILLICH



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Introductory Remarks

THERE is hardly a word in the religious language, both theological and popular, which is subject to more misunderstandings, distortions and questionable definitions than the word "faith." It belongs to those terms which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men. Today the term "faith" is more productive of disease than of health. It confuses, misleads, creates alternately skepticism and fanaticism, intellectual resistance and emotional surrender, rejection of genuine religion and subjection to substitutes. Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that the word "faith" should be dropped completely; but desirable as that may be it is hardly possible. A powerful tradition protects it. And there is as yet no substitute expressing the reality to which the term "faith" points. So, for the time being, the only way of dealing with the problem is to try to reinterpret the word and remove the confusing and distorting connotations, some of which are the heritage of centuries. It is the hope of the writer that he will succeed at least in this purpose even if he does not succeed in his more far-reaching aim to convince some readers of the hidden power of faith within themselves and of the infinite significance of that to which faith is related.

Cambridge, September, 1956

I.

What Faith Is

I. FAITH AS ULTIMATE CONCERN

Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern. Man, like every living being, is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition his very existence, such as food and shelter. But man, in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns—cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them as well as the vital concerns can claim ultimacy for a human life or the life of a social group. If it claims ultimacy it demands the total surrender of him who accepts this claim, and it promises total fulfillment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name. If a national group makes the life and growth of the nation its ultimate concern, it demands that all other concerns, economic well-being, health and life, family, aesthetic and cognitive truth, justice and humanity, be sacrificed. The extreme nation-

alisms of our century are laboratories for the study of what ultimate concern means in all aspects of human existence, including the smallest concern of one's daily life. Everything is centered in the only god, the nation—a god who certainly proves to be a demon, but who shows clearly the unconditional character of an ultimate concern.

But it is not only the unconditional demand made by that which is one's ultimate concern, it is also the promise of ultimate fulfillment which is accepted in the act of faith. The content of this promise is not necessarily defined. It can be expressed in indefinite symbols or in concrete symbols which cannot be taken literally, like the "greatness" of one's nation in which one participates even if one has died for it, or the conquest of mankind by the "saving race," etc. In each of these cases it is "ultimate fulfillment" that is promised, and it is exclusion from such fulfillment which is threatened if the unconditional demand is not obeyed.

An example—and more than an example—is the faith manifest in the religion of the Old Testament. It also has the character of ultimate concern in demand, threat and promise. The content of this concern is not the nation—although Jewish nationalism has sometimes tried to distort it into that—but the content is the God of justice, who, because he represents justice for everybody and every nation, is called the universal God, the God of the universe. He is the ultimate concern of every pious Jew, and therefore in his name the great commandment is given: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your

soul, and with all your might" (Deut 6:5). This is what ultimate concern means and from these words the term "ultimate concern" is derived. They state unambiguously the character of genuine faith, the demand of total surrender to the subject of ultimate concern. The Old Testament is full of commands which make the nature of this surrender concrete, and it is full of promises and threats in relation to it. Here also are the promises of symbolic indefiniteness, although they center around fulfillment of the national and individual life, and the threat is the exclusion from such fulfillment through national extinction and individual catastrophe. Faith, for the men of the Old Testament, is the state of being ultimately and unconditionally concerned about Jahweh and about what he represents in demand, threat and promise.

Another example—almost a counter-example, yet nevertheless equally revealing—is the ultimate concern with "success" and with social standing and economic power. It is the god of many people in the highly competitive Western culture and it does what every ultimate concern must do: it demands unconditional surrender to its laws even if the price is the sacrifice of genuine human relations, personal conviction, and creative *eros*. Its threat is social and economic defeat, and its promise—indefinite as all such promises—the fulfillment of one's being. It is the breakdown of this kind of faith which characterizes and makes religiously important most contemporary literature. Not false calculations but a misplaced faith is revealed in novels like *Point of*

No Return. When fulfilled, the promise of this faith proves to be empty.

Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned. The content matters infinitely for the life of the believer, but it does not matter for the formal definition of faith. And this is the first step we have to make in order to understand the dynamics of faith.

2. FAITH AS A CENTERED ACT

Faith as ultimate concern is an act of the total personality. It happens in the center of the personal life and includes all its elements. Faith is the most centered act of the human mind. It is not a movement of a special section or a special function of man's total being. They all are united in the act of faith. But faith is not the sum total of their impacts. It transcends every special impact as well as the totality of them and it has itself a decisive impact on each of them.

Since faith is an act of the personality as a whole, it participates in the dynamics of personal life. These dynamics have been described in many ways, especially in the recent developments of analytic psychology. Thinking in polarities, their tensions and their possible conflicts, is a common characteristic of most of them. This makes the psychology of personality highly dynamic and requires a dynamic theory of faith as the most personal of all personal acts. The first and decisive polarity in analytic psychology is that between the so-called unconscious and the conscious. Faith as an act

of the total personality is not imaginable without the participation of the unconscious elements in the personality structure. They are always present and decide largely about the content of faith. But, on the other hand, faith is a conscious act and the unconscious elements participate in the creation of faith only if they are taken into the personal center which transcends each of them. If this does not happen, if unconscious forces determine the mental status without a centered act, faith does not occur, and compulsions take its place. For faith is a matter of freedom. Freedom is nothing more than the possibility of centered personal acts. The frequent discussion in which faith and freedom are contrasted could be helped by the insight that faith is a free, namely, centered act of the personality. In this respect freedom and faith are identical.

Also important for the understanding of faith is the polarity between what Freud and his school call ego and superego. The concept of the superego is quite ambiguous. On the one hand, it is the basis of all cultural life because it restricts the uninhibited actualization of the always-driving libido; on the other hand, it cuts off man's vital forces, and produces disgust about the whole system of cultural restrictions, and brings about a neurotic state of mind. From this point of view, the symbols of faith are considered to be expressions of the superego or, more concretely, to be an expression of the father image which gives content to the superego. Responsible for this inadequate theory of the superego is Freud's naturalistic negation of norms and prin-

ciples. If the superego is not established through valid principles, it becomes a suppressive tyrant. But real faith, even if it uses the father image for its expression, transforms this image into a principle of truth and justice to be defended even against the "father." Faith and culture can be affirmed only if the superego represents the norms and principles of reality.

This leads to the question of how faith as a personal, centered act is related to the rational structure of man's personality which is manifest in his meaningful language, in his ability to know the true and to do the good, in his sense of beauty and justice. All this, and not only his possibility to analyze, to calculate and to argue, makes him a rational being. But in spite of this larger concept of reason we must deny that man's essential nature is identical with the rational character of his mind. Man is able to decide for or against reason, he is able to create beyond reason or to destroy below reason. This power is the power of his self, the center of self-relatedness in which all elements of his being are united. Faith is not an act of any of his rational functions, as it is not an act of the unconscious, but it is an act in which both the rational and the nonrational elements of his being are transcended.

Faith as the embracing and centered act of the personality is "ecstatic." It transcends both the drives of the nonrational unconscious and the structures of the rational conscious. It transcends them, but it does not destroy them. The ecstatic character of faith does not exclude its rational

character although it is not identical with it, and it includes nonrational strivings without being identical with them. In the ecstasy of faith there is an awareness of truth and of ethical value; there are also past loves and hates, conflicts and reunions, individual and collective influences. "Ecstasy" means "standing outside of oneself"—without ceasing to be oneself—with all the elements which are united in the personal center.

A further polarity in these elements, relevant for the understanding of faith, is the tension between the cognitive function of man's personal life, on the one hand, and emotion and will, on the other hand. In a later discussion I will try to show that many distortions of the meaning of faith are rooted in the attempt to subsume faith to the one or the other of these functions. At this point it must be stated as sharply and insistently as possible that in every act of faith there is cognitive affirmation, not as the result of an independent process of inquiry but as an inseparable element in a total act of acceptance and surrender. This also excludes the idea that faith is the result of an independent act of "will to believe." There is certainly affirmation by the will of what concerns one ultimately, but faith is not a creation of the will. In the ecstasy of faith the will to accept and to surrender is an element, but not the cause. And this is true also of feeling. Faith is not an emotional outburst: this is not the meaning of ecstasy. Certainly, emotion is in it, as in every act of man's spiritual life. But emotion does not produce faith. Faith has a cognitive content and is an act |

of the will. It is the unity of every element in the centered self. Of course, the unity of all elements in the act of faith does not prevent one or the other element from dominating in a special form of faith. It dominates the character of faith but it does not create the act of faith.

This also answers the question of a possible psychology of faith. Everything that happens in man's personal being can become an object of psychology. And it is rather important for both the philosopher of religion and the practical minister to know how the act of faith is embedded in the totality of psychological processes. But in contrast to this justified and desirable form of a psychology of faith there is another one which tries to derive faith from something that is not faith but is most frequently fear. The presupposition of this method is that fear or something else from which faith is derived is more original and basic than faith. But this presupposition cannot be proved. On the contrary, one can prove that in the scientific method which leads to such consequences faith is already effective. Faith precedes all attempts to derive it from something else, because these attempts are themselves based on faith.

