Paul: An Outline of His Theology

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MAIN LINES IN THE HISTORY OF PAULINE INTERPRETATION

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

It is not surprising that with respect to so profound and complicated a phenomenon as the manner in which the Apostle Paul has given form and expression to the gospel of Jesus Christ, a great variety of conceptions is to be traced in the history of Pauline investigation. Although this history demands a study in itself, and to treat it at all exhaustively would take us far beyond the proportions of an introductory chapter, it is nevertheless profitable and necessary to acquaint oneself with the main lines along which this investigation has moved, particularly in the last hundred years. Our concern in this connection is above all to gain an insight into the fundamental structure of Paul's preaching and doctrine or, in other words, where the entrance is to be sought into the imposing edifice of Paul's theology. It is clear that there are all sorts of doors by which one can enter. But which is the main entrance that governs the whole building? That question has been answered very differently, particularly in the last hundred years of the inquiry. And this difference has in the nature of the case been bound up with the views scholars have held of the architectonic structure and arrangement of the building as a whole.

The theology of the Reformation, broadly speaking, has long found this entrance in Paul's preaching of justification by faith. In the great struggle with Roman Catholic legalism and mysticism the forensic statements in the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians were of fundamental significance. The result was that the Reformation view of the epistles of Paul came to be determined primarily by this doctrine of justification. This is especially apparent in Luther. For him, that which "preaches and inculcates Christ" (Preface to James and Jude), in...
the sense of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, was the only principle and criterion for the whole New Testament doctrine of salvation, the canon within the canon, as appears, for example, from Luther's critique of the Epistle of James. Later Lutheran theology continued to exhibit traces of this point of departure in the Pauline doctrine of justification. It has not infrequently gone further still and projected Luther's struggle to arrive at assurance of faith back into Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, and in this respect has not only understood Luther sub specie Pauli, but also indeed Paul sub specie Lutheri. 2

In the theology emanating from Calvin these matters lie from the very beginning in decidedly better balance. For Calvin Paul's doctrine of justification by faith did not become a principium canonicitatis. Nevertheless, in opposition to Rome the Pauline doctrine of justification in the tradition originating with Calvin, too, acquired a dominant significance as the key to understanding the whole gospel. 3 The entire Reformed concept of faith, which bears Calvin's stamp, also testifies to the same effect. The gospel of justification by faith alone without the works of the law appeared anew to be the only and powerful means to liberate the burdened conscience and to replace the spirit of legalistic servitude with the certainty of reconciliation and of the adoption as children of God. No wonder, then; that because of this all-controlling antithesis, for the Reformation consciousness of faith Paul was above everything else the preacher of justification, and all his theology came to be regarded from this point of view.

In the degree to which the force of the original Reformation idea slackened, change came about with respect to it in the traditions emanating both from Calvin and from Luther. Questions about the order of salvation, having reference to the personal appropriation of redemption (ordo salutis), came increasingly to receive attention in preference to questions about the history of salvation (historia salutis). While in Luther and Calvin all the emphasis fell on the redemptive event that took place with Christ's death and resurrection, 4 later under the influence of pietism, mysticism, and moralism, the emphasis shifted to the process of individual appropriation of the salvation given in Christ and to its mystical and moral effect in the life of believers. Accordingly, in the history of the interpretation of the epistles of Paul the center of gravity shifted more and more from the forensic to the pneumatic and ethical aspects of his preaching, and there arose an entirely different conception of the structures that lay at the foundation of this preaching.

This shift acquires scholarly significance and force, however, only in the theology deriving from the Enlightenment, without which the whole history of the Paulusforschung during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is inconceivable. On the one hand, it initiated historical-critical exegesis and made a powerful contribution to a better distin-

4. For Luther see also J. T. Bakker, Eschatologische Prediking bij Luther, 1964.
SECTION 2. F. C. BAUR (THE TUBINGEN SCHOOL)

The struggle concerning the significance of the Apostle Paul in the history of the New Testament revelation began in recent times with the works of F. C. Baur, the father of the so-called Tubingen school (d. 1860). Baur attempted to interpret the history of Christianity according to the philosophical tenets of Hegel. Also guided by them he sought the center of Paul's preaching, not in Christology, but in the Pauline conception of the Spirit and the antithetical motif of Spirit and flesh bound up with it. Baur takes this in the Hegelian sense as the infinite and absolute in opposition to the finite (the flesh). In the spirit man has a share in the Spirit of God himself, by which he is freed from the finite and relative and attains absolute freedom. In this idealistic scheme Christology for Baur is the absolute religion and Paul is the one in whose doctrine of freedom and reconciliation the consciousness of the unity of man with God in the Spirit has been embodied.

According to Baur this consciousness in Paul developed in antithesis with the primitive Christianity that was still bound to the law and to particularistic Judaism. In this conflict, which was resolved in later synthetic Catholicism under the pressure of rising Gnosticism, Paul became the champion of the universalistic Christian faith detached from the law. In the later synthesis this universalism, then bound up with the ecclesiastical hierarchical idea, retained the mastery.

Historically considered, both lines can be traced to the appearance of Jesus, in which according to Baur the universal, generally human and moral and therefore absolute makes itself known, as well as the particularistic, namely, in his assessment of Israel as the people of God and of his own person as the Messiah. Nevertheless, Baur interprets Paul, not out of his following of the historical Jesus, of whom after all Paul seldom speaks in his epistles, but out of the miracle of his conversion when God revealed his Son in him, that is, by confronting him with the tremendous fact of Jesus' death. It was in that experience surely that the idea of absolute truth and freedom stripped of all national and legalistic ties entered his mind, and he came to the developments in the works of F. C. Baur which are characteristic of him and henceforth also determinative for the whole of his view of the person of Christ. On this account Paul does not need any historic argumentation for his doctrine. "Why should he ask whether what he is teaching agrees with the original teaching of Jesus... when in the Christ who lives and works in him he hears the voice of the Lord himself? Why should he draw from the past what the Christ who is present in him has made to be the direct utterance of his own consciousness?"

This reconstruction of the origin of Christianity functions at the same time for Baur as the criterion for the genuineness of Paul's epistles, and in general for the dating of the New Testament writings. Baur thinks only the four principal epistles (Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians) can be accepted as genuine, because in them the antithetical motif is still visible, and all its sharpness. The rest he considers as already dominated by a unionistic tendency and therefore of a later date.

Baur's conception is entirely governed by the Hegelian view of history and the idea of Spirit. This pneuma-idea is not, however, Pauline. Also, by his exclusively antithetical interpretation of Paul's doctrine, Baur has not only barred his own way to arriving at a correct appreciation of the picture of original Christianity drawn for us in the Acts of the Apostles, but also to an understanding of the full significance of Paul in the history of New Testament revelation. This led to a massive amputation of the corpus Paulinum, for which (after the radical consequences of Baur's conception were drawn by the Dutchmen Pierson, van Manen, and Loman, and the Swiss Steck, who finally rejected the genuineness of all the Pauline epistles) no agreement could be found at a later time even in the most advanced historical criticism. Nevertheless, Baur's critical and idealistic-universalistic conceptions of original Christianity have continued to exercise great influence, and the distance he created between Paul's doctrine and that of the other apostles who associated themselves with Jesus has continued to be one of the chief motifs of the later inquiry. The formulations, the manner in which he stated the problems with respect to the place of Paul in the New Testament and his relationship to Jesus and original Christianity, have been of incalculable influence, even though the total construction of Baur has been accepted in unaltered form only by a few even in the so-called Tubingen school (e.g., by Schwegler).

SECTION 3. THE LIBERAL INTERPRETATION AND ITS DECLINE

After Baur another explanation of the theological significance of Paul's preaching of the gospel found acceptance, which likewise took its point of departure from what Paul had to say about the Spirit, but which attempted to interpret this from Greek anthropology. Among others Holsten, Ludemann, Pfleiderer, and H. J. Holtzmann are to be mentioned as the most prominent representatives of this period.

While Reformation theology viewed justification by faith as the center of Paul's doctrine and associated sanctification, the struggle between flesh and spirit, and the like very closely with it, in this period scholars proceeded to distinguish beside the juridical-forensic "line," which they explained from Judaism, an ethical (or mystical-ethical)
line, which was said to find its expression in the contrast of flesh and spirit and to be oriented, not to Judaism, but to Greek-Hellenistic thinking. Thus “spirit” is no longer taken here as the antithesis of the finite and the human (as with Baur), but as the antipode of the sensual. “Spirit” and “flesh” is an antithesis that is realized in man himself: the spirit as the leading rational principle in man must gain the victory over the lower sensual nature (sarx) and hold it in subjection. This Greek idea is supposed to appear in a ChristIALIZED form in Paul and to constitute in many respects that which is distinctive in his proclamation of the gospel, whereby at one time the emphasis is placed on the ethical, at another on the mystical significance of the antithesis of flesh and spirit. It is in this sense accordingly that all that Paul writes about believers as being “with Christ” and “in Christ” is also understood. This communion is thought of as an ethically oriented mysticism, not as an objective inclusion of believers in Christ, but as a spiritual and mystical connection, out of which then, understood in a general religious sense, a life of love and spiritual freedom would flourish.

These ideas place us in the heyday of the so-called liberal theology. The ethical view men had of Jesus’ preaching is also dominant in their assessment of Paul’s theology. A fundamental contrast between Jesus and Paul is not made as yet, inasmuch as scholars attempt to reduce Paul’s proclamation, too, to a rationalistic-idealistic morality. It is true indeed that other tendencies are discovered in Paul, for example, his eschatological, demonological, and angelological pronouncements. These are regarded, however, as the contemporary framework of Paul’s real teaching, just as Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom of God was also interpreted. To be sure, it is assumed that Paul’s conversion played a great part in the development of these ideas. In this way he came to be entirely detached from the Jewish scheme of thought, and there came into him the possibility of an entirely new attitude toward life in which then, as has been said, Greek thought was of great influence.

Yet the liberal school cannot deny that, alongside this ethical-mystical religiosity in Paul, other motifs occupy an important place, in particular the juridical doctrine of justification, which Paul bases on faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. Although liberal theology attempts to hide the significance of these redemptive facts in Paul behind the moral-rational conception of religion (i.e., by explaining Paul’s doctrine of justification from tradition and polemic), it nevertheless cannot ignore the place all this occupies in Paul’s epistles. It is

7. Holsten especially, in a rationalizing and psychologizing manner, related the genesis of the Pauline gospel to Paul’s conversion (Das Christusvision des Paulus und die Genesis des paulinischen Evangeliums, 1861 and 1869). In Michel’s words, “It began precisely at the point where Baur did not draw the consequences of the modern view of the world. He contended against any supernatural explanation of the Damascus experience and of the development of Pauline Christology… and sought (in Paul’s own spiritual individuality and in the Christ-worship of the primitive church) sure foundations on which he could construe Paul’s experience of Christ as a necessary outgrowth.” (Die Entstehung der paulinischen Christologie.” ZNW, 1929, pp. 324, 325).

8. Lehrbuch der neuestamentlichen Theologie, II, 1911, p. 238: “The whole of St. Paul’s ‘doctrine’ will only be intelligible and transparent from the point of view that it is the generalization of what its author had gone through in his own person and what he therefore enjoins on all who follow the same path, as something that he himself has experienced.” 9. At length, ibid., pp. 256, 257. 10. Ibid., pp. 356. 11. Ibid., pp. 319. 12. Ibid., pp. 238, 239. 13. Now supposed that no consistent theological thinking was present in Paul; that his religious ideas at any rate do not receive adequate expression in his theology; that for him Jewish and Greek elements remained in an internal discord. While a writer like Lüdemann regards the contrast between spirit and flesh taken in a Greek sense as dominant in Paul, Pfleiderer, for example, comes to the conclusion that in Paul’s mind two kinds of representation stood unreconciled next to each other (the juridical and the ethical), and that he often leaped from the one to the other without sensing the contradiction.

