

Demop. In its mysteries. _Mystery_ is at bottom only the theological
terminus technicus for religious allegory. All religions have their
mysteries. In reality, a mystery is a palpably absurd dogma which
conceals in itself a lofty truth, which by itself would be absolutely
incomprehensible to the ordinary intelligence of the raw masses. The
masses accept it in this disguise on trust and faith, without allowing
themselves to be led astray by its absurdity, which is palpable to them;
and thereby they participate in the kernel of the matter so far as they
are able. I may add as an explanation that the use of mystery has been
attempted even in philosophy; for example, when Pascal, who was pietest,
mathematician, and philosopher in one, says in this threefold character:
God is everywhere centre and nowhere periphery. Malebranche has also
truly remarked, _La liberté est un mystère_. One might go further, and
maintain that in religions everything is really mystery. For it is
utterly impossible to impart truth in _sensu proprio_ to the multitude
in its crudity; it is only a mythical and allegorical reflection of it
that can fall to its share and enlighten it. Naked truth must not appear
before the eyes of the profane vulgar; it can only appear before them
closely veiled. And it is for this reason that it is unfair to demand of
a religion that it should be true in _sensu proprio_, and that, _en
passant_. Rationalists and Supernaturalists of to-day are so absurd.
They both start with the supposition that religion must be the truth;
and while the former prove that it is not, the latter obstinately
maintain that it is; or rather the former cut up and dress the allegory
in such a way that it could be true in _sensu proprio_ but would in that
case become a platitude. The latter wish to maintain, without further

dressing, that it is true in *_sensu proprio_*, which, as they should know, can only be carried into execution by inquisitions and the stake. While in reality, myth and allegory are the essential elements of religion, but under the indispensable condition (because of the intellectual limitations of the great masses) that it supplies enough satisfaction to meet those metaphysical needs of mankind which are ineradicable, and that it takes the place of pure philosophical truth, which is infinitely difficult, and perhaps never attainable.