3. THE SOURCE OF FAITH

We have described the act of faith and its relation to the dynamics of personality. Faith is a total and centered act of the personal self, the act of unconditional, infinite and ultimate concern. The question now arises: what is the source of this all-embracing and all-transcending concern? The

word "concern" points to two sides of a relationship, the relation between the one who is concerned and his concern. In both respects we have to imagine man's situation in itself and in his world. The reality of man's ultimate concern reveals something about his being, namely, that he is able to transcend the flux of relative and transitory experiences of his ordinary life. Man's experiences, feelings, thoughts are conditioned and finite. They not only come and go, but their content is of finite and conditional concern—unless they are elevated to unconditional validity. But this presupposes the general possibility of doing so; it presupposes the element of infinity in man. Man is able to understand in an immediate personal and central act the meaning of the ultimate, the unconditional, the absolute, the infinite. This alone makes faith a human potentiality.

Human potentialities are powers that drive toward actualization. Man is driven toward faith by his awareness of the infinite to which he belongs, but which he does not own like a possession. This is in abstract terms what concretely appears as the "restlessness of the heart" within the flux of life.

The unconditional concern which is faith is the concern about the unconditional. The infinite passion, as faith has been described, is the passion for the infinite. Or, to use our first term, the ultimate concern is concern about what is experienced as ultimate. In this way we have turned from the subjective meaning of faith as a centered act of the personality to its objective meaning, to what is meant in

the act of faith. It would not help at this point of our analysis to call that which is meant in the act of faith "God" or "a god." For at this step we ask: What in the idea of God constitutes divinity? The answer is: It is the element of the unconditional and of ultimacy. This carries the quality of divinity. If this is seen, one can understand why almost every thing "in heaven and on earth" has received ultimacy in the history of human religion. But we also can understand that a critical principle was and is at work in man's religious consciousness, namely, that which is really ultimate over against what claims to be ultimate but is only preliminary, transitory, finite.

The term "ultimate concern" unites the subjective and the objective side of the act of faith—the *fides qua creditur* (the faith through which one believes) and the *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed). The first is the classical term for the centered act of the personality, the ultimate concern. The second is the classical term for that toward which this act is directed, the ultimate itself, expressed in symbols of the divine. This distinction is very important, but not ultimately so, for the one side cannot be without the other. There is no faith without a content toward which it is directed. There is always something meant in the act of faith. And there is no way of having the content of faith except in the act of faith. All speaking about divine matters which is not done in the state of ultimate concern is meaningless. Because that which is meant in the

act of faith cannot be approached in any other way than through an act of faith.

In terms like ultimate, unconditional, infinite, absolute, the difference between subjectivity and objectivity is overcome. The ultimate of the act of faith and the ultimate that is meant in the act of faith are one and the same. This is symbolically expressed by the mystics when they say that their knowledge of God is the knowledge God has of himself; and it is expressed by Paul when he says (I Cor. 13) that he will know as he is known, namely, by God. God never can be object without being at the same time subject. Even a successful prayer is, according to Paul (Rom. 8), not possible without God as Spirit praying within us. The same experience expressed in abstract language is the disappearance of the ordinary subject-object scheme in the experience of the ultimate, the unconditional. In the act of faith that which is the source of this act is present beyond the cleavage of subject and object. It is present as both and beyond both.

This character of faith gives an additional criterion for distinguishing true and false ultimacy. The finite which claims infinity without having it (as, e.g., a nation or success) is not able to transcend the subject-object scheme. It remains an object which the believer looks at as a subject. He can approach it with ordinary knowledge and subject it to ordinary handling. There are, of course, many degrees in the endless realm of false ultimacies. The nation is nearer to true ultimacy than is success. Nationalistic ecstasy can pro-

duce a state in which the subject is almost swallowed by the object. But after a period the subject emerges again, disappointed radically and totally, and by looking at the nation in a skeptical and calculating way does injustice even to its justified claims. The more idolatrous a faith the less it is able to overcome the cleavage between subject and object. For that is the difference between true and idolatrous faith. In true faith the ultimate concern is a concern about the truly ultimate; while in idolatrous faith preliminary, finite realities are elevated to the rank of ultimacy. The inescapable consequence of idolatrous faith is "existential disappointment," a disappointment which penetrates into the very existence of man! This is the dynamics of idolatrous faith: that it is faith, and as such, the centered act of a personality; that the centering point is something which is more or less on the periphery; and that, therefore, the act of faith leads to a loss of the center and to a disruption of the personality. The ecstatic character of even an idolatrous faith can hide this consequence only for a certain time. But finally it breaks into the open.

4. FAITH AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE HOLY

He who enters the sphere of faith enters the sanctuary of life. Where there is faith there is an awareness of holiness. This seems to contradict what has just been said about idolatrous faith. But it does not contradict our analysis of idolatry. It only contradicts the popular way in which the word "holy" is used. What concerns one ultimately becomes

holy. The awareness of the holy is awareness of the presence of the divine, namely of the content of our ultimate concern. This awareness is expressed in a grand way in the Old Testament from the visions of the patriarchs and Moses to the shaking experiences of the great prophets and psalmists. It is a presence which remains mysterious in spite of its appearance, and it exercises both an attractive and a repulsive function on those who encounter it. In his classical book, *The Idea of the Holy*, Rudolph Otto has described these two functions as the fascinating and the shaking character of the holy. (In Otto's terminology: *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*.) They can be found in all religions because they are the way in which man always encounters the representations of his ultimate concern. The reason for these two effects of the holy is obvious if we see the relation of the experience of the holy to the experience of ultimate concern. The human heart seeks the infinite because that is where the finite wants to rest. In the infinite it sees its own fulfillment. This is the reason for the ecstatic attraction and fascination of everything in which ultimacy is manifest. On the other hand, if ultimacy is manifest and exercises its fascinating attraction, one realizes at the same time the infinite distance of the finite from the infinite and, consequently, the negative judgment over any finite attempts to reach the infinite. The feeling of being consumed in the presence of the divine is a profound expression of man's relation to the holy. It is implied in every genuine act of faith, in every state of ultimate concern.

This original and only justified meaning of holiness must replace the currently distorted use of the word. "Holy" has become identified with moral perfection, especially in some Protestant groups. The historical causes of this distortion give a new insight into the nature of holiness and of faith. Originally, the holy has meant what is apart from the ordinary realm of things and experiences. It is separated from the world of finite relations. This is the reason why all religious cults have separated holy places and activities from all other places and activities. Entering the sanctuary means encountering the holy. Here the infinitely removed makes itself near and present, without losing its remoteness. For this reason, the holy has been called the "entirely other," namely, other than the ordinary course of things or—to refer to a former statement—other than the world which is determined by the cleavage of subject and object. The holy transcends this realm; this is its mystery and its unapproachable character. There is no conditional way of reaching the unconditional; there is no finite way of reaching the infinite.

The mysterious character of the holy produces an ambiguity in man's ways of experiencing it. The holy can appear as creative and as destructive. Its fascinating element can be both creative and destructive (referring again to the fascinating character of the nationalistic idolatry), and the terrifying and consuming element can be destructive and creative (as in the double function of Siva or Kali in Indian thought). This ambiguity, of which we still find traces in the Old Testament, is reflected in the ritual or quasi-ritual

activities of religions and quasi religions (sacrifices of others or one's bodily or mental self) which are strongly ambiguous. One can call this ambiguity divine-demonic, whereby the divine is characterized by the victory of the creative over the destructive possibility of the holy, and the demonic is characterized by the victory of the destructive over the creative possibility of the holy. In this situation, which is most profoundly understood in the prophetic religion of the Old Testament, a fight has been waged against the demonic-destructive element in the holy. And this fight was so successful that the concept of the holy was changed. Holiness becomes justice and truth. It is creative and not destructive. The true sacrifice is obedience to the law. This is the line of thought which finally led to the identification of holiness with moral perfection. But when this point is reached, holiness loses its meaning as the "separated," the "transcending," the "fascinating and terrifying," the "entirely other." All this is gone, and the holy has become the morally good and the logically true. It has ceased to be the holy in the genuine sense of the word. Summing up this development, one could say that the holy originally lies below the alternative of the good and the evil; that it is both divine and demonic; that with the reduction of the demonic possibility the holy itself becomes transformed in its meaning; that it becomes rational and identical with the true and the good; and that its genuine meaning must be rediscovered.

These dynamics of the holy confirm what was said about the dynamics of faith. We have distinguished between true

and idolatrous faith. The holy which is demonic, or ultimately destructive, is identical with the content of idolatrous faith. Idolatrous faith is still faith. The holy which is demonic is still holy. This is the point where the ambiguous character of religion is most visible and the dangers of faith are most obvious: the danger of faith is idolatry and the ambiguity of the holy is its demonic possibility. Our ultimate concern can destroy us as it can heal us. But we never can be without it.

5. FAITH AND DOUBT

We now return to a fuller description of faith as an act of the human personality, as its centered and total act. An act of faith is an act of a finite being who is grasped by and turned to the infinite. It is a finite act with all the limitations of a finite act, and it is an act in which the infinite participates beyond the limitations of a finite act. Faith is certain in so far as it is an experience of the holy. But faith is uncertain in so far as the infinite to which it is related is received by a finite being. This element of uncertainty in faith cannot be removed, it must be accepted. And the element in faith which accepts this is courage. Faith includes an element of immediate awareness which gives certainty and an element of uncertainty. To accept this is courage. In the courageous standing of uncertainty, faith shows most visibly its dynamic character.