The zenith and at the same time the terminal point of this interpretation of Paul is found in the grand master of liberal theology, H. J. Holtzmann. For Holtzmann the event at Damascus is of fundamental significance for understanding Paul’s theological position. He interprets that event as the first subjective experience of what Paul will shortly proclaim as his objective doctrine of salvation. Even before the experience at Damascus Paul is said to have become an “ethical bankrupt” (which is then supposed to be described in Rom. 7) and to have received the correct light concerning this condition through his vision of the exalted Christ. He then discovered another way of salvation than that of the law, the haughty Pharisee in him was conquered, the proud particularism in him shattered, he came to grasp what it means “to die and rise with Christ,” new powers and tasks came flooding in upon him. What in his preaching Paul afterwards teaches on this matter would thus be in the deepest sense an objectivizing and generalizing of his inner and personal experience.

Holtzmann assumes, moreover, that in the shaping of these experiences and ideas Paul exhibits strong Greek influences. This is so, for example, in the metaphysical dimensions of his Christology. These are to be explained from a Greek-Alexandrian influence, particularly the speculations of Philo; likewise the contrast of spirit and flesh is typically Greek, and one must relate his doctrine of the sacraments to the Greek teaching of the mysteries. Yet Holtzmann, too, cannot deny that many Jewish ideas and influences continue to be at work in Paul. In the remarkable conjunction of the Greek and the Jewish, whereby antinomies are often to be encountered, Holtzmann sees that which is in many respects distinctive of Paul’s theology. Alongside the ethical stands the juridical, alongside the idealistic the realistic conception of man, alongside the Greek idea of the soul detaching itself from the body the realistic Jewish eschatology. Though all this may in itself
yield a combination in many respects heterogeneous and a theology full of internal contradictions, behind it all stands the great religious personality of Paul, and his deep experience on the road to Damascus, by which everything is supported.\(^1\)

Holtzmann's conception is thus an extending of the lines drawn by Holsten, Lüdemann, and Pfleiderer. The vision at Damascus, the Greek influence, and, not to be forgotten, their own religious-ethical view of Christianity form for these authors the constituent elements in their interpretation of Paul. They are not able to achieve a unity. Everything, however, is directed toward an effort to reduce Paul's theology and religion to a general, ethical-rational religiosity not dependent on redemptive facts.\(^2\) In Jesus this piety is said to exhibit its most significant appearance and flowering. Paul ranks behind Jesus in this respect because with him all manner of juridical and metaphysical speculations play a greater role. Fundamentally, however, the same thing lives in Paul as in Jesus,\(^3\) and it was he who first came to the Christian world of ideas with Hellenistic forms of thought and made the transition from the Semitic to the Greek and by this avenue also to the modern world.\(^4\)

After Holtzmann this liberal picture of Paul was not able to maintain itself for long. Investigation began more and more to grasp the fact that it was not possible, for example, to spiritualize in the manner of Holtzmann the so-called metaphysical Christology, the significance of the redemptive facts, the juridical doctrine of satisfaction, and eschatology, or to consider them as a "theological" element foreign to Paul's real religion. The contrast in Paul between spirit and flesh understood by Holtzmann and his predecessors in the light of dualistic Greek thinking was also subjected to serious criticism, by Gunkel, among others, who considered the Pauline pneuma-concept to be not of Greek but rather of Jewish origin and in consequence rejected the rational-ethical character of the flesh and spirit antithesis.\(^5\) Even so early a writer as R. Kabisch had already directed attention to eschatology as the dominating factor in the Pauline theology and in this way pointed to Jewish toleology, especially to late Jewish apocalyptic, as the origin of the so-called Pauline doctrinal system.\(^6\) Further, more than had been the case with Holtzmann, the emphasis came gradually to be placed on the significance of the sacraments in Paul's teaching, to which, in contrast to the spiritualizing conceptions of Holtzmann, a realistic naturhaft significance was ascribed, and it was thought possible to explain them from the eastern mystery religions. The result of this increasingly accepted history of religions method of interpretation was that scholars came to reject the ethical-idealistic interpretation of liberal theology as completely inadequate and to place the emphasis on the "alien" character of Paul's theology, on precisely that which is not assimilable for modern man. Along with that emphasis, however, the possibility fell away of preserving the unity between the picture of Jesus still accepted by many as the teacher of the fatherhood of God and lofty morality and the supernatural Christ as Paul preached him in his epistles. The problem of the Jesus-Paul relationship becomes acute for modern theology when it comes to recognize that one cannot understand the Pauline Christology psychologically (as the objectivizing of Paul's religious experience at Damascus) and in a spiritualized manner, as did Holtzmann, nor separate it from Paul's "religion" as a "theological" construction, but that it ought to be interpreted precisely as the great central datum of Paul's theology as well as of his religion.\(^7\)

Nowhere does this disintegration of the liberal picture of Paul and along with it of the conversion of Jesus and Paul come to light more clearly than in the very radical and to the present day very influential exposition of Wrede.\(^8\) Wrede will have nothing to do with a separation between Paul's "religion" and his "theology" (e.g., as in Holtzmann), Paul's "theology" is the adequate expression of his religion.\(^9\) And this theology is fundamentally Christology. The whole Pauline doctrine is a doctrine of Christ and his work; that is its essence. That which is peculiar to Paul and also new in him is this, that he made redemptive facts—the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Christ—the foundation of religion. Redemptive history is the backbone of Pauline Christianity.\(^10\)

When one inquires into the origin of this doctrine, then neither Paul's conversion experience, nor the impression of the centrality of Jesus (whom Paul probably never knew), nor Paul's own theological construction can constitute the explanation for it. One can only unravel the problem as to how it was possible that within one human lifetime the figure of Jesus was so completely changed into the Pauline Christ if one supposes that Paul the Pharisee was already in possession of "a number of readymade conceptions of a divine being" which he then transferred to the historical Jesus under the impact of his conversion.\(^11\) His christological preaching thus has little to do with the historical Jesus, but to be understood from the mythological redemptive and redemptive concept of his time, which he applied to Jesus of Nazareth without being conscious of this radical transformation.\(^12\)

Wrede's criticism has had such an influence because he was able to give a much more self-contained picture of Paul's preaching than that of liberal theology. He designated Paul's Christology of redemptive facts, as the essence of his preaching, and broke the bond between Paul's preaching and the liberal picture of Jesus. This criticism had to prevail because it did much greater justice to Paul's preaching—if only

\(^{13}\) Wrede, Paul, ET 1908. On Wrede in detail see my Paul and Jesus, pp. 3f.

\(^{14}\) Wrede, Paul, p. 48.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., pp. 103-104.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 87.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 95.
in an historical-exegetical sense—than did those who viewed as the heart of his preaching not the great Christ-event, but a timeless religious-ethical truth. At the same time, however, the gap between Paul's preaching and the modern-liberal conception of Jesus and his proclamation of the kingdom of God was hereby indicated, a gap that was and is unbridgeable so long as one is able to discover in Jesus of Nazareth only a human figure, no matter what the spiritual height to which he rose.

SECTION 4. THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS APPROACH

At the end of the last century and the beginning of the present one the *religionsgeschichtliche* interpretation of Paul's epistles and of the Christian kerygma contained in them demanded increasingly greater attention. In contrast with earlier attempts to derive various leading motifs in Paul's preaching from the literature and world view of Greek philosophical thinking (as that had been attempted, for example, with the spirit-flesh antithesis), scholars now turned to the popular religious views and phenomena of the Hellenistic period, in particular to the religious syncretism of that time as this had arisen under the influence of eastern on western religiosity and manifested itself in the mystery religions and cultus. The knowledge of these religious phenomena has greatly increased since the investigations of such noted philologists and historians as Cumont, Rohde, Dieterich, Reitzenstein, et al.

In general it may be said of these mystery religions that approximately at the beginning of the Christian era they form a combination of mystical-transcendent eastern thinking and the more concrete immanent religiosity of the West. At a time in which a marked religious attitude emerges in the West, the eastern ideas of redemption pour in and lay hold of the spirit of the time which is looking for deeper religious satisfaction and deliverance from the transitoriness of time-bound human existence.

All these mystery religions have a so-called cultus-myth, that is to say, a mythological story concerning the deity worshipped in the cultus, whether it be that he dies and comes to life again or that he gains the victory over the powers or gods that fight against him, but always with a tendency toward redemption from the transitory. Already in ancient Greece there were the Eleusinian mysteries; and the deliverance of Cora, daughter of Demeter, who, brought to Hades by Pluto, was restored to her mother by the intervention of Zeus, was celebrated annually. A vegetation cultus is spoken of here, because the myth represents the dying and rising of nature. Very important at a later time were the Serapis mysteries stemming from Egypt, in which the worship of Isis and Osiris was fused. The original myth speaks of the union of Osiris (the masculine) and Isis (the feminine) in which the victory over death is symbolized. Osiris is robbed of life by an opponent hostile toward him (his brother Seth), and when found by the grieving Isis he is again overpowered by his adversary and hacked in pieces. The scattered limbs are once more sought out by Isis. They come to new life, whereupon the union of Osiris and Isis and the dominion of Osiris follow. From this, then, the general idea of death and the hostile powers and belief in immortality are derived. Syria, too, contributed its share to the mystery religions in the Adonis cultus (the Baal of Byblos). Adonis also makes his appearance as the god who dies and rises again, the savior from death. The cultic myth speaks of the mortal wound that is inflicted by a wild boar on Adonis while hunting. From his blood rises (or anemones) begin to flourish. The whole of nature participates in the mourning. The festival of the dying and coming to life again of Adonis is celebrated annually. Very well known, too, is the cultus of the Phrygian god Attis, closely related to the worship of the Thracian Dionysus-Sabazius. In the Phrygian cultus, the mother goddess Cybele, held in high honor in Rome, appears next to Attis. Here again the myth speaks of the death of the god Attis and his subsequent resurrection. The festival is attended with wild orgies, emasculations, etc. Finally the cult of Mithras, very important especially at a later time, deserves to be mentioned. It is of Persian origin and was imported into the West particularly by Roman soldiers. In accordance with its derivation the Mithraic religion is dualistic in character. Its fundamental motif consists in the struggle between the world of good and that of evil, in which Mithras achieves the victory.

These different cultic myths, which came to a common blending in all sorts of ways, are now in one way or another transferred to the initiates in the cultus belonging to these mystery religions. In this cultus they receive a share in the victory, resurrection, and immortality of the deity worshipped by them. In the cultus, in which one can participate in various ways according to the depth to which he has been initiated, one comes to deification. This takes place in the manner of mysticism and of the magical-materialistic idea "sacrament," which works *ex operu operato*, consisting in the immersion in or the sprinkling with water or blood, the putting on of holy clothing, and the eating of certain foods. The highest objective is to arrive at a beholding of the deity, transcending all sense experience. Naturally, in the various mystery religions all kinds of differences exist at this point, too. In some it is a wild and ecstatic sort of thing, as, for example, in the cult of Attis and Dionysus; others exhibit a much more sober and subdued type, as, for example, the cult of Mithras. In them all, however, lives the consciousness that those who are admitted to the secrets of the cult thereby receive immortality. In the mystery religions a fixed doctrinal system is wanting. The mythic themes are recited in a variety of ways. To be sure, one needs growth in order to reach redemption, but this is not to be understood as a clearly defined quantum of religious or theological tenets, but rather as the initiation into certain ceremonies described with secret language, the knowledge of which must be kept in strict secrecy.

