The Divine may show three faces of itself to the mind. These are the order of right-action, the order of splendor, the order of beatitude. A face is not necessarily experienced as an order except by the mind. It is the proper work of intellect to present the order of any face to the mind. A face has four directed aspects: above, below, before and behind. This basic order is symbolized non-verbally by the figure of the equilateral cross whose dimensions are called, respectively, the vertical and the horizontal. The vertical axis refers to "height" and "depth"; the horizontal to "length" and "breadth." The vertical axis expresses, among others, the polarities between value and latency; clarity and profundity; the sublime and the dangerous. It is the axis of the transcendent and the abyssal. The horizontal axis expresses, among others, the polarities between position and direction; establishment and duration; satisfaction and longing. It is the axis of the spatial and the temporal--of the coming-to-be-and the-passing-away. These axis form symbolically the skeleton of cosmos.

The three faces of the Divine show these structures; and these structures mutually reflect each other without, however, duplicating each other. In biblical language the three faces of the Divine are called holiness, wisdom and glory, and the divine energies most particular to each are faith, hope and love. What the inter--relationships are among these and, also, how they inter-function is a continuing task for understanding, an understanding ordered to humility.

A face both divides and integrates. It is called a sur-face when it covers what it hides, and a foundation when it supports what it manifests. A face divides by concealing and revealing. As a presentation it bears forward what hitherto was not expressed, and as a design it heralds action. A face integrates, it brings together, by mediation. It severs and unites. It is not what it severs or unites, yet it is not lost to these. It is the cardinal agent of presence. Further, a face establishes. As an abode it contains what it serves, and as an image it fixes what it radiates. A face establishes by limitation. By dividing it perfects; through mediating it secures; in establishing it completes.

The symmetry of vision reveals and conceals all these features. It is the task of intellect to apprehend, discover and draw them into the reservoir of mind. It achieves these functions through the contemplation of symbolic image. When such contemplation commends itself to what, in biblical language, is called the "understanding," one is then constrained to meditate the significance of what is seen through the "inner" eye--the eye that is ordered to contemplate the things of the Spirit which are discerned only spiritually.[1] Such a restriction upon their availability to discernment has always been a scandal. Affectively, the cause is not far to seek. The two images most primitively associated with spirit are wind and fire. The one drives and the other purifies. One threatens sovereignty and the other amplitude. Wind arouses and fire consumes.

Adequate preparation is needed if one is to cope with them effectively. Traditionally, contemplation of things of the Spirit follows upon special preparation--a readiness achieved through various disciplines. Most persons are disinclined to these. This is one of the more obvious reasons why the wisdom tradition in philosophy has all but disappeared from that academic discipline. Few are disposed to remember the lesson of Socrates that it is more important to find out what one does not know than to follow after what one might yet be informed of, without respect to the first.

The chief function of mythological language, (the discourse, par excellence, through symbolic images) is to mediate the presence of what one cannot exhaust conceptually, namely, the wonder of his being. Not his being this or that, but his being as such. Further, there stands always between himself and the mystery of the ground of his being some face that reveals and conceals the Presence which it mediates. This face he contemplates as symbolic image whenever he waits upon it to disclose its visionary significance. This significance might spend itself evoking action or prompting some aesthetic response. However, if any visionary significance arouses thought its meaning must be meditated through, i.e., interpreted. Interpretation is a third form of knowing, after perception and conception. Interpretation is not reducible to either of these last, but includes both.

Any face as sur-face must be interpreted if the image which bears it is to yield knowledge of its depth dimension. This is so equally

of things that present themselves to us in the sensory field as it is of symbolic images. For instance, the carpenter, the sculptor and the thinker are engaged upon a common task of clarification though they work toward quite different ends.

It is not accidental that these three faces of the Divine, namely, right-action, splendor, and beatitude are reflected in the triple structure of interpretation. Interpretation has a "directed 'sense,'" a communal character and a teleological effect. Such is the case not only when "there is an act B wherein a mental process A is interpreted, read, or rendered to a third mind" but also when presently the single person reviews what he had planned and interprets it to his future self.[2] He must place himself at the disposal of the meanings of the past so that it can be integrated into the structure of the present. Otherwise, the "fullness of time" will not be experienced in its teleological effect. This temporal process has its spatial analogue in the interrelations among position, radius and order which, with concrete elements, are the principals of structure. Strict visionary contemplation of them may prompt in the single person concerned to think religiously such questions as: Where and how and to what end he is in the world--questions of utmost ontological significance.

The orders of right-action, splendor and beatitude reflect themselves also in structures of grace which are the structures by, through, and in which the divine Presence creates, generates and heals within the spatio-temporal field. Structures of grace which have

historical significance are the covenant of Israel, the Vedic sacrifice and the Christian communion of saints. All have elements that mutually reflect each other without, however, duplicating each other. Nevertheless each structure of grace functions uniquely in emphasis bringing to the foreground what in the others, by comparison, remains latent. Israel's covenant emphasized the historical, the Vedic sacrifice the cosmological and the Christian communion of saints the eschatological. Respectively they uniquely reflect concern for the orders of right-action, splendor and beatitude. And these latter orders may also be sought in any symbolic image which is religiously contemplated, i.e., the object of religious thought with special respect to meditation.

Meditation is a mode of ruling. Essentially, to rule is to exemplify an ordering principle, namely, that ordering principal which from the beginning remains the signature of the body so ruled. One of the basic images associated with ruling is the tower. A tower reflects a spear stood upright, stationary, its tip piercing the sky. A tower, as a landmark, integrates for it mediates location and bearings. Meditation inquires after the essential signature of its object. It is this signature which must be searched while contemplating the face of any symbolic image. As ruling persuades by example, so governing coerces by execution. One of the basic images associated with governing is the shaft as rudder, (or as handle of a plow). As rudder it divides by steering, directing along one course of action.

Its revealing and concealing action as a dividing plane is evident in its opening up a "way" which opening is a concealing, a making latent of other "ways." If one is to meditate successfully he must govern his inquiry according to the essential rule of the ordering principle latent in the object he meditates. This principle is discovered in the object's signature. This signature is present in the face of any symbolic image.

Any religiously symbolic image calls to right-action, radiates splendor and conduces to beatitude. Even images perverted to demonic ends derive their power from the latent essential goodness from which they have become estranged.

One of the urgent and continuing tasks of religious thought is the recovery, reintegration, and transformation of religious images "which we have loved long since and lost awhile."