If we try to describe the relation of faith and courage, we must use a larger concept of courage than that which is

ordinarily used.¹ Courage as an element of faith is the daring self-affirmation of one's own being in spite of the powers of "nonbeing" which are the heritage of everything finite. Where there is daring and courage there is the possibility of failure. And in every act of faith this possibility is present. The risk must be taken. Whoever makes his nation his ultimate concern needs courage in order to maintain this concern. Only certain is the ultimacy as ultimacy, the infinite passion as infinite passion. This is a reality given to the self with his own nature. It is as immediate and as much beyond doubt as the self is to the self. It is the self in its self-transcending quality. But there is not certainty of this kind about the content of our ultimate concern, be it nation, success, a god, or the God of the Bible: They all are contents without immediate awareness. Their acceptance as matters of ultimate concern is a risk and therefore an act of courage. There is a risk if what was considered as a matter of ultimate concern proves to be a matter of preliminary and transitory concern—as, for example, the nation. The risk to faith in one's ultimate concern is indeed the greatest risk man can run. For if it proves to be a failure, the meaning of one's life breaks down; one surrenders oneself, including truth and justice, to something which is not worth it. One has given away one's personal center without having a chance to regain it. The reaction of despair in people who have experienced the breakdown of their national claims is

¹ Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*. Yale University Press.

an irrefutable proof of the idolatrous character of their national concern. In the long run this is the inescapable result of an ultimate concern, the subject matter of which is not ultimate. And this is the risk faith must take; this is the risk which is unavoidable if a finite being affirms itself. Ultimate concern is ultimate risk and ultimate courage. It is not risk and needs no courage with respect to ultimacy itself. But it is risk and demands courage if it affirms a concrete concern. And every faith has a concrete element in itself. It is concerned about something or somebody. But this something or this somebody may prove to be not ultimate at all. Then faith is a failure in its concrete expression, although it is not a failure in the experience of the unconditional itself. A god disappears; divinity remains. Faith risks the vanishing of the concrete god in whom it believes. It may well be that with the vanishing of the god the believer breaks down without being able to re-establish his centered self by a new content of his ultimate concern. This risk cannot be taken away from any act of faith. There is only one point which is a matter not of risk but of immediate certainty and herein lies the greatness and the pain of being human; namely, one's standing between one's finitude and one's potential infinity.

All this is sharply expressed in the relation of faith and doubt. If faith is understood as belief that something is true, doubt is incompatible with the act of faith. If faith is understood as being ultimately concerned, doubt is a necessary element in it. It is a consequence of the risk of faith.

attitude of complete unconcern. But since man is that being who is essentially concerned about his being, such an escape finally breaks down. This is the dynamics of skeptical doubt. It has an awaking and liberating function, but it also can prevent the development of a centered personality. For personality is not possible without faith. The despair about truth by the skeptic shows that truth is still his infinite passion. The cynical superiority over every concrete truth shows that truth is still taken seriously and that the impact of the question of an ultimate concern is strongly felt. The skeptic, so long as he is a serious skeptic, is not without faith, even though it has no concrete content.

The doubt which is implicit in every act of faith is neither the methodological nor the skeptical doubt. It is the doubt which accompanies every risk. It is not the permanent doubt of the scientist, and it is not the transitory doubt of the skeptic, but it is the doubt of him who is ultimately concerned about a concrete content. One could call it the existential doubt, in contrast to the methodological and the skeptical doubt. It does not question whether a special proposition is true or false. It does not reject every concrete truth, but it is aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth. At the same time, the doubt which is implied in faith accepts this insecurity and takes it into itself in an act of courage. Faith includes courage. Therefore, it can include the doubt about itself. Certainly faith and courage are not identical. Faith has other elements besides courage and courage has other functions beyond affirming faith.

Nevertheless, an act in which courage accepts risk belongs to the dynamics of faith.

This dynamic concept of faith seems to give no place to that restful affirmative confidence which we find in the documents of all great religions, including Christianity. But this is not the case. The dynamic concept of faith is the result of a conceptual analysis, both of the subjective and of the objective side of faith. It is by no means the description of an always actualized state of the mind. An analysis of structure is not the description of a state of things. The confusion of these two is a source of many misunderstandings and errors in all realms of life. An example, taken from the current discussion of anxiety, is typical of this confusion. The description of anxiety as the awareness of one's finitude is sometimes criticized as untrue from the point of view of the ordinary state of the mind. Anxiety, one says, appears under special conditions but is not an ever-present implication of man's finitude. Certainly anxiety as an acute experience appears under definite conditions. But the underlying structure of finite life is the universal condition which makes the appearance of anxiety under special conditions possible. In the same way doubt is not a permanent experience within the act of faith. But it is always present as an element in the structure of faith. This is the difference between faith and immediate evidence either of perceptual or of logical character. There is no faith without an intrinsic "in spite of" and the courageous affirmation of oneself in the state of ultimate concern. This intrinsic ele-

*This is really
mean doubt? 95 - faith is
related to opinion.*

ment of doubt breaks into the open under special individual and social conditions. If doubt appears, it should not be considered as the negation of faith, but as an element which was always and will always be present in the act of faith. Existential doubt and faith are poles of the same reality, the state of ultimate concern.

The insight into this structure of faith and doubt is of tremendous practical importance. Many Christians, as well as members of other religious groups, feel anxiety, guilt and despair about what they call "loss of faith." But serious doubt is confirmation of faith. It indicates the seriousness of the concern, its unconditional character. This also refers to those who as future or present ministers of a church experience not only scientific doubt about doctrinal statements—this is as necessary and perpetual as theology is a perpetual need—but also existential doubt about the message of their church, e.g., that Jesus can be called the Christ. The criterion according to which they should judge themselves is the seriousness and ultimacy of their concern about the content of both their faith and their doubt.

6. FAITH AND COMMUNITY

The last remarks about faith and doubt in relation to religious creeds have led us to those problems which are ordinarily dominant in the popular mind in the discussion of faith. Faith is seen in its doctrinal formulations or in its legally dogmatic expressions. It is seen in its sociological setting more than in its character as a personal act. The

historical causes of this attitude are obvious. The periods of suppression of the autonomous mind, culturally and religiously, in the name of the doctrinal formulations of a special faith, are remembered by the following generations. The life-and-death struggle of rebellious autonomy with the powers of religious suppression has left a deep scar in the "collective unconscious." This is true even in the present period, when the kind of suppression that existed at the end of the Middle Ages and in the period of the religious wars is a thing of the past. Therefore, it is not futile to defend the dynamic concept of faith against the accusation that it would lead back to new forms of orthodoxy and religious suppression. Certainly, if doubt is considered an intrinsic element of faith, the autonomous creativity of the human mind is in no way restricted. But, one will ask, is not this concept of faith incompatible with the "community of faith" which is a decisive reality in all religions? Is not the dynamic idea of faith an expression of Protestant individualism and humanistic autonomy? Can a community of faith—e.g., a church—accept a faith which includes doubt as an intrinsic element and calls the seriousness of doubt an expression of faith? And even if it could allow such an attitude in its ordinary members, how could it permit the same in its leaders?

The answers to these often rather passionately asked questions are many-sided and involved. At the present point the obvious and yet significant assertion must be made that the act of faith, like every act in man's spiritual life, is de-

pendent on language and therefore on community. For only in the community of spiritual beings is language alive. Without language there is no act of faith, no religious experience! This refers to language generally and to the special language in every function of man's spiritual life. The religious language, the language of symbol and myth, is created in the community of the believers and cannot be fully understood outside this community. But within it, the religious language enables the act of faith to have a concrete content. Faith needs its language, as does every act of the personality; without language it would be blind, not directed toward a content, not conscious of itself. This is the reason for the predominant significance of the community of faith. Only as a member of such a community (even if in isolation or expulsion) can man have a content for his ultimate concern. Only in a community of language can man actualize his faith.

But now one will repeat the question and ask: If there is no faith without community of faith, is it not necessary that the community formulate the content of its faith in a definite way as a creedal statement and demand that every member of the community accept it? Certainly this is the way in which the creeds came into existence. This is the reason for their dogmatic and legal fixation! But this does not explain the tremendous power of these expressions of the communal faith over groups and individuals from generation to generation. Nor does it explain the fanaticism with which doubts and deviations were suppressed, not only by

external power but even more by the mechanisms of inner suppression. These mechanisms had been planted into the individual mind and were most effective even without pressure from outside. In order to understand these facts we must remember that faith as the state of ultimate concern includes total surrender to the content of this concern in a centered act of the personality. This means that the existence of the personality in the ultimate sense is at stake. Idolatrous concern and devotion may destroy the center of the personality. If, as in the Christian Church, in centuries of strife the content of the communal faith has been defended against idolatrous intrusions and has been formulated as a defense against such intrusions, it is understandable that every deviation from these formulations is considered destructive for the "soul" of the Christian. He is thought to have fallen under demonic influences. Ecclesiastical punishments are attempts to save him from demonic self-destruction. In these measures the concern which is the content of faith is taken absolutely seriously. It is a matter of eternal life and death.

