Biblical and doctrinal apologists for Christianity tend to live and move within a prescribed theological circle. It is the purpose of this essay to plead with such apologists to widen their circle by recognizing the significance of mythological and psychological as well as theological approaches to Christian faith and life. It is not our purpose to advocate the substitution of mythic and psychic symbols for, let us say, the Gospel interpreted as kerygma. However else Christianity may and should be interpreted, it can and should also be interpreted mythologically and psychologically.

When it is possible and popular for literary critics to speak of “Christfigures” in contemporary drama and fiction, and when the U. S. Government sponsors Institutes on Religion and Mental Health, Biblical and doctrinal apologists impoverish rather than imperil their witness by ignoring what is going on around them. Exclusivist Christian claims need not be denied in expounding Christianity’s share in universal mythic and psychic symbolism. Even the comparative anthropologists, sociologists, and symbolists—who have no stake in the Christian cause—do not dispute the Christian’s right to absolutist assertions 1). To suggest that Christian faith-and-life, whatever its uniqueness, is also in—if not of—the world of universal symbolism may conceivably in our day be better evangelistic strategy than traditional exclusivist apologetics.

To get the matter before us, we will deal with what is here called the „Christ-Life“ as: (a) paralleled in the monomyth or hero’s pilgrimage and ordeal, and (b) internalized and interiorized as psychic history and experience. “Christ-Life” is a portmanteau catch-all to

1) Cf. the Eranos Jahrbuch series, 24 vols. since 1933, and similar publications of the Bollingen Foundation.
include: life of Christ, kerygma, religion-of-Jesus, Christ-of-faith, as well as the Christian's life in Christ, Christ-in-us, and Christ-for-us. "Symbol" is used to suggest—as distinct from the contrived "sign"—the multivalence and ambivalence (mystery and meaning) of mythic and psychic phenomena 2).

I. THE CHRIST-LIFE AND THE MONOMYTH

The "Monomyth", a term used by James Joyce and adopted, adapted, and anticipated by many others 3), is an endlessly variegated structure of fairly constant components. "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" 4).

The pattern of the monomyth is so universal, says Gerald Vann, that it may be taken as a paradigm of created reality. "You find it", he writes, "in nature, in the cycle of day and night, the sun dying and going back to his mother the sea to be reborn the next day at dawn; and in the cycle of the year, high summer followed by the 'fall' of autumn and the death of winter and then the rebirth of spring. You find it in myth and folklore and fairy tale and poetry; you find it in dreams; you find it in the teachings of the mystics, in

2) Myth is understood here as a dramatic narrative of interest for its own sake but also as an explanation of how beliefs, practices, human relations, cosmic realities originated and what they mean. Myth is not only a story but an imaginative way of thinking and communicating. Bultmann's definition: "...the other-worldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side" (H. W. Bartsch, Kerygma and Myth, Macmillan, 1953, p. 10) is too rationalist and reflective; myths are not deliberately created in order to do these things.