It is these mystery religions, the "sacramental" acts that occur in
them, and especially the mystical approach to the deity centrally placed in them, with which some have related that which is distinctive in Paul's preaching and "religion" and have wanted in part to interpret it. For a time the relationship was sought above all in the former, namely, the sacramental acts in the mystery religions on the one hand, and on the other the communion of baptism and the Lord's Supper, connected with Paulin Christ's death and resurrection. Further considerations have made it increasingly apparent, however, that this way was impassable. So far as the sacred meals are concerned, it has become evident that as soon as one goes beyond the general phenomenon of a sacrificial eating and drinking, the parallel or analogy with the Lord's Supper as described by Paul becomes dubious or even ceases altogether. Some have thought to find at least in baptism a fixed point of agreement, inasmuch as Paul related baptism to Christ's death (burial) and resurrection (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:11ff.); and this "baptismal death," it is said, could not have developed from the Jewish symbolism of purification and therefore must be viewed as a "Hellenistic commodity." But it has come to be seen with increasing clarity that (a) nowhere in the mystery religions is such a symbolism of death present in the "baptismal" ritual, and that (b) in Romans 6 and Colossians 2 Paul does not portray baptism itself as a symbolic or sacramental representation of the going down into death (the so-called "death by drowning," about which Lietzmann speaks) and rising up again to life. Thus in the area of the sacraments every deeper link with the ritual acts in the mystery religions has become illusory.

It is often alleged, to be sure, that a realistic, naturhaft conception of the sacral eating and drinking, that he must have had this from the mystery religions. Specifically, it has been supposed that evidence could be found for this in 1 Corinthians 15:29 (baptism for the dead). It is noteworthy, however, that in the heathen religions there is nowhere mention of baptismal death in the pre-Christian era. 

27. See also G. W. Iittel, Urchristentum und Fremdreligionen im Urteile der Religionsgeschichtlichen Schule, 1946.

28. Cf., e.g., W. Heitmüller, Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus, 1903. One may find a valuable summary of the data to which appeal is made, e.g., in J. Hoek, De Sacramenten bij Paulus en de hellenistische mysterie-religies, 1925, p. 98; see also Lietzmann, Cor., pp. 140ff., and now especially G. Wagner, Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries, ET 1967.

29. Against Lietzmann's view that the idea is present both in the mystery religions and in Paul that the deity (in Paul: Christ) is not only the dispenser but also the object of the sacrificial eating and drinking, see, e.g., Kümmel in the "Anhang" to Lietzmann, Cor., pp. 181ff.


31. In the Isis mysteries, to which appeal is made indeed, sprinkling with water has only a preparatory character. It does not accomplish the real initiation (myētêia), much less the beholding (epopteia) that follows it, but only fulfills the function of a preparatory purification (katathrosis). There is nowhere any question of a connection between baptism and a "dying and coming to life of the deity" (cf. Hoek, De Sacramenten, pp. 118ff.). For this "dying and rising of the deity" in the cultus-mysteries and the so-called connection with the Pauline dying and rising with Christ see my Paul and Jesus, pp. 10ff.

32. See my Rom., pp. 135-134; further below, pp. 402ff.


34. See Hoek, De Sacramenten, pp. 88ff.; Rissi, Die Taufe, pp. 62ff.; and G. Wagner, Pauline Baptism, pp. 268ff., and the literature referred to there.


36. See, e.g., Bachmann's ten arguments against it in Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther, 3rd ed., 1921.

37. So Rissi, Die Taufe, pp. 85ff.


mystical communion in the cultus takes the place of the Son-of-Man Christology of the Palestinian church that represented Christ above all as the future world judge. This is the fundamental Greek idea of God, which takes the place of the Palestinian-Jewish: the Christology becomes pneumatic and mystical instead of eschatological. In Paul, however, this Christ-mysticism develops into the intensive feeling of a personal belonging to and of a spiritual connection with the exalted Kyrios, which for him constitutes the basic fact of the Christian life and the Christian ethic. The Kyrios is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17), and where the Spirit is there is liberty, and likewise the principle of the Spirit-governed life in Christian love.

On the other hand, Bousset's conception of Paul's Christology, however much the model of a well-balanced application of the history of religions method, is at the same time the typical intellectual product of around the time of the First World War. The rational-ethical Christ figure of liberal theology gave way to a deeper, more sensitive conception of religion; such words as Christ-experience, Christ-mysticism, Christ-communion everywhere made their appearance. It may be postulated, moreover, that the history of religious school was the appropriate agency to furnish from the history of religious life and experience the evidence for this deeper element focused more on the divine mystery and the divine hiddenness and to indicate its forms. But it is another question whether Paul, in accordance with Bousset's conception of it, can be summoned as the star witness for this Christ-mysticism.

The day when scholars believed this is long since past. On the basis of historical argumentation and criticism light has not only been cast on the untenableness of the antithesis Bousset supposed himself able to point out between the Messianic-eschatological Christology of the primitive Palestinian church and the worship of the pneumatik Kyrios, in which Paul's epistles were said to bear their distinctive Hellenistic mark; but it is also acknowledged, even by those who have otherwise followed in the footsteps of Bousset, that the fundamental structure of Paul's preaching and Christology is other than the mystical and pneumatic sketch of it given by Bousset. Paul's kerygma is not to be reduced to a christological projection of religious feeling. It is rather the explication of the absolutely unique, one-time-only redemptive situation, which was Christ's advent, his suffering, death, and resurrection. However much this event finds its outwardly and application in life according to the Spirit, in putting on the new man

and standing in the liberty that is not of the law but of the Spirit, the point of departure and the matrix even of the pneumatic character of Paul's preaching is not to be sought in the mystical cultus experiences of contemporary Hellenistic religiosity, but in the historical revelation of Christ in the fullness of time, that is to say, in the Christocentric fulfillment of the redemptive promise given to Israel.

In view of the above it is no wonder that, in order to trace the history of religions backgrounds of Paul's preaching, scholars began to orient themselves on a broader terrain than that of the mystery cults. To be sure, they continued to seek these backgrounds in Hellenistic religiosity, particularly as this was experienced and brought to expression in the mystery religions. But more than in the specifically cultic, they sought the connection between Paul and Hellenism in the general character and attitude toward life of this religiosity. They came more and more to speak of Gnosticism as the common denominator for this world of thought, a name formerly used for a syncretistic heresy in the second century of the Christian era, whose roots came to be sought in a universally dispersed pre-Christian complex of ideas, partly of Greek, partly of eastern origin, and of a distinctly dualistic character. It is supposed to have been the influence of this Gnosticism by which Paul's world of ideas in general and his Christology in particular, both in a positive and in a negative sense, were profoundly conditioned, and in which the explanation is, to be sought for those "elements" in his teaching for which no correspondence is to be found in the tradition of the primitive Palestinian church.

The writer who was especially responsible for this turn in the history of religions approach to Paul's preaching was the classical literary scholar R. Reitzenstein. He appealed, at least in the first instance, primarily to the so-called Hermetic literature, a motley mixture of speculative religious non-Christian tracts from the second and third centuries (A.D.) that announce themselves as revelations of Hermes Trismegistos, i.e., of the Egyptian god Thoth. Greek, Egyptian, eastern, and Jewish influences have here come together. Hermes, sometimes also called Poinandres or Asklepios, gives secret revelations that have reference to astrological and magical as well as to religious subjects. The religious ideas are dualistic-gnostic. The soul, imprisoned in matter, ascends once again to God in the way of gnosis. Along with this then, according to Reitzenstein, the so-called Anthropos-myth makes its appearance, the representation of original man in whom the divine pneuma finds its highest manifestation and who once more shows the scattered particles of light the way to God.

According to Reitzenstein a strong immediate influence of this gnostic Hellenism on Paul is to be assumed. The absolute proof for this
he finds in the technical use of all kinds of gnostic words and ideas in Paul, as, for example, psychikos and pneumatikos (being or not being in possession of gnosis), gnosis and agnosia, phantazein and doxa, morphoushtai and metamorphoushtai, nous, in the sense of pnuema, as the divine effluvium that is conferred on the elect as charisma. And Paul is said to have had not only the terminology but also the notions and concepts bound up with it, in common with Hellenistic mysticism and Gnosticism. Reitzenstein views Paul not as the greatest Gnostic. For this he refers particularly to 1 Corinthians 2, where Paul appeals for his knowledge to the Pneuma, the Spirit, who searches even the deep things of God. The psychical man is not in a position to grasp this, nor can he judge the pneumatic man. He is still a man; the pneumatic is that no longer. It is to this Pneuma, which finds its highest expression in the beholding of the Risen One, that Paul also appeals for his apostleship and his independence of others, as no longer bound to any tradition (Gal. 1). This also provides the explanation, it is said, for the fact that Paul does not ground his teaching on the deeds and words of the historical Jesus. According to Reitzenstein, Paul thought, not historically, but pneumatically. It was not what would have reached him from the tradition concerning Jesus of Nazareth, but what he had beheld and inwardly experienced as a Gnostic that constituted the source of his Christology.

The sweeping conclusions drawn by Reitzenstein have been rejected. Almost no one believes any longer that Paul was a mystic who, detached from the Christian tradition, gave out his pneumatic speculations for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The deep-lying material differences between the Pauline and gnostic conceptions, notwithstanding terminological similarity, have also been demonstrated from more than one side with a profusion of evidence. Even so, Reitzenstein's fundamental proposition that Paul's world of thought was profoundly conditioned by what is then termed his pre-Christian Gnosticism became the real foundation of the history of religions interpretation of Paul's preaching and doctrine, and has remained so to the present day. And this influence is the more radical according to the extent to which it is the more closely connected with the views propagated by Reitzenstein in his later writings, that Paul's Christology, too, was conditioned in a decisive way by pre-Christian Gnosticism, especially by what is termed the Iranian myth of the redeemed Redeemer. It is in this mythological interpretation of Paul's Christology that the transitions are to be found.

MAIN LINES IN THE HISTORY OF PAULINE INTERPRETATION

Diametrically contrary to the endeavor of the history of religions school, of which he was a decided and formidable opponent, Albert Schweitzer pointed to the basic eschatological motif as the key to the whole of Paul's preaching. Already in his Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung (English translation, 1912, Paul and His Interpreters), which appeared in 1911 as a sequel to his great work on the Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, Schweitzer had proved himself to be a very consistent and well-equipped adversary of the religionsgeschichtliche interpretation of Paul. He did not set forth his ideas in a positive way, however, until the publication in 1930 of his book Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus (English translation, 1931, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle). Here he attempted to achieve unity between his consistent-eschatological conception of Jesus' life and preaching and the theology of the Apostle Paul.

According to Schweitzer, the center of Paul's teaching lies in what he describes with the easily misunderstood term, Christ-mysticism. By that he means the way in which the church is involved in the death and resurrection of Christ, being with Christ and in Christ. One must understand this communion, however, not in a Greek-dualistic, but in a Jewish-eschatological sense. Paul's doctrine rests entirely on the eschatological preaching of Jesus concerning the nearness of the kingdom of God. While for Jesus, however, this kingdom was still a matter of the (imminent) future, Paul was faced with a completely new situation. With the death and resurrection of Christ the future continually expected by Jesus but not fulfilled has reached the stage of fulfillment. A radical alteration of the eschatological situation has entered in. The eschaton has become present time in the resurrection of Christ. Paul is said now, however, to have been confronted with the question as to how this is to be related to the unmistakable fact that the resurrection of the dead, to be expected with the consummation, the judgment of the world, and the like, had not yet come to pass. He is supposed now, in order to overcome this discrepancy between the "already" (of Christ's resurrection) and the "not yet" (of the final consummation), to have associated himself with the eschatological "schema" in the apocalypse of Baruch and the fourth book of Ezra and, in divergence from Jesus' expectation, to have conceived of it to the presently influential school of Bultmann and the history of religions interpretation of Paul's Christology advocated by it.