But it is not only the individual for whom subjection to the established creed is of decisive importance. It is also the community of faith as such which must be protected against the distorting influences of individuals. The Church excludes from its community those who are thought to have denied the foundations of the Church. This is the meaning of the concept of "heresy." The heretic is not one who has erroneous beliefs (this is a possible implication of heresy,

but not its essence), but the heretic is one who has turned away from the true to a false, idolatrous concern. Therefore, he may influence others in the same direction, destroy them, and undermine the community. If the civil authorities consider the Church as the basis of the conformity and cultural substance without which a society cannot live, they persecute the heretic as a civil criminal and use means of indoctrination and external pressure by which they try to keep the unity of the religio-political realm. However, if this point is reached, the reaction of man's spiritual autonomy begins to work and, if victorious, removes not only the political enforcement of a creedal system but the creedal system itself—and, beyond this, often faith itself. But this proves to be impossible. It can be and has always been done only through the power of another ultimate concern. Faith stands against faith in the world historical struggles between the Church and its liberal critics. Even the faith of the liberal needs expression and some communal formulation, and it needs to be defended against authoritarian attacks. Even more: the ultimate concern of the liberal needs concrete contents, as does every ultimate concern. He also lives in institutions of a definite historical character. He, too, has a special language and uses special symbols. His faith is not the abstract affirmation of freedom, but is the faith in freedom as an element in the concreteness of a total situation. If he undercuts this concreteness in the name of freedom, he produces a vacuum into which antiliberal forces easily enter. Only creative faith can resist the onslaught of

destructive faith. Only the concern with what is truly ultimate can stand against idolatrous concerns.

All this drives to the question: How is a community of faith possible without suppression of the autonomy of man's spiritual life? The first answer is based on the relation of the civil authorities to the community of faith. Even if a society is practically identical with a community of faith and the actual life of the group is determined by the spiritual substance of a church, the civil authorities should as such remain neutral and risk the rise of dissident forms of faith. If they try to enforce spiritual conformity, and are successful, they have removed the risk and courage which belong to the act of faith. They have transformed faith into a behavior pattern which does not admit alternatives, and which loses its character of ultimacy even if the fulfillment of the religious duties is done with ultimate concern. However, such a situation has become rare in our period. In most societies the civil authorities have to deal with different communities of faith, unable to enforce the one or the other in all members of the society. In this case the spiritual substance of the social group is determined by the common denominator of the different groups and their common tradition. This denominator may be more secular or more religious. In any case it is an outgrowth of faith, and its expression—as in the American Constitution—is affirmed in an attitude which sometimes has the unconditional character of an ultimate concern, but more often the conditional character of a preliminary concern of highest degree. Just

for this reason the civil authorities should not try to prohibit the expression of doubt about such a basic law, although they must enforce the legal consequences of it.

The second step in the solution of the problem deals with faith and doubt within the community of faith itself. The question is whether the dynamic concept of faith is incompatible with a community which needs creedal expressions of the concrete elements in its ultimate concern. The answer which follows from the preceding analyses is that no answer is possible if the character of the creed excludes the presence of doubt. The concept of the "infallibility" of a decision by a council or a bishop or a book excludes doubt as an element of faith in those who subject themselves to these authorities. They may have to struggle within themselves about their subjection; but after they have made the decision, no doubt can be admitted by them about the infallible statements of the authorities. This faith has become static, a nonquestioning surrender not only to the ultimate, which is affirmed in the act of faith, but also to its concrete elements as formulated by the religious authorities. In this way something preliminary and conditional—the human interpretation of the content of faith from the Biblical writers to the present—receives ultimacy and is elevated above the risk of doubt. The fight against the idolatrous implication of this kind of static faith was waged first by Protestantism and then, when Protestantism itself became static, by Enlightenment. This protest, however insufficient its expression, aimed originally at a dynamic

faith and not at the negation of faith, not even at the negation of creedal formulations. So we stand again before the question: How can a faith which has doubt as an element within itself be united with creedal statements of the community of faith? The answer can only be that creedal expressions of the ultimate concern of the community must include their own criticism. It must become obvious in all of them—be they liturgical, doctrinal or ethical expressions of the faith of the community—that they are not ultimate. Rather, their function is to point to the ultimate which is beyond all of them. This is what I call the "Protestant principle," the critical element in the expression of the community of faith and consequently the element of doubt in the act of faith. Neither the doubt nor the critical element is always actual, but both must always be possible within the circle of faith. From the Christian point of view, one would say that the Church with all its doctrines and institutions and authorities stands under the prophetic judgment and not above it. Criticism and doubt show that the community of faith stands "under the Cross," if the Cross is understood as the divine judgment over man's religious life, and even over Christianity, though it has accepted the sign of the Cross. In this way the dynamic faith which we first have described in personal terms is applied to the community of faith. Certainly, the life of a community of faith is a continuous risk, if faith itself is understood as a risk. But this is the character of dynamic faith, and the consequence of the Protestant principle.

II.

What Faith Is Not

I. THE INTELLECTUALISTIC DISTORTION OF THE MEANING OF FAITH

Our positive description of what faith is implies the rejection of interpretations that dangerously distort the meaning of faith. It is necessary to make these implicit rejections explicit, because the distortions exercise a tremendous power over popular thinking and have been largely responsible for alienating many from religion since the beginning of the scientific age. It is not only the popular mind which distorts the meaning of faith. Behind it lie philosophical and theological thoughts which in a more refined way also miss the meaning of faith.

The different distorted interpretations of the meaning of faith can be traced to one source. Faith as being ultimately concerned is a centered act of the whole personality. If one of the functions which constitute the totality of the personality is partly or completely identified with faith, the meaning of faith is distorted. Such interpretations are not

altogether wrong because every function of the human mind participates in the act of faith. But the element of truth in them is embedded in a whole of error.

The most ordinary misinterpretation of faith is to consider it an act of knowledge that has a low degree of evidence. Something more or less probable or improbable is affirmed in spite of the insufficiency of its theoretical substantiation. This situation is very usual in daily life. If this is meant, one is speaking of *belief* rather than of faith. One believes that one's information is correct. One believes that records of past events are useful for the reconstruction of facts. One believes that a scientific theory is adequate for the understanding of a series of facts. One believes that a person will act in a specific way or that a political situation will change in a certain direction. In all these cases the belief is based on evidence sufficient to make the event probable. Sometimes, however, one believes something which has low probability or is strictly improbable, though not impossible. The causes for all these theoretical and practical beliefs are rather varied. Some things are believed because we have good though not complete evidence about them; many more things are believed because they are stated by good authorities. This is the case whenever we accept the evidence which others accepted as sufficient for belief, even if we cannot approach the evidence directly (for example, all events of the past). Here a new element comes into the picture, namely, the trust in the authority which makes a statement probable for us. Without such trust we could not believe

anything except the objects of our immediate experience. The consequence would be that our world would be infinitely smaller than it actually is. It is rational to trust in authorities which enlarge our consciousness without forcing us into submission. If we use the word "faith" for this kind of trust we can say that most of our knowledge is based on faith. But it is not appropriate to do so. We believe the authorities, we trust their judgment, though never unconditionally, but we do not have faith in them. Faith is more than trust in authorities, although trust is an element of faith. This distinction is important in view of the fact that some earlier theologians tried to prove the unconditional authority of the Biblical writers by showing their trustworthiness as witnesses. The Christian may believe the Biblical writers, but not unconditionally. He does not have faith in them. He should not even have faith in the Bible. For faith is more than trust in even the most sacred authority. It is participation in the subject of one's ultimate concern with one's whole being. Therefore, the term "faith" should not be used in connection with theoretical knowledge, whether it is a knowledge on the basis of immediate, prescientific or scientific evidence, or whether it is on the basis of trust in authorities who themselves are dependent on direct or indirect evidence.

The terminological inquiry has led us into the material problem itself. Faith does not affirm or deny what belongs to the prescientific or scientific knowledge of our world, whether we know it by direct experience or through the ex-

perience of others. The knowledge of our world (including ourselves as a part of the world) is a matter of inquiry by ourselves or by those in whom we trust. It is not a matter of faith. The dimension of faith is not the dimension of science, history or psychology. The acceptance of a probable hypothesis in these realms is not faith, but preliminary belief, to be tested by scholarly methods and to be changed by every new discovery. Almost all the struggles between faith and knowledge are rooted in the wrong understanding of faith as a type of knowledge which has a low degree of evidence but is supported by religious authority. It is, however, not only confusion of faith with knowledge that is responsible for the world historical conflicts between them; it is also the fact that matters of faith in the sense of ultimate concern lie hidden behind an assumedly scientific method. Whenever this happens, faith stands against faith and not against knowledge.

The difference between faith and knowledge is also visible in the kind of certitude each gives. There are two types of knowledge which are based on complete evidence and give complete certitude. The one is the immediate evidence of sense perception. He who sees a green color sees a green color and is certain about it. He cannot be certain whether the thing which seems to him green is really green. He may be under a deception. But he cannot doubt that he sees green. The other complete evidence is that of the logical and mathematical rules which are presupposed even if their formulation admits different and sometimes conflicting

methods. One cannot discuss logic without presupposing those implicit rules which make the discussion meaningful. Here we have absolute certitude; but we have no reality, just as in the case of mere sense perception. Nevertheless, this certitude is not without value. No truth is possible without the material given by sense perception and without the form given by the logical and mathematical rules which express the structure in which all reality stands. One of the worst errors of theology and popular religion is to make statements which intentionally or unintentionally contradict the structure of reality. Such an attitude is an expression not of faith but of the confusion of faith with belief.

