THE GREAT SYMBOLS

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The great symbols by W. J. Townsend

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W. J. TOWNSEND

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BY

W. J. TOWNSEND, D.D.

CHARLES II. KELLY

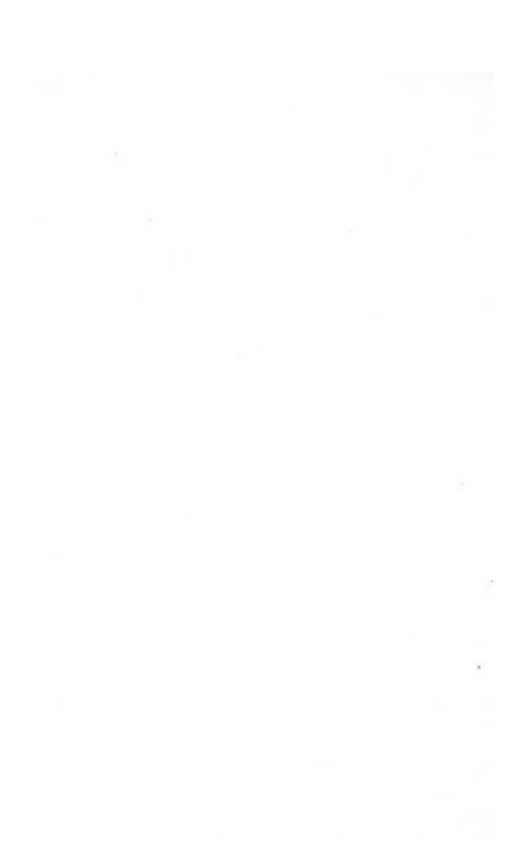
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CONTENTS

CHAIR	Francisco de la composición del composición de la composición de la composición del composición de la									PAGE
1,	ENTRODU	CTION	9.3	\odot	(3)			•	1	1
л.	THE SAN	CTUARY	÷		3	÷			4:1	15
αţ,	THE ARE	OF GOD		*	8			9	10	31
IV.	THE CHE	RUDIM 0	E GLO	PRY	(i)	30			63	49
v.	THE SAC	RIPICE F	or si	N (PA	RT I	١.			8	65
VI.	THE SAC	RIFICE F	on si	N (P.	ART I	100		39	10	88
¥11.	THE HIG	н рацка	'AND	HIS	VEST	MENT	s (PA	BT 1)		97
VIII,	тик ню	н ткием	r and	1118	VEST	MENT	s (ra	кт п)	111
IX,	THE SEV	EN-ERAN	CHED	LAMI	STA	N))	× .		•	127
х.	THE ALT	AB OF I	CENS	E				•		145
XI.	THE TAB	LE OF SI	IFW1:	EKAD					•	159
XII.	THE LAY	LB .	63	¥	(i)	36		% S 3		173
хиі.	THE AD	OLITION	or s	YMDO	LISM	: ти	E VE	IL D	g-	
	FORE !	гив поь	IEST			÷.	4			185



CHAPTER I



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

TIME word Symbol is derived from the Greek sumbolon (from sun-ballo, I cast or throw together), and mount originally to east together several portions so as to form a whole; eg. a feast, towards which each person had contributed something to the common stock. Probably it was in this sense that the creeds of the early church came to be called symbols, because (according to Augustine) all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity were gathered in them, or from the tradition related by Rufinus that the so-called Apostle's Creed was formed by each of the apostles on the day of Pentecost contributing a sentence; Peter commencing: "I believe in God the Father," the others continuing, and so on to Matthias, who concluded, "the life everlasting. Amen." The word enlarged its scope in the progress of time so as to be applied to many things which in their outward appearance,

or designated purpose, represented or signified higher things. The standards of military bodies were called by this name, and Christians applied it to rites, ceremonies, sacraments, and forms which had religious signification. In later times the name was given to crosses, images, and pictures used in worship.

The word will be used in a somewhat narrower sense in these chapters. The term Symbol has, by general consent, come to be applied to anything which becomes representative of something The meaning supplied by Coleridge sufficiently indicates the sense in which it is used in this volume: "A symbol is a sign included in the idea which it represents, e.g. an actual part chosen to represent the whole, or a lower form or species used as the representative of a higher in the same kind." In relation to the sacred Scriptures it is almost entirely a synonym of the word type (tupos, a figure), which is used by the apostles in this sense: "them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression" (Rom. 514). "Now these things happened by way of example" (margin, figure, 1 Cor. 1011). "Figures which ye made to worship them" (Acts 743). "The pattern showed thee in the mount" (Heb. 85).

The word symbol has displaced the word type