Before we attempt to trace this development further, however, we shall have to include in our range of vision the fourth or eschatological method of interpretation of Paul's gospel. For without its radical influence the whole of the subsequent history, even that of the present-day history of religions method of interpretation, is incomprehensible.

47. Ibid., p. 62.
49. Ibid., p. 226.
50. Cf., e.g., the careful writing by K. Deissner, Paulus und die Mystik seiner Zeit, 2nd ed., 1921; for the later period especially the great work of J. Dupont, Gnosis, La connaissance religieuse dans les Epitres de Saint Paul, 1919.
51. Above all in Das iranische Erlö sungsmysterium, 1921.
52. For the whole genesis of this hypothesis see the full and penetrating sketch by C. Colpe, Die religiengeschichtliche Schule. Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom gnostischen Erlö sungsmysterium, 1961, pp. 10-57.
the Messianic kingdom as coming before the full revelation of the kingdom of God. The resurrection of Christ signifies the beginning of this overlap. With Christ, however, the sharers in the Messianic kingdom (the elect church) also participate in his resurrection. The elect have risen with Christ. They are with him sharers in the "mode of being of the resurrection." This "mysticism" is to be taken as realistically as possible.

Schweitzer speaks repeatedly in this connection of the actual. The mysticism of Paul is not Greek in character, not a symbolically expressed experiencing of reality, but it is realistic, corporeal. It is, however, the new, pneumatic corporeality that is operative here, and it does not make rising with Christ, being in Christ, with all its hiddenness, an inward, mental occurrence, but a reality into which one is taken up automatically by the sacramental event.

Schweitzer attempts to elucidate all the facets of Paul's teaching from the eschatological Christ-mysticism thought of in this way. Thus it becomes clear that the law no longer has any power over man. The commencement of the new aeon signifies the end of the law. Thus the power of sin is also destroyed. It has place only in the body, in which the elect have died with Christ. As far as justification is concerned, Schweitzer speaks here of a "subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main crater -- the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ." Paul no longer has any need for this juridical line. Because with the dying and rising of Christ God has made sin to be destroyed with the flesh, those who have died and risen with Christ are considered before God in fact as sinless beings. The doctrine that God forgives sins on the basis of Christ's expiatory death is the doctrine handed down to Paul. He holds fast to it. The other is more his own, however, and springs from the mysticism of being in Christ. It is also this doctrine alone which establishes the right relation with ethics. Nevertheless, that the doctrine of justification on the ground of Christ's expiatory death appears to have had the most influence in history means that the Pauline doctrine of redemption became detached from its proper root and that the elementary power contained in it was not able to work reformatively on the life of the world.

It is not to be denied that Schweitzer's conception has something very self-contained and imposing about it. It is true that he leaves aside a number of Paul's epistles that he holds to be spurious. Among these, in addition to the Pastoral Epistles, is the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians in which other considerations are introduced against the expectation that Jesus' return is directly imminent, and an eschatology is developed for which there is no place in Schweitzer's construction. He also leaves out of consideration the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, with their peculiar christological pronouncements. All this cannot enhance the prestige of his interpretation. Further, a great many of the constituent parts of his conception are open to extensive criticism. Not least does this apply to his naturehaft view of "being in Christ" and of the sacraments. The use he makes of various Jewish eschatological schemas is also highly artificial, and the antithesis he constructs in this respect between Jesus and Paul certainly cannot be maintained. It may be observed further that justice is not done in Schweitzer to the christological pronouncements of Paul, especially where the divine person and cosmic significance of Christ are concerned.

All this will come up for further discussion in connection with our positive exposition. In addition we must not forget that the whole of this transcendent-christological mysticism of Paul, which goes back to Jesus' death and resurrection, has for Schweitzer (who does not accept the factuality of this resurrection and considers the eschatological expectations both of Jesus and of Paul an illusion) the significance of a mystical thought-construct, however much he attempts to preserve the essential and spiritual content of it.

This does not alter the fact, however, that as an interpretation of Paul's ideas Schweitzer's book offers something very valuable in two respects -- first, that he attempts to establish a unity between Jesus and Paul and that he finds it in the central idea of the imminent approach of the kingdom of God; second, closely related to this, that, over against the Greek-dualistic interpretation of the religiosisgeschichtliche school, he places his entire emphasis on the redemptive-historical character of the salvation preached by Paul. For this reason Schweitzer, however, fantastic his interpretations in all manner of subordinate parts may sometimes be, did not fail to exercise great influence, both in his sound criticism of the religiosisgeschichtliche school and in his christological interpretation of the Pauline kerygma. Moreover, the right continual to a purely christological conception of Paul's doctrine, if it is to be at all acceptable historically, must be able to make clear the connection of Paul to the primitive church at Jerusalem and the gospel proclaimed there, since it must be considered impossible that Paul could have

55. Ibid., p. 90.
56. Ibid., p. 90. cf. p. 37.
57. Ibid., pp. 109ff.
58. Ibid., p. 100.
59. Ibid., p. 110.
60. Ibid., pp. 117, 227ff.
61. Ibid., pp. 171ff.
62. Ibid., p. 225.
63. Ibid., p. 381.
presented an entirely new Greek conception of the gospel without coming into conflict with the church at Jerusalem.

**SECTION 6. CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT**

He who views the continuing investigation against the background of these four most prominent interpretations of the fundamental motif of Paul's preaching must come to the conclusion that there is hardly question any longer of a rectilinear continuation of the earlier positions. Rather, the lines cross each other in many respects. The liberal conception has had the least influence on the continuing investigation. Wrede's criticism of it, which pointed to the "Christology of redemptive facts" as the backbone of the whole of Paul's preaching, has come to be generally accepted. On the other hand, Wrede's position has proved untenable in that over against Paul's religion of redemption he still attempted to maintain the liberal picture of Jesus. Here it is particularly the eschatological approach to the whole of the New Testament kerygma that has been of decisive significance. What Paul proclaims is nothing other than the explicatio of the eschatological redemptive event that commenced with the advent of Christ and in his death and resurrection came to a provisional climax. All of Paul's preaching finds its starting point and motive in this eschatological orientation, however much men may be of different opinions concerning the manner in which Paul gave form to and elaborated it.

So far as this last point is concerned, the history of religions interpretation continues to retain a dominant influence in certain sectors of New Testament scholarship.

This is seen most clearly in the influential figure of Rudolf Bultmann and the school originating with him. Bultmann recognizes on the one hand the common basic eschatological motif underlying the preaching of Jesus and Paul.64 And although he thinks it necessary to deny Messianic self-consciousness to Jesus, yet he sees given in Jesus' person the absolute demand of decision. The certainty of having been placed in the eschatological situation with the appearance of Jesus constitutes according to Bultmann the starting point of the whole of the New Testament kerygma, and of the preaching of Paul.

While in this way Bultmann maintains the historical-eschatological character of Paul's preaching and Christology against Baur's idealistic interpretation of Paul, the ethical interpretation of the liberal school, and the mystical interpretation of Bousset and others, on the other hand he is of the opinion that Paul's world of thought was profoundly conditioned by gnosis. It is here that in Bultmann the connection is to be found with the history of religions school and particularly with Reitzenstein. Involved here is not only the origin of the fundamental distinction between real human existence and the world, which may be expressed as the consciousness of the heavenly realm into which the earth is to be lifted, but the absolute and transcendent. What in Baur was Hegelian idealism, however, is in Bultmann Heideggerian existentialism: it is again and again a matter of the actual decision between flesh and Spirit.

Now this gnosis is said to have played a great part with Paul also, especially in Christology. For Bultmann the **religionsgeschichtliche** background of Paul's Christology is no longer situated in the cultus-myth of the deity who dies and comes to life again, but rather in the cosmic drama of which the mythology of gnosis speaks. For in it the figure of a Redeemer makes its appearance, who as the pre-existent Son of the Most High descends from the world of light in order to communicate true knowledge, gnosis, to the sparks of light sunk in sleep and to bring them as the souls of men again to himself at their death. For that purpose, however, the heavenly Redeemer must himself descend to the domain of the power of the enemy, assume human form, become unrecognizable; indeed, he must himself be redeemed from the want and affliction of the earthly existence into which he has entered.65 It is this myth of the "redeemed Redeemer," called by Reitzenstein the Iranian mystery of redemption, which according to Bultmann forms the (anthetical) background of the Pauline Christology, as this clearly emerges particularly in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, further in the "Christ-hymn" cited by Paul in Philippians 2:6-11 and Ephesians 4:8-10, but also in such a passage as 1 Corinthians 2:8. In all this, Christ, it is said, acquires the significance of a cosmic figure who descends into this world to do battle with the powers that threaten man. And behind that again, as the real origin of this myth, lies the gnostic understanding of one's self and the world, which may be expressed as the consciousness of the fundamental distinction between real human existence and that which is bound to the world. At the same time it is here that the connection lies with the modern approach to life, and the way has been prepared to the "existentialist" Paul of the years following the Second World War.66

This approach to Paul's preaching on the basis of Gnosticism, 65. For a further characterization of this gnosis see Bultmann, Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting, ET 1956.
68. For this view in detail see my Paul and Jesus, pp. 17ff., 195ff.

irrespective of its connection with existence philosophy, has found acceptance with many. For the Apostle Paul E. Haenchen also writes — the conceptual materials of future eschatological speculation are not enough. A whole series of notions and ideas — the doctrine of the fall of the creation (Rom. 8:9-12) and of Adam (Rom. 5:12-17); the contrast of the psychic and pneumatic (1 Cor. 2:14ff.; 15:21, 44-49), of light and darkness (Rom. 13:11-13; 1 Thess. 5:4-6), and of the demonic rulers of this aeon (1 Cor. 2:6-8; 2 Cor. 4:4); and the peril of marriage (1 Cor. 7:33-34, 38) — are supposed to be related to gnosis. Likewise the false doctrine with which Paul has to contend in his epistles (or in those which are attributed to him), as, for example, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and the Pastoral Epistles, is said to have been of a gnostic character, and to have given Paul occasion to employ the gnostic schemas in a Christian re-interpretation. The most radical conception is, of course, that even Paul's preaching of Christ as the descended and exalted Redeemer was conditioned by a pre-Christian redeemer figure, specifically by the so-called gnostic myth of the primal-man redeemer, as we meet with it in various presentations, in addition to Bultmann, for example, in Haenchen, Käsemann, Schmithals, Fuchs, Bornkamm, Viehauer, and Brandenburger.

Meanwhile, partly in connection with the newer discoveries, both of the Qumran scrolls and of the still incompletely examined gnostic writings at Nag Hammadi, the unrestrained talk about gnosis, Gnosticism, etc., as a system of thought already more or less worked out in Paul's day, has indeed passed its high-water mark. For that matter, objections are sheltered against it from the very outset. After all, the writings to which scholars supposed themselves able to appeal for the gnostic complex of ideas — the Hermetic writings, the Mandaeans and Manichaean literature — date from a later, in part even from a much later, period than that of the commencement of Christianity. Even if one assumes, as most scholars now certainly do, that gnosis is to be spoken of as a pre-Christian phenomenon, this is not to say that on the basis of these writings of so much later origin one is able to draw a clear picture and to reach sweeping conclusions with respect to the manner in which, for example, Paul may be said already to have been dependent on them. This applies particularly to what is termed the gnostic mystery of redemption in the figure of the primal-man redeemer. For many scholars who have occupied themselves with these questions it is regarded as definitely established that wherever in this literature there is mention of such a redeemer, this representation is not antecedent to Christianity, but rather is borrowed from it. Colpe in his extensive discussion of this so-called gnostic redeemer-myth especially stressed the unwarranted generalization in the talk about this myth, as if it were a uniform thing that were to be found ready to hand in all the relevant texts. He demonstrates with great exactitude how complicated and differentiated the whole gnostic idea of redemption is and with how little justice one constructs for himself from it a "model" of a mythical redeemer figure (which then comes to function as "the" gnostic Redeemer) and in this way suggests a general gnostic myth of redemption that has perhaps never existed. And all this becomes still worse when one infers from this a precursor in the older gnostic traditions not known to us in which, it is said, the background of certain Pauline (and other New Testament) redemption and redeemer ideas must be discovered.