Knowledge of reality has never the certitude of complete evidence. The process of knowing is infinite. It never comes to an end except in a state of knowledge of the whole. But such knowledge transcends infinitely every finite mind and can be ascribed only to God. Every knowledge of reality by the human mind has the character of higher or lower probability. The certitude about a physical law, a historical fact, or a psychological structure can be so high that, for all practical purposes, it is certain. But theoretically the incomplete certitude of belief remains and can be undercut at any moment by criticism and new experience. The certitude of faith has not this character. Neither has it the character of formal evidence. The certitude of faith is "existential," meaning that the whole existence of man is involved. It has, as we indicated before, two elements: the one, which is not a risk but a certainty about one's own being, namely, on

being related to something ultimate or unconditional; the other, which is a risk and involves doubt and courage, namely, the surrender to a concern which is not really ultimate and may be destructive if taken as ultimate. This is not a theoretical problem of the kind of higher or lower evidence, of probability or improbability, but it is an existential problem of "to be or not to be." It belongs to a dimension other than any theoretical judgment. Faith is not belief and it is not knowledge with a low degree of probability. Its certitude is not the uncertain certitude of a theoretical judgment.

2. THE VOLUNTARISTIC DISTORTION OF THE MEANING OF FAITH

One can divide this form of the distorted interpretation of faith into a Catholic and a Protestant type. The Catholic type has a great tradition in the Roman Church. It goes back to Thomas Aquinas, who emphasized that the lack of evidence which faith has must be complemented by an act of will. This, first of all, presupposes that faith is understood as an act of knowledge with a limited evidence and that the lack of evidence is made up by an act of will. We have seen that this way of understanding faith does not do justice to the existential character of faith. Our criticism of the intellectualistic distortion of the meaning of faith hits basically also the voluntaristic distortion of the meaning of faith. The former is the basis of the latter. Without a theoretically formulated content the "will to believe" would be empty.

critique of Thos.

up - by love.

But the content which is meant in the will to believe is given to the will by the intellect. For instance, someone has doubts about the so-called "immortality of the soul." He realizes that this assertion that the soul continues to live after the death of the body cannot be proved either by evidence or by trustworthy authority. It is a questionable proposition of theoretical character. But there are motives driving people to this assertion. They decide to believe, and make up in this way for the lack of evidence. If this belief is called "faith," it is a misnomer, even if much evidence were collected for the belief in a continuation of life after death. In classical Roman Catholic theology the "will to believe" is not an act which originates in man's striving, but it is given by grace to him whose will is moved by God to accept the truth of what the Church teaches. Even so, it is not the intellect which is determined by its content to believe, but it is the will which performs what the intellect alone cannot do. This kind of interpretation agrees with the authoritarian attitude of the Roman Church. For it is the authority of the Church which gives the contents, to be affirmed by the intellect under the impact of the will. If the idea of grace mediated by the Church and motivating the will is rejected, as in pragmatism, the will to believe becomes willfulness. It becomes an arbitrary decision which may be supported by some insufficient arguments but which could have gone in other directions with equal justification. Such belief as the basis of the will to believe is certainly not faith.

The Protestant form of the will to believe is connected

with the moral interpretation of religion by Protestants. One demands "obedience of faith," following a Paulinian phrase. The term can mean two different things. It can mean the element of commitment which is implied in the state of ultimate concern. If this is meant, one simply says that in the state of ultimate concern all mental functions participate—which certainly is true. Or the term "obedience of faith" can mean subjection to the command to believe as it is given in prophetic and apostolic preaching. Certainly, if a prophetic word is accepted as prophetic, i.e., as coming from God, obedience of faith does not mean anything other than accepting a message as coming from God. But if there is doubt whether a "word" is prophetic, the term "obedience of faith" loses its meaning. It becomes an arbitrary "will to believe." Yet one may describe the situation in a more refined way and point to the fact that we are often grasped by something, e.g., Biblical passages, as expressions of the objectively ultimate concern, but we hesitate to accept them as our subjective ultimate concern for escapist reasons. In such cases, one says, the appeal to the will is justified and does not ask for a willful decision. This is true; but such an act of will does not produce faith—faith as ultimate concern is already given. The demand to be obedient is the demand to be what one already is, namely, committed to the ultimate concern from which one tries to escape. Only if this is the situation can obedience of faith be demanded; but then faith precedes the obedience and is not

the product of it. No command to believe and no will to believe can create faith.

This is important for religious education, counseling and preaching. One should never convey the impression to those whom one wants to impress, that faith is a demand made upon them, the rejection of which is lack of good will. Finite man cannot produce infinite concern. Our oscillating will cannot produce the certainty which belongs to faith. This is in strict analogy to what we said about the impossibility of reaching the truth of faith by arguments and authorities, which in the best case give finite knowledge of a more or less probable character. Neither arguments for belief nor the will to believe can create faith.

3. THE EMOTIONALISTIC DISTORTION OF THE MEANING OF FAITH

The difficulty of understanding faith either as a matter of the intellect or as a matter of will, or of both in mutual support, has led to the interpretation of faith as emotion. This solution was, and partly is, supported from both the religious and the secular side. For the defenders of religion it was a retreat to a seemingly safe position after the battle about faith as a matter of knowledge or will had been lost. The father of all modern Protestant theology, Schleiermacher, has described religion as the feeling of unconditional dependence. Of course, feeling so defined does not mean in religion what it means in popular psychology. It is not vague and changing, but has a definite content: uncondi-

mathematical signs. Sometimes such signs are called symbols; but this is unfortunate because it makes the distinction between signs and symbols more difficult. Decisive is the fact that signs do not participate in the reality of that to which they point, while symbols do. Therefore, signs can be replaced for reasons of expediency or convention, while symbols cannot.

(2) This leads to the second characteristic of the symbol: It participates in that to which it points: the flag participates in the power and dignity of the nation for which it stands. Therefore, it cannot be replaced except after an historic catastrophe that changes the reality of the nation which it symbolizes. An attack on the flag is felt as an attack on the majesty of the group in which it is acknowledged. Such an attack is considered blasphemy.

(3) The third characteristic of a symbol is that it opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us. All arts create symbols for a level of reality which cannot be reached in any other way. A picture and a poem reveal elements of reality which cannot be approached scientifically. In the creative work of art we encounter reality in a dimension which is closed for us without such works. The symbol's fourth characteristic not only opens up dimensions and elements of reality which otherwise would remain unapproachable but also unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality. A great play gives us not only a new vision of the human

scene, but it opens up hidden depths of our own being. Thus we are able to receive what the play reveals to us in reality. There are within us dimensions of which we cannot become aware except through symbols, as melodies and rhythms in music.

Symbols cannot be produced intentionally—this is the fifth characteristic. They grow out of the individual or collective unconscious and cannot function without being accepted by the unconscious dimension of our being. Symbols which have an especially social function, as political and religious symbols, are created or at least accepted by the collective unconscious of the group in which they appear.

The sixth and last characteristic of the symbol is a consequence of the fact that symbols cannot be invented. Like living beings, they grow and they die. They grow when the situation is ripe for them, and they die when the situation changes. The symbol of the "king" grew in a special period of history, and it died in most parts of the world in our period. Symbols do not grow because people are longing for them, and they do not die because of scientific or practical criticism. They die because they can no longer produce response in the group where they originally found expression.

These are the main characteristics of every symbol. Genuine symbols are created in several spheres of man's cultural creativity. We have mentioned already the political and the artistic realm. We could add history and, above all, religion, whose symbols will be our particular concern.

inable form of atheism. Whether it is possible is a problem which must remain unsolved at this point. In any case, he who denies God as a matter of ultimate concern affirms God, because he affirms ultimacy in his concern. God is the fundamental symbol for what concerns us ultimately. Again it would be completely wrong to ask: So God is nothing but a symbol? Because the next question has to be: A symbol for what? And then the answer would be: For God! God is symbol for God. This means that in the notion of God we must distinguish two elements: the element of ultimacy, which is a matter of immediate experience and not symbolic in itself, and the element of concreteness, which is taken from our ordinary experience and symbolically applied to God. The man whose ultimate concern is a sacred tree has both the ultimacy of concern and the concreteness of the tree which symbolizes his relation to the ultimate. The man who adores Apollo is ultimately concerned, but not in an abstract way. His ultimate concern is symbolized in the divine figure of Apollo. The man who glorifies Jahweh, the God of the Old Testament, has both an ultimate concern and a concrete image of what concerns him ultimately. This is the meaning of the seemingly cryptic statement that God is the symbol of God. In this qualified sense God is the fundamental and universal content of faith.

It is obvious that such an understanding of the meaning of God makes the discussions about the existence or non-existence of God meaningless. It is meaningless to question the ultimacy of an ultimate concern. This element in the

idea of God is in itself certain. The symbolic expression of this element varies endlessly through the whole history of mankind. Here again it would be meaningless to ask whether one or another of the figures in which an ultimate concern is symbolized does "exist." If "existence" refers to something which can be found within the whole of reality, no divine being exists. The question is not this, but: which of the innumerable symbols of faith is most adequate to the meaning of faith? In other words, which symbol of ultimacy expresses the ultimate without idolatrous elements? This is the problem, and not the so-called "existence of God"—which is in itself an impossible combination of words. God as the ultimate in man's ultimate concern is more certain than any other certainty, even that of oneself. God as symbolized in a divine figure is a matter of daring faith, of courage and risk.

