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I have usually operated with the distinction between "constitutive" and "representative." But much the same work could be done, presumably, by distinguishing instead between "constitutive" and "declarative." In that event, a "constitutive" act would be an act whereby something as yet unconstituted as what it is becomes so constituted, whereas a "declarative" act, by contrast, would be an act whereby something already constituted as what it is is declared to be so constituted.

Given this distinction, one could say, for example, that religion is the primary form of culture whereby human existence as such is explicitly declared to be constituted in a certain way, although the standing temptation of religion is to claim to be somehow constitutive of human existence rather than thus merely declarative. "The true religion," then, could be defined as the primary form of culture whose explicit declaration of how human existence as such is constituted (1) agrees with how human existence in fact is constituted; and (2) is free of any claim to be constitutive of human existence as distinct from explicitly declaring its constitution.

This, I take it, is just the distinction lying behind F. W. Robertson's reflections on the meaning of baptism, which "makes" one a child of God in the way in which coronation "makes" one a king, namely, by an "authoritative declaration" declaring one to be so, not by constituting one as such.

The underlying presupposition of religion, then, is that human existence as such is constituted in a certain way—if not in this way or in that, then in some other way. This means that any human being whatever is entitled and empowered—in a word, *authorized*—to understand her- or himself in a certain way, which, being thus authorized, is authentic. Obviously, it makes no sense to declare that human existence is constituted in this way or that unless human existence is constituted in *some* way. But if it is constituted somehow, so that some self-understanding/ understanding of existence is authentic/ true because it is authorized by the way things ultimately are, then the way things ultimately are has to be such as to authorize this self-understanding/ understanding of

existence as authentic/ true, and so must have a structure in itself that makes so understanding oneself/ understanding existence both possible and appropriate.

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