As more comes to be known about this gnosis from the newly discovered gnostic writings of the early Christian period, the correctness of this criticism is more and more corroborated. It becomes ever more apparent how cautiously one ought to speak of "gnosis," "gnostic myth," etc., as soon as one attempts to denote something more than a general dualistic philosophy of life and to judge it at a comparison with that which, for instance, may be said to be characteristic of Paul. Thus van Unnik, for example, on the basis of the examination of newly discovered gnostic texts, writes: "Anyone who has made a study of the speculative passages on Adam in the Apocryphon of John, for example, will not so easily get away with explaining Paul's exposition in Rom. 5 and 1 Cor. 15 in terms of similar ideas of a Gnostic type: and anybody who has seen here how the Gnostics handle the concept of the 'Son of Man' will not be inclined to try to shed light on this term in the Gospels by reference to such ideas of 'primeval man.' An understanding of the history and growth of Gnosticism, such as now becomes possible, must make us cautious about drawing so freely on very late Manichaean and Mandaean sources — as has happened often enough — in order to explain something in the New Testament. We may also expect that when these documents have been properly studied, academic myth-making will be a more sober business, and some of the myths will be up for sale."

70. For 1 and 2 Corinthians see W. Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, ET 1971; for Galatians the same author, "Die Häretiker in Galatien," ZNW, 1956, pp. 25-67; for Philippians again the same writer, "Die Irrlehren des Philippibriefes," ZTK, 1957, pp. 297-511 (see also the devastating critique of Schmithals by Colpe, Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule, 3rd ed., II, cols. 619ff.; as the descended and of Adam (Rom. 5:12-17); the conceptual materials of future eschatological speculation are not enough. A whole series of notions and ideas — the doctrine of the fall of the creation (Rom. 8:9-12) and of Adam (Rom. 5:12-17); the contrast of the psychic and pneumatic (1 Cor. 2:14ff.; 15:21, 44-49), of light and darkness (Rom. 13:11-13; 1 Thess. 5:4-6), and of the demonic rulers of this aeon (1 Cor. 2:6-8; 2 Cor. 4:4); and the peril of marriage (1 Cor. 7:33-34, 38) — are supposed to be related to gnosis. Likewise the false doctrine with which Paul has to contend in his epistles (or in those which are attributed to him), as, for example, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and the Pastoral Epistles, is said to have been of a gnostic character, and to have given Paul occasion to employ the gnostic schemas in a Christian re-interpretation. The most radical conception is, of course, that even Paul's preaching of Christ as the descended and exalted Redeemer was conditioned by a pre-Christian redeemer figure, specifically by the so-called gnostic myth of the primal-man redeemer, as we meet with it in various presentations, in addition to Bultmann, for example, in Haenchen, Käsemann, Schmithals, Fuchs, Bornkamm, Viehauer, and Brandenburger. Meanwhile, partly in connection with the newer discoveries, both of the Qumran scrolls and of the still incompletely examined gnostic writings at Nag Hammadi, the unrestrained talk about gnosis, Gnosticism, etc., as a system of thought already more or less worked out in Paul's day, has indeed passed its high-water mark. For that matter, objections are sheltered against it from the very outset. After all, the writings to which scholars supposed themselves able to appeal for his gnostic complex of ideas — the Hermetic writings, the Mandaeans and Manichaean literature — date from a later, in part even from a much later, period than that of the commencement of Christianity. Even if one assumes, as most scholars now certainly do, that gnosis is to be spoken of as a pre-Christian phenomenon, this is not to say that on the basis of these writings of so much later origin one is able to draw a clear picture and to reach sweeping conclusions with respect to the manner in which, for example, Paul may be said already to have been dependent on them. This applies particularly to what is termed the gnostic mystery of redemption in the figure of the primal-man redeemer. For many scholars who have occupied themselves with these questions it is regarded as definitely established that wherever in this literature there is mention of such a redeemer, this representation is not antecedent to Christianity, but rather is borrowed from it. Colpe in his extensive discussion of this so-called gnostic redeemer-myth especially stressed the unwarranted generalization in the talk about this myth, as if it were a uniform thing that were to be found ready to hand in all the relevant texts. He demonstrates with great exactitude how complicated and differentiated the whole gnostic idea of redemption is and with how little justice one constructs for himself from it a "model" of a mythical redeemer figure (which then comes to function as "the" gnostic Redeemer) and in this way suggests a general gnostic myth of redemption that has perhaps never existed. And all this becomes still worse when one infers from this a precursor in the older gnostic traditions not known to us in which, it is said, the background of certain Pauline (and other New Testament) redemption and redeemer ideas must be discovered.

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In the light of all the foregoing it is not strange that interest in the Greek-Hellenistic religiosity as background of the Pauline formulation of the gospel has diminished in recent years, and that its place has been taken by a vigorous revival of the study of the Jewish premises of Paul’s preaching. All sorts of a priori considerations would seem to make this method of approach plausible. Is it not in the nature of things that a writer be judged above all according to the milieu from which he comes and which provides his frame of reference? Must not, then, the Pauline ideas be viewed in the light of the Old Testament and rabbinic Judaism, which are known, rather than in that of the Hellenistic Gnosticism of the second century or later, which is not, or scarcely, known? Paul himself appeals again and again to the Old Testament and to his Jewish origin (Phil. 3:5; 2 Cor. 11:22; cf. Acts 23:6; 26:5). The thesis often advanced that Paul was reared in Tarsus and even in his youth must have been deeply impressed by Hellenistic heathenism has been strongly contested on the basis of a closer examination of Acts 22:3 and been replaced by another, namely, that Paul not only received his Pharisaic training in Jerusalem, but also spent his youth there. This is not, of course, to deny that at a more advanced age Paul will have become thoroughly acquainted with the Hellenistic world, rather than by the frequent use of the Hebraic idiom, he gives evidence of his affinity with the Greek-speaking Jewry in the Diaspora; but there has indeed been a return from seeking the fundamental structures of Paul’s preaching and doctrine, as well as that which was distinctive in his world of ideas and mode of expression, elsewhere than in his Jewish origin. Very characteristic of this new view is surely, for example, the very detailed and magnificently constructed book of J. Dupont on gnosis. Although this author, too, does not deny that in certain respects Paul draws on the vocabulary of the popular Hellenistic philosophy, he strongly posits on the other hand that what is said to be gnosis in Paul is not borrowed from Hellenism, but must be interpreted from the Old Testament. In order to understand Paul, therefore, one must not call in the assistance of the gnostic systems, the mystery religions, or the Hermetic writings, but rather seek in the knowledge of God in the Old Testament the source from which Paul has drawn even for the formulation of his proclamation.

This emphasis on the Jewish character of Paul’s preaching and doctrine is then developed further in a great many different ways. While Dupont attempts to appeal especially to the Old Testament, the thesis has been defended, notably by the Jewish scholar H. J. Schoeps, that Paul must be understood entirely as a Hellenistic Jew, and as such

78. Against the religionsgeschichtliche interpretation see the early work of H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, 1913; later, i.a., C. A. A. Scott, Christianity according to St. Paul, 1939; now especially G. Wagner, Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries.
81. J. Dupont, Gnosis.

In the meantime there are also cautious voices that warn that one must not conceive of the Palestinian Judaism of Paul’s day as a self-contained intellectual world and that therefore, even if one chooses to seek Paul’s spiritual background in it, other influences are not thereby excluded but must rather be presupposed. In this context the Qumran literature is very often taken into consideration. However one thinks these writings can be characterized—here, too, the word gnostis crops up repeatedly, though usually in a much more restricted and less pregnant sense than that in which, for example, Bultmann and his school are accustomed to speak of it—they represent the Jewish world of thought again in another way than, for example, the rabbinic writings, and they also show, more clearly perhaps than any other contemporary Jewish writings, the influx of other than originally Jewish ideas.

Now it is these writings, and the motifs that predominate in them, to which it is thought that Paul’s preaching, too, can be related. To be sure, the essence of the Pauline kerygma, the historical-eschatological character of his Christology in which Christ’s death and resurrection occupy the central place, cannot in any sense be connected with the data of the Qumran literature. But this does not alter the fact that with respect to secondary (although not unimportant) motifs in Paul’s preaching striking analogies are to be observed: motifs which, if true, have been thoroughly transformed by the use that Paul makes of them precisely because he presses them into the service of a new and entirely original kerygma, but which nevertheless are able to throw light on the backgrounds that until now have been sought in vain not only in the Greek, but also in the Jewish thinking of his time. Among others certain themes are mentioned that are highly characteristic of Paul, such as the struggle between light and darkness, the revelation of the mystery, justification from pure grace. One can add to this that in the heresies combatted by Paul, as in the Epistle to the Colossians (heresies that frequently have had to do with the gnostic interpretation of Paul’s preaching), motifs stand out that seem to fit...
much better in the framework of the Judaism represented in the Qumran literature than in that which it has been thought possible to reconstruct on the basis of the later gnostic writings as pre-Christian gnosis. Indications are accordingly seen here, especially in the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, that Paul's preaching with respect to its formulation must be viewed especially against the background of these newly unlocked sources.

This whole development admits finally of being demonstrated at a single point, although for the understanding of Paul's preaching a very important one; the frequently occurring formula "in Christ," "with Christ," and what is related to it. Although formerly appeal was often made to these formulae and ideas in order to show the mystical character of Paul's proclamation of the gospel and experience of faith (dying, rising, etc., "with Christ") and attempts were made to cite all sorts of parallels from the Greek world, since scholars have become more aware of the Jewish and Semitic background of Paul an entirely different view has come to predominate in this respect, that of the Old Testament idea of the "all-in-one," frequently denoted with the term "corporate personality." Although it is questionable whether this term, in the special sense with which it has been stamped notably by Wheeler Robinson for certain relationships observed in the Old Testament, is applicable in every respect to the epistles of Paul, yet the idea one intends to typify with the aid of this expression is undoubtedly of great significance for insight into the fundamental structures of Paul's preaching. It is that of the representation by Christ of those who belong to him, the inclusion of "the many" in the One and on this ground the application to these many of what has taken place, or will yet take place, in and with the One, Christ. It is a matter here not only of a certain formula ("in Christ," "with Christ"), but of a way of thinking that understands the relationship between Christ and his own in an entirely different, much more "objective" manner than the method of interpretation that moves in the Greek-mystical direction. Along with this the Adam-Christ parallel has appeared to be of a much broader purport than has often been assumed on the basis of the few explicit pronouncements (in Rom. 5 and 1 Cor. 15). The whole specifically Pauline idea of the church as the "body" of Christ is bound up with it, as also the all-embracing significance of Christ's redemptive work with respect to "all things." Later we shall return to this in greater detail.