God is the basic symbol of faith, but not the only one. All the qualities we attribute to him, power, love, justice, are taken from finite experiences and applied symbolically to that which is beyond finitude and infinity. If faith calls God "almighty," it uses the human experience of power in order to symbolize the content of its infinite concern, but it does not describe a highest being who can do as he pleases. So it is with all the other qualities and with all the actions, past, present and future, which men attribute to God. They are symbols taken from our daily experience, and not information about what God did once upon a time or will do sometime in the future. Faith is not the belief in such

All spiritual elements of man, in spite of their distinct character, are within each other. This is true also of faith and reason. Therefore, it is not enough to assert that the state of being ultimately concerned is in no conflict with the rational structure of the human mind. One also must show their actual relationship, namely, the way in which they lie within each other. In which sense, one must ask first, is the word "reason" used when confronted with faith? Is it meant, as is often the case today, in the sense of scientific method, logical strictness and technical calculation? Or is it used, as in most periods of Western culture, in the sense of the source of meaning, of structure, of norms and principles? In the first case, reason gives the tools for recognizing and controlling reality, and faith gives the direction in which this control may be exercised. One could call this kind of reason technical reason, providing for means but not for ends. Reason in this sense concerns the daily life of everybody and is the power which determines the technical civilization of our time. In the second case, reason is identical with the humanity of man in contrast to all other beings. It is the basis of language, of freedom, of creativity. It is involved in the search for knowledge, the experience of art, the actualization of moral commands; it makes a centered personal life and a participation in community possible. If faith were the opposite of reason, it would tend to dehumanize man. This consequence has been drawn, theoretically and practically, in religious and political authoritarian systems. A faith which destroys reason destroys itself

and the humanity of man. For only a being who has the structure of reason is able to be ultimately concerned, to distinguish ultimate and preliminary concerns, to understand the unconditional commands of the ethical imperative, and to be aware of the presence of the holy. All this is valid only if the second meaning of reason is presupposed: reason as the meaningful structure of mind and reality; and not the first meaning: reason as a technical tool.

Reason is the precondition of faith; faith is the act in which reason reaches ecstatically beyond itself. This is the opposite side of their being within each other. Man's reason is finite; it moves within finite relations when dealing with the universe and with man himself. All cultural activities in which man perceives his world and those in which he shapes his world have this character of finitude. Therefore, they are not matters of infinite concern. But reason is not bound to its own finitude. It is aware of it and, in so doing, rises above it. Man experiences a belonging to the infinite which, however, is neither a part of himself nor something in his power. It must grasp him, and if it does, it is a matter of infinite concern. Man is finite, man's reason lives in preliminary concerns; but man is also aware of his potential infinity, and this awareness appears as his ultimate concern, as faith. If reason is grasped by an ultimate concern, it is driven beyond itself; but it does not cease to be reason, finite reason. The ecstatic experience of an ultimate concern does not destroy the structure of reason. Ecstasy is fulfilled, not denied, rationality. Reason can be fulfilled only if it is

driven beyond the limits of its finitude, and experiences the presence of the ultimate, the holy. Without such an experience reason exhausts itself and its finite contents. Finally, it becomes filled with irrational or demonic contents and is destroyed by them. The road leads from reason fulfilled in faith through reason without faith to reason filled with demonic-destructive faith. The second stage is only a point of transition, since there is no vacuum in the spiritual life, as there is none in nature. Reason is the presupposition of faith, and faith is the fulfillment of reason. Faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy. There is no conflict between the nature of faith and the nature of reason; they are within each other.

On this point theology will ask several questions. It will ask whether the nature of faith is not distorted under the conditions of human existence, for example, if demonic-destructive forces get hold of it—as indicated before. And theology will ask whether the nature of reason is not distorted with man's estrangement from himself. Finally, it will ask whether the unity of faith and reason and the true nature of both of them must not be re-established by what religion calls "revelation." And—theology will continue—if this is the case, is reason in its distorted stage not obliged to subject itself to revelation and is not this subjection to the contents of revelation the true sense of the term "faith"? The answer to these questions, asked by theology, is the matter of a whole theology itself. It cannot be given in the present book except in a few basic statements.

✓ First, it must be acknowledged that man is in a state of estrangement from his true nature. Thus the use of his reason and the character of his faith are not what they essentially are and, therefore, ought to be. This leads to actual conflicts between a distorted use of reason and an idolatrous faith. The solution we gave with respect to the true nature of faith and the true nature of reason cannot be applied without this fundamental qualification to the actual life of faith and reason under the conditions of human existence.

7 The consequence of this qualification is that the estrangement of faith and of reason in themselves and in their mutual relationship must be overcome and their true nature and relation must be established within actual life. The experience in which this happens is a revelatory experience. The term "revelation" has been misused so much that it is difficult to use it at all, even more so than the term "reason." Revelation is popularly understood as a divine information about divine matters, given to prophets and apostles and dictated by the divine Spirit to the writers of the Bible, or the Koran, or other sacred books. Acceptance of such divine informations, however absurd and irrational they may be, is then called faith. Every word of the present discussion contradicts this distortion of the meaning of revelation. Revelation is first of all the experience in which an ultimate concern grasps the human mind and creates a community in which this concern expresses itself in symbols of action, imagination and thought. Wherever such a revelatory experience occurs, both faith and reason are renewed.

Their internal and mutual conflicts are conquered, and estrangement is replaced by reconciliation. This is what revelation means, or should mean. It is an event in which the ultimate becomes manifest in an ultimate concern, shaking and transforming the given situation in religion and culture. In such an experience no conflict between faith and reason is possible; for it is man's total structure as a rational being which is grasped and changed by the revelatory manifestation of an ultimate concern. But revelation is revelation to man in his state of corrupted faith and corrupted rationality. And the corruption, although broken in its final power, is conquered but not removed. It enters the new revelatory experience as it had entered the old ones. It makes faith idolatrous, confusing the bearer and the manifestations of the ultimate with the ultimate itself. It deprives reason of its ecstatic power, of its tendency to transcend itself in the direction of the ultimate. In consequence of this dual distortion, it distorts the relation of faith and reason, reducing faith to a preliminary concern which interferes with the preliminary concerns of reason, and elevates reason to ultimacy in spite of its essential finitude. Out of this double corruption there arise new conflicts between faith and reason and with them the quest for a new and superior revelation. The history of faith is a permanent fight with the corruption of faith, and the conflict with reason is one of its most conspicuous symptoms. The decisive battles in this fight are the great revelatory events, and the victorious battle would be a final revelation in which the distortion of

interdependent. In any case, where there is the attempt to know, there is truth or error or one of the many degrees of transition between truth and error. In faith man's cognitive function is at work. Therefore, we must ask what the meaning of truth in faith is, what its criteria are, and how it is related to other forms of truth with other kinds of criteria.

Science tries to describe and to explain the structures and relations in the universe, in so far as they can be tested by experiment and calculated in quantitative terms. The truth of a scientific statement is the adequacy of the description of the structural laws which determine reality, and it is the verification of this description by experimental repetitions. Every scientific truth is preliminary and subject to changes both in grasping reality and in expressing it adequately. This element of uncertainty does not diminish the truth value of a tested and verified scientific assertion. It only prevents scientific dogmatism and absolutism.

Therefore, it is a very poor method of defending the truth of faith against the truth of science, if theologians point to the preliminary character of every scientific statement in order to provide a place of retreat for the truth of faith. If tomorrow scientific progress reduced the sphere of uncertainty, faith would have to continue its retreat—an undignified and unnecessary procedure, for scientific truth and the truth of faith do not belong to the same dimension of meaning. Science has no right and no power to interfere with faith and faith has no power to interfere with science.

One dimension of meaning is not able to interfere with another dimension.

If this is understood, the previous conflicts between faith and science appear in a quite different light. The conflict was actually not between faith and science but between a faith and a science each of which was not aware of its own valid dimension. When the representatives of faith impeded the beginning of modern astronomy they were not aware that the Christian symbols, although using the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic astronomy, were not tied up with this astronomy. Only if the symbols of "God in heaven" and "man on earth" and "demons below the earth" are taken as descriptions of places, populated by divine or demonic beings can modern astronomy conflict with the Christian faith. On the other hand, if representatives of modern physics reduce the whole of reality to the mechanical movement of the smallest particles of matter, denying the really real quality of life and mind, they express a faith, objectively as well as subjectively. Subjectively science is their ultimate concern—and they are ready to sacrifice everything, including their lives, for this ultimate. Objectively, they create a monstrous symbol of this concern, namely, a universe in which everything, including their own scientific passion, is swallowed by a meaningless mechanism. In opposing this symbol of faith Christian faith is right.

