

The general concept of grace will be based on the characteristics of the Christian concept of grace as presented in the previous chapter, except for two that are quintessentially religious. The first is the identity of the sides in the relation of grace, that is, as Christian grace is a relation between God and Man. In the general concept of grace, on the other hand, there is no reference to the identity of the two sides. The second is those grace's results that are related to the religious plane (forgiveness, healing, and elevation), which cannot be left literally in the framework of a relation in which God is not a side.

In the general concept of grace, those characteristics will appear merely as possible or metaphorical. Given that, a general concept of grace means a dialogical relationship between two personae, a relationship that is a gift given and received out of free will, with a subjective aspect of love in the broad sense which is also expressed objectively. The possible results of general grace are on two levels: the existential level – liberation, love, meaning (of life) and independence; and on the religious level – forgiveness, healing and elevation, which in Christian grace may exist literally, and in a secular context may not exist at all or exist only metaphorically.

The general concept of grace allows a broad spectrum of different relations of grace, without losing its essence or spirit of a concept of grace in all its characteristics and results. Comparing the bases that establish general grace with those that establish Christian grace reveals that Christian grace is in fact a particular case of general grace. The general concept also accords with the widespread use of the concept "grace" in the sense of gratuitous generosity, given and received from free will and has a positive value for both its giver and receiver. Another consideration of what is usually described as an act of grace also reveals the existence of a subjective and objective facet of such an act, which rise in tandem with characteristics of those facets of grace-concepts borne in our discussion. Thus, for example, "had the grace to" describes somebody who finds in himself the will to do something good, or talking about grace in the ethical context of authentic human love, not exactly divine.

This essay, however, presents a concept of grace that is far more specific, rich and immeasurably meaningful than the common everyday one. But the fact that the general concept of grace (like concepts of religious and secular grace that will be its particular cases) rises in tandem with the everyday use of that expression, is another reinforcement of my position that general grace as characterized here does indeed preserve and express the essence of the concept of grace.