If it is possible to speak in this sense of a growing consensus, such must undoubtedly be done with great reserve, as has already been evident in part from the preceding. For while there is agreement that what lies at the root of Paul's preaching is not the theological system, nor the philosophical idea, nor religious feeling, but the eschatologically understood activity of God in Jesus Christ, yet just with respect to this eschatological character of Paul's preaching strongly divergent opinions are once again to be pointed out, so that it is not without justice that Rigaux speaks of "eschatology and eschatologies." As we have seen, Schweizer applied his consistent-eschatological conception to Paul's preaching in such a way that this is defined on the one hand by the expectation, unaltered in all his epistles, of the imminent return of Jesus and of the Messianic glory, and on the other by the certainty that with Jesus' death and resurrection the eschaton and with it the eschatological mode of being of believers (by virtue of their being-in-Christ) has broken through into this aeon. For Schweizer and his followers this means that the first is an illusion rendered out of date. Here it can already be established, however, what a radical change this new approach has involved, an approach that some retrospectively have once again wished to press into the service of the gnostic interpretation of Paul's preaching but which, even so, obviously finds support in the first place in the Old Testament and Semitic character of Paul's world of ideas and thought.

If we now return finally to our starting point and ask ourselves where it is that continuing investigation sees the confluence of the main architectonic lines of Paul's preaching and where it appears that the main entrance to this imposing building can be found, then surely one can speak of a growing consensus insofar as scholars are more and more finding the point of departure for an adequate approach to the whole in the redemptive-historical, eschatological character of Paul's proclamation. The governing motif of Paul's preaching is the saving activity of God in the advent and the work, particularly in the death and the resurrection, of Christ. This activity is on the one hand the fulfillment of the work of God in the history of the nation Israel, the fulfillment therefore also of the Scriptures; on the other hand it reaches out to the ultimate consummation of the parousia of Christ and the coming of the kingdom of God. It is this great redemptive-historical framework within which the whole of Paul's preaching must be understood and all of its subordinate parts receive their place and organically cohere.

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of date by the course of events, but that the abiding significance of Paul's teaching is situated in the Pauline pneumatology attending the second motif. 94 Not unjustly has it been said of the latter position that Schweitzer, by making the Spirit a timeless element, in the end shows more kinship with the theology of the nineteenth century than with that of Paul. 95

But while Schweitzer always recognized the great significance that the continuing future expectation had for Paul, however much this proved to have been an illusion, others wish to see the real core of Paul's eschatological preaching in the eschatological event realized in Jesus' death and resurrection. Here the conception of C. H. Dodd 96 and of the literature that has emerged under his influence should be mentioned especially. 97 According to Dodd also, it is the eschatological framework within which the death and resurrection of Christ must be understood and from which this event derives its specific significance in Paul's preaching. This eschatological context, in which everything is placed in Paul, is said to be the expression of Paul's belief that history has reached its fulfillment in Christ's death and resurrection; that is to say, these events have the absolute significance of the final goal that God has set for himself in history. 98 To be sure, this belief among the first Christians and also in Paul was coupled with the expectation of a speedy return of Christ, but his interest in it is said to have decreased more and more and the "futurist eschatology" of the first period to have been replaced by his "Christ-mysticism," that is to say, by the consciousness of spiritual unity with Christ and the contemplation of all the riches of the divine grace that even now are the portion of those who are in Christ. 99 The church is accordingly the place in which the promise of the great future is fulfilled. It is the sphere of divine grace and supernatural life. 100 The supra-natural order of life that the apocalyptic writers had foretold "in terms of pure fantasy" is now described as an actual fact of experience. In this way Paul brought the principle of realized eschatology to full development. After the resurrection of Christ the church became the sphere of the eschatological miracle. 101

Although Dodd cannot of course deny that Paul's preaching is full of references to the future, yet in his spiritual development 102 the presence of the salvation given in Christ is said more and more to have defined the eschatological character of his preaching. That Dodd very one-sidedly shifts the accents here, and that this whole hypothetical development in Paul from "futuristic" to "realized" eschatology can be constructed in Paul's epistles in no other way than by means of a strongly selective arrangement of texts, has been frequently demonstrated. 103 One is certainly permitted to take into consideration here Dodd's own philosophical-religious premises, in which the temporal aspects of salvation entirely recede into the background in comparison with the "eternal issues of life." It has consequently been said, not unjustly, that Dodd's interpretation of the Pauline eschatology has a certain Platonic tendency. 104 Eschatology is ultimately nothing other than the expression of the absolute, timeless significance and value of the realities proclaimed by Paul. The futural element of this eschatology may not entirely disappear, but it does become withered. And with that Paul's preaching is deprived of a dimension that pertains to its essence no less than the realized eschatology Dodd posits so emphatically.

In this connection the name of Bultmann is once more to be mentioned. As we have seen, while on the one hand he considers Paul's preaching in a positive as well as in a negative sense to have been profoundly determined by motifs from the religions of the heathen world, for Bultmann, too, its starting point lies in the eschatological interpretation of Christ's death and resurrection. More clearly than Dodd, Bultmann recognizes the essential significance of the futural dimension in Paul's eschatology. 105 Paul interprets eschatology, however, on the basis of his anthropology, that is to say, the eschatological present and future is for him the expression of a specific understanding of human existence. To be sure, according to Bultmann Paul does not abandon the apocalyptic picture of the future of resurrection, judgment, glory, etc., but the real salvation is righteousness, liberty, joy in the Holy Spirit. The idea of salvation is thus oriented to the individual. On the one hand this salvation is already present time, on the other it is still future, for it is, by virtue of "the historicity of man," to be obtained only in the way of existential decisions. In order to attain to his authentic existence man must let himself be crucified with Christ over and over again, that is to say, renounce that which is ready to hand, which he has at his disposal, and choose for that which is not ready to hand and which he does not have at his disposal. In this he is again and again brought to the end of the possibilities at his disposal and led to the liberty of true humanness. It is therefore not the eschatological notions, but rather the anthropological insights given expression in them, which constitute the very core of Paul's preaching. Not the idea of the end of the world but the manner in which man is confronted

94. Ibid., pp. 160-176, 368-388.
98. The Apostolic Preaching, p. 41.
99. Ibid., p. 63.
100. Ibid., p. 64.
101. Ibid., p. 65.
102. Paul's interest in the speedy return is said to have diminished especially in the period after he wrote 1 Corinthians (ibid., p. 65). See also Dodd's article cited there, "The Mind of Paul: Change and Development," in Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, I, 1935, II, 1941, included in his New Testament Studies, 1953.
105. In addition to the writings of Bultmann already mentioned, for what follows see his History and Eschatology, ET 1957, pp. 34ff., 40ff.
existentially with the acting and speaking of God in Jesus Christ is the demythologized substance of this eschatology. In the nature of the case there can be no question in this interpretation of an eschatological redemptive history in the sense of a train of events advancing toward the consummation which have already taken place and are still to be anticipated in Christ. Such a conception presupposes, in Bultmann's judgment, a conception of history and Naherwartung that has long since been rendered out of date by the course of events. It is precisely the great significance of Paul that, by interpreting eschatology out of his anthropology, he has already given in nuce the solution to the problem of history and eschatology, as this was posed by the failure of the paraousia to arrive.

It is clear that this demythologizing interpretation covers the content of Paul's preaching only very incompletely — and at that according to the prior understanding of an existentialist hermeneutic. All of theology, and thus also Christology, is treated from the viewpoint of anthropology. Accordingly the anthropological categories of which Paul makes use form the real framework in which Bultmann in his Theology of the New Testament analyzes and brings together Paul's preaching. It is not difficult to recognize that along with this approach a great narrowing makes its appearance insofar as here — otherwise than in Paul — all of the divine redemptive activity in Christ is regarded sub specie hominis. Yet Bultmann's interpretation is so far an advance with respect to his radical predecessors, in that he seeks the heart of Paul's preaching, not in timeless notions concerning God or in a new experience of religious feeling, but in the decisive significance of the divine redemptive work in Christ. For this reason the analyses of Bultmann, even though they all bear the signature of his existentialist interpretation (and reduction!) of the gospel, still have a greater value for the understanding of Paul, even for those who cannot follow him on his philosophical pathways, than those of his radical-critical predecessors.

Finally, then, it remains to mention that this interpretation of Paul's eschatological preaching — to our mind the most adequate interpretation — which does justice both to the present and the future significance of this "eschatology" and which does not attempt to dissolve the historical backbone of Paul's preaching, with respect to what has already taken place as well as to that which must yet take place, in an idealistic or existentialistic fashion. There is no specific school in the investigation to be spoken of here, but rather a widespread group of interpreters, highly differentiated among themselves, who endeavor to understand the Pauline gospel in its original meaning and purport without subjecting its content to a previously determined hermeneutical principle. On the one hand this redemptive-historical interpretation (as it has been given expression in a very representative manner, for example, in

106. Ibid., p. 49.
108. For this "narrowing" see my Bultmann, 1960, pp. 38ff.

109. ET 1951; and by the same author the general work Christology of the New Testament, while reference is now to be made especially to his Salvation in History, ET 1967, where the whole problem surrounding the redemptive history of the New Testament is treated at length; as regards Paul, see pp. 248-268. In his footsteps on Paul, e.g., J. Munk, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, ET 1959; Hamilton, The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul, 1957.

110. By these I understand the thirteen canonical epistles. On the authenticity of Colossians (and Ephesians) see the Introduction to my Col.; on that of the Pastoral Epistles my De Pastoralis Missae, 1967.
II

FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURES

SECTION 7. THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME.
THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

From the history of the investigation it has become evident how easily the entrance to Paul's preaching is blocked or narrowed when one comes to place in the center and absolutize certain facets of his proclamation of salvation at the expense of others. It may undoubtedly be said to be a result of the more recent investigation that, although it has not in its own turn escaped all kinds of one-sidedness and dogmatism, it has succeeded in arriving at a broader conception of Paul's preaching. It has no longer sought the basic motif of this preaching in one particular soteriological aspect, whether in justification by faith or in victory over the flesh through the Spirit, but, transcending all these partial viewpoints and antecedent to them, in the eschatological or redemptive-historical starting point of Paul's proclamation. The whole content of this preaching can be summarized as the proclamation and explication of the eschatological time of salvation inaugurated with Christ's advent, death, and resurrection. It is from this principal point of view and under this denominator that all the separate themes of Paul's preaching can be understood and penetrated in their unity and relation to each other.1

Naturally, only the continuation of our inquiry will throw further light on this thesis in all its implications. The extent, however, to which Paul saw the advent and work of Christ as revelation of the fulfilling activity of God in history and as the breaking through of the great time of salvation can immediately be demonstrated on the basis of a number of typical pronouncements from his epistles.

What is said in Galatians 4:4 of "the fullness of the time" and in Ephesians 1:10 of "the fullness of the times" is surely of special importance:

...but when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son,...

...the mystery of his [God's] will,... unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon earth....

What is meant by this "fullness of the time" is not only the maturation of a specific matter in the great framework of redemptive history, but the fulfilling of the time in an absolute sense. The time

2. In Gal. 4:4 there is mention of the πλήρωμα τού χρόνου, that is, the fullness of the time in its extensiveness, as world time. In Eph. 1:10 it is πλήρωμα τού καιρού, that is, the fulfillment of all antecedent redemptive-historical interventions and turning points in the extensiveness of the time.

3. See below, p. 52.

4. cf. Théologie, TDNT, IV, pp. 118 f., s.v. nyn. He writes that the apostle believed "that the long-expected day of the Lord had come in this nyn.... In the NT this nyn there is in fact expressed the certainty of eschatology already realized." See also Wendland, Cor., p. 57: "The great 'now' is the onset of the time of salvation." 5. Cf. cf. Kümmel, too, in the "Anhang" to Lietzmann, Cor., p. 205. In a sweeping manner Kümmel here corrects Lietzmann, who still wholly followed the mystical interpretation and by "from now on" (v. 16) understood, not the redemptive-historical revolution that has dawned with Christ's resurrection, but the point of time of conversion.