Science can conflict only with science, and faith only with faith; science which remains science cannot conflict with faith which remains faith. This is true also of other spheres

of scientific research, such as biology and psychology. The famous struggle between the theory of evolution and the theology of some Christian groups was not a struggle between science and faith, but between a science whose faith deprived man of his humanity and a faith whose expression was distorted by Biblical literalism. It is obvious that a theology which interprets the Biblical story of creation as a scientific description of an event which happened once upon a time interferes with the methodologically controlled scientific work; and that a theory of evolution which interprets man's descendancy from older forms of life in a way that removes the infinite, qualitative difference between man and animal is faith and not science.

The same consideration must be given to present and future conflicts between faith and contemporary psychology. Modern psychology is afraid of the concept of soul because it seems to establish a reality which is unapproachable by scientific methods and may interfere with their results. This fear is not unfounded; psychology should not accept any concept which is not produced by its own scientific work. Its function is to describe man's processes as adequately as possible, and to be open to replacement of these descriptions at any time. This is true of the modern concepts of ego, superego, self, personality, unconsciousness, mind, as well as of the traditional concepts of soul, spirit, will, etc. Methodological psychology is subject to scientific verification, as is every other scientific endeavor. All its con-

cepts and definitions, even those most validated, are preliminary.

When faith speaks of the ultimate dimension in which man lives, and in which he can win or lose his soul, or of the ultimate meaning of his existence, it is not interfering at all with the scientific rejection of the concept of the soul. A psychology without soul cannot deny this nor can a psychology with soul confirm it. The truth of man's eternal meaning lies in a dimension other than the truth of adequate psychological concepts. Contemporary analytic or depth psychology has in many instances conflicted with pre-theological and theological expressions of faith. It is, however, not difficult in the statements of depth psychology to distinguish the more or less verified observations and hypotheses from assertions about man's nature and destiny which are clearly expressions of faith. The naturalistic elements which Freud carried from the nineteenth into the twentieth century, his basic puritanism with respect to love, his pessimism about culture, and his reduction of religion to ideological projection are all expressions of faith and not the result of scientific analysis. There is no reason to deny to a scholar who deals with man and his predicament the right to introduce elements of faith. But if he attacks other forms of faith in the name of scientific psychology, as Freud and many of his followers do, he is confusing dimensions. In this case those who represent another kind of faith are justified in resisting these attacks. It is not always easy to distinguish the element of faith from the element of scientific

hypothesis in a psychological assertion, but it is possible and often necessary.

The distinction between the truth of faith and the truth of science leads to a warning, directed to theologians, not to use recent scientific discoveries to confirm the truth of faith. Microphysics have undercut some scientific hypotheses concerning the calculability of the universe. The theory of quantum and the principle of indeterminacy have had this effect. Immediately religious writers use these insights for the confirmation of their own ideas of human freedom, divine creativity, and miracles. But there is no justification for such a procedure at all, neither from the point of view of physics nor from the point of view of religion. The physical theories referred to have no direct relation to the infinitely complex phenomenon of human freedom, and the emission of power in quanta has no direct relation to the meaning of miracles. Theology, in using physical theories in this way, confuses the dimension of science with the dimension of faith. The truth of faith cannot be confirmed by latest physical or biological or psychological discoveries—as it cannot be denied by them.

3. THE TRUTH OF FAITH AND HISTORICAL TRUTH

Historical truth has a character quite different from that of scientific truth. History reports unique events, not repetitious processes which can be tested again and again. Historical events are not subject to experiment. The only analogy in history to a physical experiment is the com-

parison of documents. If documents of an independent origin agree, a historical assertion is verified within its own limits. But history does not only tell a series of facts. It also tries to understand these facts in their origins, their relations, their meaning. History describes, explains, and understands. And understanding presupposes participation. This is the difference between historical and scientific truth. In historical truth the interpreting subject is involved; in scientific truth it is detached. Since the truth of faith means total involvement, historical truth has often been compared with the truth of faith. A complete dependence of the historical truth on the truth of faith has been derived from such an identification. In this way it has been asserted that faith can guarantee the truth of a questionable historical statement. But he who makes such assertions forgets that in a genuine historical work detached and controlled observation is as much used as in the observation of physical or biological processes. Historical truth is first of all factual truth; in this it is distinguished from the poetic truth of epics or from the mythical truth of legend. This difference is decisive for the relation of the truth of faith to the truth of history. Faith cannot guarantee factual truth. But faith can and must interpret the meaning of facts from the point of view of man's ultimate concern. In doing so it transfers historical truth into the dimension of the truth of faith.

This problem has come into the foreground of much popular and theological thought since historical research has discovered the literary character of the Biblical writings.

It has shown that in their narrative parts the Old and the New Testament combine historical, legendary and mythological elements and that in many cases it is impossible to separate these elements from each other with any degree of probability. Historical research has made it obvious that there is no way to get at the historical events which have produced the Biblical picture of Jesus who is called the Christ with more than a degree of probability. Similar research in the historical character of the holy writings and the legendary traditions of non-Christian religions has discovered the same situation. The truth of faith cannot be made dependent on the historical truth of the stories and legends in which faith has expressed itself. It is a disastrous distortion of the meaning of faith to identify it with the belief in the historical validity of the Biblical stories. This, however, happens on high as well as on low levels of sophistication. People say that others or they themselves are without Christian faith, because they do not believe that the New Testament miracle stories are reliably documented. Certainly they are not, and the search for the degree of probability or improbability of a Biblical story has to be made with all the tools of a solid philological and historical method. It is not a matter of faith to decide if the presently used edition of the Moslemic Koran is identical with the original text, although this is the fervent belief of most of the adherents of Mohammed. It is not a matter of faith to decide that large parts of the Pentateuch are priestly wisdom of the period after the Babylonian exile, or that the

Book of Genesis contains more myths and sacred legend than actual history. It is not a matter of faith to decide whether or not the expectation of the final catastrophe of the universe as envisaged in the late books of the Old and in the New Testament originated in the Persian religion. It is not a matter of faith to decide how much legendary, mythological and historical material is amalgamated in the stories about the birth and the resurrection of the Christ. It is not a matter of faith to decide which version of the reports about the early days of the Church has the greatest probability. All these questions must be decided, in terms of more or less probability, by historical research. They are questions of historical truth, not of the truth of faith. Faith can say that something of ultimate concern has happened in history because the question of the ultimate in being and meaning is involved. Faith can say that the Old Testament law which is given as the law of Moses has unconditional validity for those who are grasped by it, no matter how much or how little can be traced to a historical figure of that name. Faith can say that the reality which is manifest in the New Testament picture of Jesus as the Christ has saving power for those who are grasped by it, no matter how much or how little can be traced to the historical figure who is called Jesus of Nazareth. Faith can ascertain its own foundation, the Mosaic law, or Jesus as the Christ, Mohammed the prophet, or Buddha the illuminated. But faith cannot ascertain the historical conditions which made it possible for these men to become matters of ultimate con-

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cern for large sections of humanity. Faith includes certitude about its own foundation—for example, an event in history which has transformed history—for the faithful. But faith does not include historical knowledge about the way in which this event took place. Therefore, faith cannot be shaken by historical research even if its results are critical of the traditions in which the event is reported. This independence of historical truth is one of the most important consequences of the understanding of faith as the state of ultimate concern. It liberates the faithful from a burden they cannot carry after the demands of scholarly honesty have shaped their conscience. If such honesty were in a necessary conflict with what has been called the “obedience of faith,” God would be seen as split in himself, as having demonic traits; and the concern about it would not be ultimate concern, but the conflict of two limited concerns. Such faith, in the last analysis, is idolatrous.

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4. THE TRUTH OF FAITH AND PHILOSOPHICAL TRUTH

Neither scientific nor historical truth can affirm or negate the truth of faith. The truth of faith can neither affirm nor negate scientific or historical truth. Then the question arises whether philosophical truth has the same relation to the truth of faith or whether the relation is more complex. This, indeed, is the case. What is more, the complexity of the relation between philosophical truth and the truth of faith makes the relation of scientific and historical truth more complex than it appeared in the preceding analysis. This is

the reason for the innumerable discussions about the relationship of faith and philosophy and for the popular opinion that philosophy is the enemy and destroyer of faith. Even theologians who have used a philosophical concept in order to express the faith of a religious community have been accused of betraying the faith.

The difficulty of every discussion concerning philosophy as such is the fact that every definition of philosophy is an expression of the point of view of the philosopher who gives the definition. Nevertheless, there is a kind of pre-philosophical agreement about the meaning of philosophy, and the only thing one can do in a discussion like the present one is to use this prephilosophical notion of what philosophy is. In this sense philosophy is the attempt to answer the most general questions about the nature of reality and human existence. Most general are those questions which do not ask about the nature of a specific sphere of reality (as the physical or the historical realms) but about the nature of reality, which is effective in all realms. Philosophy tries to find the universal categories in which being is experienced.

If such a notion of philosophy is presupposed, the relation of philosophical truth to the truth of faith can be determined. Philosophical truth is truth about the structure of being; the truth of faith is truth about one's ultimate concern. Up to this point the relation seems to be very similar to that between the truth of faith and scientific truth. But the difference is that there is a point of identity between the ultimate of the philosophical question and the ultimate of

the religious concern. In both cases ultimate reality is sought and expressed—conceptually in philosophy, symbolically in religion. Philosophical truth consists in true concepts concerning the ultimate; the truth of faith consists in true symbols concerning the ultimate. The relation between these two is the problem with which we have to deal.

