INTRODUCTION

This project takes as its starting point a specific language
that has a symbol calling for our attention. Following the work
of Norman Perrin, the linguistic material consists of at least the
following:

    (a) The Kingdom sayings, Luke 11:20; 17:20-21; Matt.
        11:12.
    (b) The Lord's Prayer in a version close to Luke 11:2-4.
    (c) The proverbial sayings, Mark 3:27; 3:24-26; 8:35;
        Luke 9:62; Mark 19:23b,25; Luke 9:60a; Matt. 7:13-
        14; Mark 10:31; 7:15; 10;15; Luke 14:11 (cf. 16:15);
        Matt. 5:39b-41; 5:44-48.
    (d) The Major parables:
        The Hid Treasure and The Pearl, Matt. 13:44-46.
        The Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost (Prodigal) Son,
        Luke 15:3-32.
        The Great Supper, Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24; Gos.
        Thom. 92:10-35.
        The Unjust Steward, Luke 16:1-9.
        The Workers in the Vineyard, Matt. 20:1-16.
        The Two Sons, Matt. 21:28-32.
        The Children in the Marketplace, Matt. 11:16-19.
        The Pharisee and the Tax-Collector, Luke 18:9-14.
        The Good Samaritan, Luke 10:29-37.
        The Unmerciful Servant, Matt. 18:23-35.
        The Tower Builder and King Going to War, Luke 14:
        28-32.
        The Friend at Midnight, Luke 11:5-8.
        The Unjust Judge, Luke 18:1-8.
        The Leaven, Luke 13:20-21; Gos. Thom. 97:2-6.
        The Mustard Seed, Mark 4:30-32; Gos. Thom. 84:26-33.
        The Seed Growing by Itself, Mark 4:26-29; Gos. Thom.
        84:15-19.
        The Sower, Mark 4:3-8; Gos. Thom. 82:3-13.
        The Wicked Tenants, Mark 12:1-12; Gos. Thom. 93:1-
        18.
This list of the parables is meant to be illustrative
rather than exhaustive; in general scholars will accept
any parable that can be reconstructed as a parable as

> distinct from an allegory. To avoid multiple references
> I have given only the Markan or Lukan references even
> when there are parallels,for Mark in Matthew and Luke,
> for for Luke in Matthew.[1]

The reader is encouraged to read this material before beginning to read the following analysis.[2]

The main body of this work is an attempt at second-order reflection concerning the possible meaning of this symbol within this language. This follows Chapter I, which addresses two primary questions: 1) Why make this language/symbol/myth the focus of reflection; and 2) Where does the authority of this language lie--is its authority and claim dependent upon historical evidence that Jesus said these words: or is its authority dependent upon its possible disclosive power in our present experience of world? These two questions lead to a host of problems in hermeneutics and into the results of the "life of Jesus" research (which has now become "language of Jesus" research) in this century.

Having isolated the primary material of the Christian tradition as the religious language serving as the "object" of this investigation, Chapters II and III are explicitly second-order reflections concerning the meaning of this first-order religious language.

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[1]Norman Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 41-42. Some parables (e.g., of the darnel Matt. 13:24-30; of the dragnet Matt. 13:47-50; of the lilies of the field Luke 12:22-31; of the bridegroom Matt. 9:15; of the ten bridesmaids Matt. 25:1-13; of the talents Matt. 25:14-30) as well as proverbial sayings (e.g., the unshrunken cloth and new wine in old wineskins Matt. 9:16-17) are strikingly not included in this list.

[2]See below, Chapter IV, pp. 321-330.

Chapter II takes the analysis further into the current hermeneutical discussion to investigate: What is a symbol? I conclude that a symbol is a metaphor working not simply at the level of the sentence in discourse (living speech), but within the horizon of myth. If symbols are in fact "what calls us to thought" (and I understand them to have precisely this temporal priority over against philosophical reflections, as well as, in addition being that place in language (as metaphor) which breaks open nominalism to extra-linguistic reality by means of its split reference), then they never occur in isolation as a mere literal naming. They function in a narrative, and their claims upon us occur by means of their functioning within a greater narrative. Hence, the analysis of Chapter II will be one having two primary foci: 1) the investigation of the "what" of symbols as the "how" of metaphor; and 2) a pointing to inadequate understandings of myth arising in the "mythic school" in Germany beginning in the 18th century and stretching into our own. A more adequate understanding of myth, coherent with the work of Paul Ricoeur, is found in Karl Jaspers.

Chapter III, then, attempts to be more specific about the referential character of metaphor, symbol, and myth. This is, as well, at the level of second-order reflection, recognizing the priority of poiesis, and has primarily two foci: 1) a presentation of Edmund Husserl's description of intentional consciousness and temporality and 2) of Martin Heidegger's way of announcing the Seinsfrage in terms of the ontological difference.

It is the position of this author that the philosophical metaphor of the Being-of beings is an adequate way of understanding the meaning of the divine reality/transcendence (symbolically articulated by the Kingdom of God in the primary language of the Christian tradition) encountered in first-order religious language. I speak of a philosophical metaphor when I speak of the divine reality as the Being-of beings: God is the Being-of beings. I agree with Paul Tillich that this is a non-symbolic statement,[1] but as metaphor it does (in contrast to Tillich's claim) "point beyond itself." It is an "is"/"is not" that must have world, i.e., temporal human/conscious encountering and experiencing (Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse) for it to have meaning.

As a philosophical metaphor, however, the Being-of beings cannot be understood in Aristotle's fourth sense of metaphor, i.e., analogy: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy" (Poetics 1457 b 6-9). This is not the case not only because an understanding of metaphor must escape the confines of naming (definitively argued by Paul Ricoeur) to be seen as a function of discourse (and the Being-of beings is the fundamental event in all discourse), but all analogy fails when that which is sought occurs in both proportionalities. This is the meaning of Martin Heidegger's cryptic comment: "Wo . . . vom

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[1]Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1: 238.

Seyn selbst aus gedacht wird, hat die 'Analogie' keinen Anhalt

mehr."[1] Granted, the Being-of beings is no thing, and is to be

adequately understood not as substance, but as event. Such are

the clarifications attempted in Chapter III of the present pro-

ject.

Second-order reflection has value when it informs meaning-

fully first-order discourse. The final chapter of the project is

a "post critical" return to the "naivete" of the first-order

language consisting of the primary linguistic material of the

Christian tradition in an attempt to point to different levels of

soteriological possibility disclosed by the symbol of the Kingdom

of God in the language of the historical Jesus.

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[1]Martin Heidegger, Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (1809) (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1971), p. 233.