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4. Ethikon to πλήρωμα (Gal. 4:4). In Eph. 1:10 there is mention of the συναχίωσις ("management of a household," "arrangement," "administration")—not "preparation," as the Dutch Bible Society translation has it—of the fullness of the times in which God sums up all things anew in Christ as under one head. Although the fullness intended here is still a matter of the future, it has already found its initial fulfillment with Christ's exaltation (Phil. 2:10; Col. 1:20), and it is certainly meant in that sense here as well. 5. Cf. Stühlin, TDNT, IV, pp. 118 f., s.v. nyn. He writes that the apostle believed "that the long-expected day of the Lord had come in this nyn.... In the NT this nyn there is in fact expressed the certainty of eschatology already realized." See also Wendland, Cor., p. 57: "The great 'now' is the onset of the time of salvation." 6. Cf. cf. Kümmel, too, in the "Anhang" to Lietzmann, Cor., p. 205. In a sweeping manner Kümmel here corrects Lietzmann, who still wholly followed the mystical interpretation and by "from now on" (v. 16) understood, not the redemptive-historical revolution that has dawned with Christ's resurrection, but the point of time of conversion.
new creation: he participates in, belongs to, this new world of God.

The qualification of this event as the "revelation of the mystery," or the "making known" of that which until now was "kept secret" or "hidden," for which the apostle has a predilection, is also indicative of this eschatological character of the redemptive dispensation that has dawned in Christ and of its proclamation by Paul. What a dominant place this expression occupies throughout all of Paul's epistles may appear from the following survey:

... the revelation (apokalypsis) of the mystery (το μυστήριον) which was kept secret for long ages (σιγαζέον) but is now disclosed (πανερθέντος) (Rom. 16:25, 26).

... the mystery (το μυστήριον) which has been hidden (αποκρυμμένον) for ages and generations, but now has been revealed (ἐφανερώθη) to his saints (Col. 1:26; cf. 2:2, 3).

...making known (ἐγνώσις) unto the mystery (το μυστήριον) of his [God's] will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times (Eph. 1:9, 10).

... my insight into the mystery (το μυστήριον) of Christ, which was not made known (ἐγνώσις) to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed (ἀπεκάλυφθη) to his holy apostles and prophets... (Eph. 3:4, 5; cf. v. 3).

... but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery (ἐν μυστηρίῳ), even the wisdom that has been hidden (αποκρυμμένην), which God foreordained before the ages... (1 Cor. 2:7).

... the grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but has now been manifested (πανερθείαν) by the appearing of our Saviour (2 Tim. 1:9, 10; cf. also Tit. 1:2, 3).

The attempt has often been made to understand "mystery" by analogy with the significance of this word in the ancient mystery religions in the sense of a kind of secret teaching that is "revealed" to only a few intimates. In Paul, however, it has a completely different sense, as is apparent also from a comparison with the newly unlocked Jewish sources:8 "mystery," that which has been "hidden," is to be understood, as a few of the texts cited say in so many words, in connection with the hidden counsel of God in relation to his redemptive work in history. "Hiddenness," "mystery," etc., has, therefore, in addition to a poetic a plainly historical connotation: it is that which has not yet appeared, has not yet become open and manifest, but is hidden, kept secret before ages, even in the times appointed for it, its fullness is to be understood in the full sense as the new creation: he participates in, belongs to; this new world-of God, which has now come into being, is clearly evident from a comparison with such passages as Eph. 2:10, 15; 4:23; Col. 3:10; cf. also Foerster in TDNT, III, p. 1034, s.v. kriti.

To the pre-existent Elohim, God, the Pauline Eschatology, 1930, pp. 46, 47: "... not merely individual, subjective conditions have been changed, but... there has been created a totally new environment, or, more accurately speaking: a totally new world, in which the person spoken of is an inhabitant and participant."


9. Cf., e.g., Bornkamm, TDNT, pp. 819ff., s.v. μυστήριον; Groshide, 1 Cor., pp. 179ff.; on 1 Cor. 2:7, Wendland, Cor., p. 18; C. Masson, L'Épitre de Saint Paul aux Colossiens, 1950, p. 112ff.; my Paul and Jesus, p. 59.

10. The usage is also very clear, e.g., in 1 Cor. 1:7, where "the revelation" of our Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of in the sense of his advent, his appearing (cf. Rom. 8:18ff. [twice]; 1 Cor. 3:13, et al.). Rom. 1:18 is also characteristic of the Pauline usage, where Paul speaks of the wrath of God. What is meant is not the announcement that God is wrathful, but the coming into operation of that wrath, even though this is not recognized as such. Cf. Bultmann, Theology, I, pp. 275ff.

11. Oeke states that the concept of revelation has "his true locus... in eschatology" (TDNT, II, p. 583).

12. Thus Tit. 1:2, 3, where the hope of eternal life is spoken of, which the advent of the Lord promised before times eternal, but revealed in its own time (ἁρμονία idios). The same expression is found in 1 Tim. 2:6; 6:15. One can take it as a synonym of πληροφορία του ορισθούσαν or τον καιρόν. The adjective idios speaks of the proper, fitting, appropriate, which, just as πληροφορία, finds its determination in God's counsel; cf. O. Cullmann, Christ and Time, ET 1963, pp. 10ff.

13. See also J. Mommsen, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, pp. 86-80. His thesis, acceptable in itself, is diminished by dubious exegesis in several subordinate parts. See below, pp. 524ff.

has to characterize their general content not only as kerygma, but also
as doctrine and parakletesis, yet this doctrine, too, has no other object
and this admonition no other starting point and ground than the ful-
filling and redeeming activity of God in the advent of Christ.

It is plain that this general character of Paul’s preaching is
materially altogether in harmony with the great theme of Jesus’ pre-
aching of the coming of the kingdom of heaven. What Jesus proclaims
as the “fulfillment of the time” (Mark 1:15) is almost word for word
identical with what Paul terms “the fullness of the time.” And the
beatitude Jesus addresses to his disciples: “To you it has been given to
know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;... many prophets and
righteous men desired to see the things which you see, and saw them
not.” (Matt. 13:11, 16, 17) finds its echo in Paul’s word of the reve-
lation of the mystery that has been hidden for ages and generations.
However much the preaching of Jesus and that of Paul in a formal
sense (that is, in choice of words, way of representing things, type
of teaching) may be distinguished, and however much the time after
the resurrection of Christ represents a stage of the revelation that has
advanced further than Jesus in his earthly self-revelation, this
does not alter the fact that the coming of the kingdom as the ful-
filling eschatological coming of God to the world is the great dynamic
principle of Paul’s preaching, even though the word “kingdom of heaven”
does not occupy a central place in it. That this deeper unity of the New Testa-
ment kerygma is once again being recognized in a broad circle is
among the great gains of the eschatological approach to Paul’s preach-
ing as well.

And this applies not only to the relation of Jesus and Paul. In
this general character of his preaching Paul in his fashion also carries
on what the apostles and the early Christian church at Jerusalem be-
lieved and proclaimed as the gospel of Christ. For them, too, the advent
of Christ, his appearance, death, and resurrection, as well as the gift
of the Holy Spirit, were above all the fulfillment of the promise, the
dawning of the consummation of the history of redemption, escha-
tological event. Thus Peter at once expounded it on Pentecost in the
light of the prophecy of Joel (cf. Acts 2:17), and the church lived in
the consciousness of having seen the breaking of the day of salvation
and of being itself the people of God of the great end time. One can
understand the nature and origin of this peculiar consciousness, called
forth by Jesus’ advent and confirmed by his resurrection, in no other
way than against the background of Israel’s expectation of redemption
and view of history. Paul stands in the same life stream, and the funda-
mental motif of his preaching is not different from that of the other
apostles and of the primitive Christian church. But he unfolded it in a
wealth of aspects and with a depth of ideas that is unequalled in the
rest of the apostolic preaching preserved to us, and therefore has re-
peatedly opened new perspectives in the history of investigation and
for the faith of the Christian church.

SECTION 8. THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST.
ESCHATOLOGY AND CHRISTOLOGY

It follows directly from what has just been said that this general eschato-
logical character of Paul’s preaching is entirely defined and explained
by the advent and the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul’s “eschatology” is
“Christ-eschatology,” and “the Pauline approach to history is faith
in Christ.” The fundamental structure of Paul’s preaching is conse-
quently only to be approached from his Christology.

This can be seen in various ways from the already quoted eschato-
logical pronouncements themselves. It is the advent of Christ, the
sending of the Son of God, that brings to light the fullness of the time;
(Gal. 4:4); similarly, the revelation of the mystery that has now dawning
consists of the fact that “the mystery of Christ” has been revealed (Eph.
3:4); it is the “appearing of our Saviour” that is the proof of the great
turning point of the times (2 Tim. 1:9, 10). For this reason the whole
content of the mystery that has now been revealed can be qualified and
summarized in the one word—Christ (Col. 2:5), just as the gospel
of the inaugurated time of salvation, of which Paul is the herald, is again
and again called the gospel of Christ (Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor.
2:18), or the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2 Tim. 1:8), or the gospel
of God’s Son, whereby the words “of Christ,” etc., if not always and exclu-
sively, then certainly for the most part, have the sense of “the gospel
concerning Christ.”

This interdependence between the “eschatological” and the
“christological” ground motif of Paul’s preaching is of the highest
importance for the understanding of both.

On the one hand, it is determinative for insight into the real
nature of Paul’s preaching of Christ. This has in principle a redemptive-
historical, eschatological content. It is decisively defined by what has
taken place in Christ, by the acts of God that he wrought in him for
the fulfillment of his redemptive plan and of which the death and
resurrection of Christ constitute the all-controlling center. Paul’s Chris-
tology is a Christology of redemptive facts. Here lies the ground of the
whole of his preaching, and it is with the historical reality of this event,
in the past as well as in the future, that both the apostolic kerygma
and the faith of the church stand or fall (1 Cor. 15:14, 19). This historical-eschatological character of Paul's Christology also places it in organic relationship with the revelation of the Old Testament. What has taken place in Christ forms the termination and fulfillment of the great series of divine redemptive acts in the history of Israel and the presupposition of the progress and consummation of the history of the world. Therefore the still-to-be-expected future of the Lord and the continuing activity of God in history are never to be detached from the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, but rather must be understood in the light of them (cf. Rom. 11:15ff.; 15:8-12). In this connection the thesis of Bultmann that Paul's eschatology is entirely determined by his anthropology, and that the history of the people of Israel and the history of the world have disappeared from his sight and been replaced by the "historicity of man," is also to be rejected. It is true indeed that Paul does not develop a well-defined historical picture of the new dispensation of history that has begun with Christ. In that sense Paul is no philosopher or theologian of history. But this does not mean that his eschatology may be said to be only an eschatology sub specie hominis, whereby world history would have the significance of the wings and properties of the stage on which the small history of the individual man is enacted. Paul's eschatology bears a theocentric character, if we say, in its past, present, and future occur sub specie Dei, under the viewpoint of that God who is the Creator of heaven and earth and who conducts all things to their consummation in accordance with the prophetic revelation of the Old Testament. And this is reflected in his eschatological, redemptive-historical Christology. This Christology is not only directed to and determined by the fact that Christ brings man to his "authenticity" and destiny—here the great narrowness of every theology that makes the knowledge and redemption of the individual man its all-controlling hermeneutical starting point becomes perceptible—but also that God in Christ has brought to fulfillment and will yet bring to fulfillment his man- and world- and history-encompassing redemptive work in a conclusive way. This all-embracing character of Paul's eschatology and Christology comes to the fore, as we shall see still further, especially in the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. But it forms the great presupposition of all of Paul's preaching. For the Christ in whose death and resurrection the new aeon awakens is the Messiah of Israel (Rom. 1:2-4; 9:5), in whom God gathers and saves his people (2 Cor. 6:16ff.), and whom he has exalted and appointed Savior and Kyrios of all things (Phil. 2). However much the name Christ in the Pauline usage seems to have acquired the sense of a proper

22. Bultmann, History and Eschatology, p. 43.
23. See further below, Section 74.
ideas, yet it is distinguished from all forms of the contemporaneous Jewish eschatological expectation and bears a completely independent character. Now this has its origin in the fact that Paul's eschatology is not determined by any traditional eschatological schema, but by the actual acting of God in Christ. This is the fundamental christological character of his eschatology.