The question will certainly be raised: Why does philosophy use concepts and why does faith use symbols if both try to express the same ultimate? The answer, of course, is that the relation to the ultimate is not the same in each case. The philosophical relation is in principle a detached description of the basic structure in which the ultimate manifests itself. The relation of faith is in principle an involved expression of concern about the meaning of the ultimate for the faithful. The difference is obvious and fundamental. But it is, as the phrase "in principle" indicates, a difference which is not maintained in the actual life of philosophy and of faith. It cannot be maintained, because the philosopher is a human being with an ultimate concern, hidden or open. And the faithful one is a human being with the power of thought and the need for conceptual understanding. This is not only a biographical fact. It has consequences for the life of philosophy in the philosopher and for the life of faith in the faithful.

An analysis of philosophical systems, essays or fragments of all kinds shows that the direction in which the philosopher asks the question and the preference he gives to special types of answers is determined by cognitive consider-

ation and by a state of ultimate concern. The historically most significant philosophies show not only the greatest power of thought but the most passionate concern about the meaning of the ultimate whose manifestations they describe. One needs only to be reminded of the Indian and Greek philosophers, almost without exception, and the modern philosophers from Leibnitz and Spinoza to Kant and Hegel. If it seems that the positivistic line of philosophers from Locke and Hume to present-day logical positivism is an exception to this rule, one must consider that the task to which these philosophers restricted themselves were special problems of the doctrine of knowledge and, in our time especially, analyses of the linguistic tools of scientific knowledge. This certainly is a justified and very important endeavor, but is not philosophy in the traditional sense.

Philosophy, in its genuine meaning, is carried on by people in whom the passion of an ultimate concern is united with a clear and detached observation of the way ultimate reality manifests itself in the processes of the universe. It is this element of ultimate concern behind philosophical ideas which supplies the truth of faith in them. Their vision of the universe and of man's predicament within it unites faith and conceptual work. Philosophy is not only the mother's womb out of which science and history have come, it is also an ever-present element in actual scientific and historical work. The frame of reference within which the great physicists have seen and are seeing the universe of their inquiries is philosophical, even if their actual inquiries verify

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it. In no case is it a result of their discoveries. It is always a vision of the totality of being which consciously or unconsciously determines the frame of their thought. Because this is so one is justified in saying that even in the scientific view of reality an element of faith is effective. Scientists rightly try to prevent these elements of faith and philosophical truth from interfering with their actual research. This is possible to a great extent; but even the most protected experiment is not absolutely "pure"—pure in the sense of the exclusion of interfering factors such as the observer, and as the interest which determines the kind of question asked of nature in an experiment. What we said about the philosopher must also be said about the scientist. Even in his scientific work he is a human being, grasped by an ultimate concern, and he asks the question of the universe as such, the philosophical question.

In the same way the historian is consciously or unconsciously a philosopher. It is quite obvious that every task of the historian beyond the finding of facts is dependent on evaluations of historical factors, especially the nature of man, his freedom, his determination, his development out of nature, etc. It is less obvious but also true that even in the act of finding historical facts philosophical presuppositions are involved. This is especially true in deciding, out of the infinite number of happenings in every infinitely small moment of time, which facts shall be called historically relevant facts. The historian is further forced to give his evaluation of sources and their reliability, a task which is

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not independent of his interpretation of human nature. Finally, in the moment in which a historical work gives implicit or explicit assertions about the meaning of historical events for human existence, the philosophical presuppositions of history are evident. Where there is philosophy there is expression of an ultimate concern; there is an element of faith, however hidden it may be by the passion of the historian for pure facts.

All these considerations show that, in spite of their essential difference, there is an actual union of philosophical truth and the truth of faith in every philosophy and that this union is significant for the work of the scientist and the historian. This union has been called "philosophical faith."¹ The term is misleading, because it seems to confuse the two elements, philosophical truth and the truth of faith. Further, the term seems to indicate that there is *one* philosophical faith, a "philosophia perennis," as it has been termed. But only the philosophical question is perennial, not the answers. There is a continuous process of interpretation of philosophical elements and elements of faith, not *one* philosophical faith.

There is truth of faith in philosophical truth. And there is philosophical truth in the truth of faith. In order to see the latter point we must confront the conceptual expression of philosophical truth with the symbolical expression of the truth of faith. Now, one can say that most philosophical

¹ In the book of this name by Jaspers.

concepts have mythological ancestors and that most mythological symbols have conceptual elements which can and must be developed as soon as the philosophical consciousness has appeared. In the idea of God the concepts of being, life, spirit, unity and diversity are implied. In the symbol of the creation concepts of finitude, anxiety, freedom and time are implied. The symbol of the "fall of Adam" implies a concept of man's essential nature, of his conflict with himself, of his estrangement from himself. Only because every religious symbol has conceptual potentialities is "theo-logy" possible. There is a philosophy implied in every symbol of faith. But faith does not determine the movement of the philosophical thought, just as philosophy does not determine the character of one's ultimate concern. Symbols of faith can open the eyes of the philosopher to qualities of the universe which otherwise would not have been recognized by him. But faith does not command a definite philosophy, although churches and theological movements have claimed and used Platonic, Aristotelian, Kantian or Humean philosophies. The philosophical implications of the symbols of faith can be developed in many ways, but the truth of faith and the truth of philosophy have no authority over each other.

5. THE TRUTH OF FAITH AND ITS CRITERIA

In what sense, then, can one speak of the truth of faith if it cannot be judged by any other kind of truth, whether scientific, historical or philosophical? The answer follows

from the nature of faith as the state of being ultimately concerned. It has, as the concept of concern itself, two sides, a subjective and an objective side. The truth of faith must be considered from both sides. From the subjective side one must say that faith is true if it adequately expresses an ultimate concern. From the objective side one must say that faith is true if its content is the really ultimate. The first answer acknowledges the truth in all genuine symbols and types of faith. It justifies the history of religion and makes it understandable as a history of man's ultimate concern, of his response to the manifestation of the holy in many places in many ways. The second answer points to a criterion of ultimacy by which the history of religion is judged, not in terms of rejection but in terms of a yes and no.

Faith has truth in so far as it adequately expresses an ultimate concern. "Adequacy" of expression means the power of expressing an ultimate concern in such a way that it creates reply, action, communication. Symbols which are able to do this are alive. But the life of symbols is limited. The relation of man to the ultimate undergoes changes. Contents of ultimate concern vanish or are replaced by others. A divine figure ceases to create reply, it ceases to be a common symbol and loses its power to move for action. Symbols which for a certain period, or in a certain place, expressed truth of faith for a certain group now only remind of the faith of the past. They have lost their truth, and it is an open question whether dead symbols can be revived. Probably not for those to whom they have died! If we look

from this point of view at the history of faith, including our own period, the criterion of the truth of faith is whether or not it is alive. This, certainly, is not an exact criterion in any scientific sense, but it is a pragmatic one that can be applied rather easily to the past with its stream of obviously dead symbols. It cannot be applied so easily to the present because one never can say a symbol is definitely dead if it is still accepted. It may be dormant but capable of being reawakened.

The other criterion of the truth of a symbol of faith is that it expresses the ultimate which is really ultimate. In other words, that it is not idolatrous. In the light of this criterion the history of faith as a whole stands under judgment. The weakness of all faith is the ease with which it becomes idolatrous. The human mind, Calvin has said, is a continuously working factory of idols. This is true of all types of faith, and even if Protestant Christianity is considered as the point in which the different types converge, it is open to idolatrous distortions. It must also apply against itself the criterion which it uses against other forms of faith. Every type of faith has the tendency to elevate its concrete symbols to absolute validity. The criterion of the truth of faith, therefore, is that it implies an element of self-negation. That symbol is most adequate which expresses not only the ultimate but also its own lack of ultimacy. Christianity expresses itself in such a symbol in contrast to all other religions, namely, in the Cross of the Christ. Jesus could not have been the Christ without sacrificing himself as Jesus

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to himself as the Christ. Any acceptance of Jesus as the Christ which is not the acceptance of Jesus the crucified is a form of idolatry. The ultimate concern of the Christian is not Jesus, but the Christ Jesus who is manifest as the crucified. The event which has created this symbol has given the criterion by which the truth of Christianity, as well as of any other religion, must be judged. The only infallible truth of faith, the one in which the ultimate itself is unconditionally manifest, is that any truth of faith stands under a yes-or-no judgment.

Driven by this criterion, Protestantism has criticized the Roman Church. Doctrinal formulations did not divide the churches in the Reformation period; it was the rediscovery of the principle that no church has the right to put itself in the place of the ultimate. Its truth is judged by the ultimate. In the same way, Biblical research in Protestantism has shown the many levels of Biblical literature and the impossibility of considering the Bible as containing the infallible truth of faith. The same criterion is valid with respect to the whole history of religion and culture. The criterion contains a Yes—it does not reject any truth of faith in whatever form it may appear in the history of faith—and it contains a No—it does not accept any truth of faith as ultimate except the one that no man possesses it. The fact that this criterion is identical with the Protestant principle and has become reality in the Cross of the Christ constitutes the superiority of Protestant Christianity.

This is his conclusion in a nutshell.



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