This distinctive character emerges most plainly in the peculiar tension that is to be ascertained between the aspects of fulfillment and expectation in Paul's eschatology and which already finds expression in the eschatological terminology. For while, on the one hand, the apostle speaks of the fullness of the time that has taken effect and of the new creation that has begun, on the other hand he is clearly conscious of still living in the present world (ho aion houtos) and the time corresponding with it (ho nyn kaires; cf., e.g., Rom. 8:18; 11:5; 12:2, et al.). Of the new world, denoted in the Jewish usage as the world to come (ho aion mellon), he makes mention exclusively in a future sense (Eph. 1:21; cf. 2:7). And he does speak of the present world time in which the church is living as "the end (literally, the ends) of the ages" (ta telé tôn aionón; 1 Cor. 10:11), "the last times" (en hysterois kairois; 1 Tim. 4:1), but sometimes the expression "in the last days" (en eschatais hēmerinis) has reference to a period that has not yet been entered upon (2 Tim. 3:1). Finally, to mention still another example, in one place Paul can speak of "the present evil age" (ek tou aionos tou enestótos ponérou) as of a situation from which Christ has snatched his people (Gal. 1:4),27 and he can reproach the church for having subjected itself to all manner of commandments "as if still living in the world" (Col. 2:21; cf. also Eph. 2:2),28 while elsewhere he speaks of the present aeon and of the world as the place where the believers must live godly lives (Tit. 2:12), and must shine as stars (Phil. 2:15). The result is that in certain contexts he qualifies the unredemptive life prior to the redemptive time as a "once," "in that time," etc., which has now been overcome (cf. Eph. 2:2, 12), in contrast with the present "now" of the new creation, the time of redemption and fulfillment (2 Cor. 6:2; Eph. 2:13; Rom. 3:21, et al.). Elsewhere, however, the "at present" or "now" indicates the continuance of the mode of existence defined by the world, over against the "then" or "once" of the perfection still to be expected (1 Cor. 13:10, 12, et al.).29

It is this remarkable ambivalence of the "now," which can have the sense of the "already now" of the time of salvation that has been entered upon as well as of the "even now" of the world time that still continues, which imparts to Paul's eschatology its wholly distinctive character. The attempt has been made indeed to recover in certain Jewish eschatological notions the "fundamental schema" of this "already" and "not yet" eschatology (namely, in those writings in which the

27. In Col. 1:13 this is expressed as being delivered out of the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ.
28. Here kairos is used in the same sense as aion.
29. On this variously qualified nyn see Stählin at length in TDNT, IV, 525.
to Paul, the fullness of the time has been entered upon and the new creation has dawned with the advent of Christ, it is clear at once that we have to do with a total vision of the whole redemptive action of God in Christ. The breakthrough of the new does not begin only at a specific point in Christ's life on earth or at his exaltation, but the fullness of the time takes effect with the sending of God's Son, born of a woman, born under the law (Gal. 4:4). The Christ-hymn of 1 Timothy 3:16, in which “the great mystery of godliness” finds its expression, accordingly begins with the words: “who was manifested in the flesh”\(^\text{11}\). This does not alter the fact that it can be said of Paul's gospel in particular that it has its starting point and center in the death and resurrection of Christ, and that only from then on does the proper light fall on the whole of the fulfilling and consummating activity of God, both "retrospectively" in the incarnation and pre-existence of Christ and "prospectively" in his continuing exaltation and anticipated parousia.

That the center of Paul's gospel may rightly be sought in Christ's death and resurrection can be confirmed in all sorts of ways from his own pronouncements. Thus, for example, in the important words of 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4: “For I delivered to you [as tradition] as of first importance that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Paul speaks here of the apostolic tradition\(^\text{37}\) as this has been laid by him and the other apostles as the foundation of the whole of their preaching and which he admonishes the church to preserve in the same words as those in which they have received it. This tradition consists above all\(^\text{38}\) in that Christ has died, was buried and raised. And that: according to the Scriptures. The fulfillment of God's prior redemptive promise, the fullness of the time, has therefore become manifest above all in Christ's death and resurrection. It is thus, he emphatically adds in verse 11, that we preach and that you have come to believe. In this gospel lies the starting point and foundation both for preaching and for faith.

It is, moreover, of the greatest importance to see the significance of Christ's death and resurrection, which are the center of Paul's proclamation, as an inseparable unity; and particularly to keep in view how the significance of Christ's resurrection is determined by that of his death and vice versa. On the one hand the eschatological significance Paul ascribes to Christ's resurrection is not that of a general belief in redemption or immortality that may be said to have found its firm basis in Christ's resurrection. The eschatological significance of Christ's resurrection is determined by the special character of his death, which does not merely consist in that Christ was abandoned to the transitoriness of human life as a fate or necessarily or tragedy that is not to be qualified further, with his resurrection being characterized as a vanquishing of that transitoriness. For Paul Christ's death is determined primarily by its connection with the power and guilt of sin. As characteristic of this emphasis that again and again he relates Christ's death to the cross and can therefore qualify the whole of his gospel as “the word of the cross” (1 Cor. 1:17, 18; cf. Gal. 3:1). He declares that in the church he will know nothing other than Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), and he calls the enemies of the gospel “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). It is this special death of Christ, qualified by the cross, which further determines the significance of Christ's resurrection and the new life that has come to light with it, in its forensic, ethical, and cosmic aspects, into which we shall have to go further in what follows. As often, therefore, as Paul mentions the resurrection as the great central redemptive fact (Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:13, 14), calls it the content of “the word of faith, which we preach,” “that Jesus is Lord,” and “that God has raised him from the dead” (Rom. 10:8, 9), and describes the faith itself by which man is justified as “faith in him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Rom. 4:24; cf. v. 17),\(^\text{39}\) this is to be understood adequately if the specific significance of Christ's death, as that is developed by the apostle in a great variety of ways, is never for an instant detached from this eschatological gospel of the resurrection.

On the other hand, it is to be maintained no less vigorously that in Paul's proclamation the resurrection of Christ in fact means the breakthrough of the new age in the real, redemptive-historical sense of the word, and therefore cannot be understood only in forensic, ethical, or existential categories. This all-embracing significance of the resurrection of Christ is in Paul likewise not only the fruit of his profound theological reflection, but above all of divine revelation. For as he himself expresses it, when it pleased God to reveal his Son to him (Gal. 1:15), that was first and foremost the evidence for him that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and had died and whom he himself had persecuted, was the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. And it was this certainty, entirely foreign and even offensive to Jewish thinking,\(^\text{40}\) which determined his insight into the redemptive-historical significance of Christ's death and resurrection in a decisive manner. Because Jesus was the Christ, his resurrection is not, as previous raisings of the dead, an isolated occurrence, but in it the time of salvation promised in him, the new creation, dawns in an overwhelming manner, as a decisive transition from the old to the new world (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. v.

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\(^{36}\) See further below, Section 11.

\(^{37}\) For this idea of tradition in more detail see my The Authority of the New Testament Scriptures, pp. 17ff., and the literature cited there.

\(^{38}\) Ein prophet. Lietzmann translates it “als Hauptstück,” and he explains these words with the synonyms “in primis, hauptsächlich,” vom Rang” (Cor., p. 70). Robertson-Plummer translates “in the foremost place,” and annotate thereby: “Foremost in importance, not in time; the doctrine of the Resurrection is primary and cardinal central and indispensable” (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 2nd ed., 1929, p. 332; cf. Grothe, 1 Cor., p. 386).

\(^{39}\) Cf. Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, pp. 9ff.

15. It is in this light too, that those passages are to be understood where Paul calls Christ the Firstborn, the Firstfruits, the Beginning:

... that he might be the Firstborn (πρωτότοκος) among many brethren (Rom. 8:29).

... but now Christ has been raised from the dead, the Firstfruits (αρχη) of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15:20).

... who is the Beginning (αρχη), the Firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be the First (Col. 1:18).

In connection with the name Firstborn one is not to think here merely of an order of birth but, as may appear from a comparison with certain Old Testament pronouncements (as, for example, Exod. 4:22; Ps. 89:22), of an order of rank or dignity. To be sure, this name also indicates the relationship to others who in Romans 8:29 are called "many brethren." As the Firstborn among those many, however, Christ not only occupies a special place and dignity, but he also goes before them, he opens up the way for them, he joins their future to his own. Now, while in Romans 8:29 the thought is of the glorification that is still to be expected, in Colossians 1:18 this position as Firstborn is related specifically to the resurrection, and this pronouncement is amplified still further with the words "who is the Beginning." We shall have to understand both qualifications in close relationship with each other, and must thus see in "the Beginning" a denotation of the significance of Christ's resurrection as well. Our word "beginning" is no adequate translation of it. For what is intended is not merely that Christ was the First or formed a beginning in terms of chronological order; he was rather the Pioneer, the Inaugurator, who opened up the way. With him the great Resurrection became reality. And very similar is the meaning of Firstborn from the dead: he ushers in the world of the resurrection. 42 He has brought life and incorruptibility to light (2 Tim. 1:10). In a somewhat different way the same idea is given expression by "Firstfruits" (of those who have fallen asleep): Here the picture of the harvest is in the background. The firstfruits are not only its beginning, but its representation. In the firstfruits the whole harvest becomes visible. So Christ is the Firstfruits of them that slept. In him the resurrection of the dead dawns, his resurrection represents the commencement of the new world of God.

Nowhere is this more clearly voiced than in the passages in which Christ is set over against Adam. Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15:45ff. of Adam as "the first man," and of Christ as "the last (ho eschatos) Adam," the "second man." The expression "the last Adam" is again highly typical of the eschatological character of Paul's preaching: Christ is thereby designated as the Inaugurator of the new humanity. And it is once more his resurrection from the dead that has made him this last Adam:

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

... of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall be all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

... as the first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit. ... The first man is from the earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven. ... And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:45ff.).

The intention of the apostle is here again not merely to point to the resurrection of Christ as the token or as the possibility of the future resurrection of all believers. Rather, Christ as second man and last Adam is the one in whose resurrection this new life of the re-creation has already come to light and become reality in this dispensation. This is also the clear purport of Romans 5:12ff. As Adam is the one through whom sin entered into the world and death through sin, so Christ is the one who gives righteousness and life. Christ and Adam stand over against one another as the great representatives of the two aeons, that of life and that of death. In that sense, as representing a whole dispensation, a whole humanity, Adam can be called the type of "him who was to come" (v. 14), i.e., of the second man and of the coming aeon represented by him. 43 For as the protos-pater brought sin and death into the world, so Christ by his obedience (that is, by his death) and his resurrection has made life to dawn for the new humanity.

In summary we can say, therefore, that Paul's kerygma of the great time of salvation that has dawned in Christ is above all determined by Christ's death and resurrection. It is in them that the present aeon has lost its power and hold on the children of Adam and that the new things have come. For this reason, too, the entire unfolding of the salvation that has dawned with Christ again and again harks back to his death and resurrection, because all the facets in which this salvation appears and all the names by which it is described are ultimately nothing other than the unfolding of what this all-important breakthrough of life in death, of the kingdom of God in this present world, contains within itself. Here all lines come together, and from hence the whole Pauline proclamation of redemption can be described in its unity and coherence. Paul's preaching, so we have seen, is "eschatology," because it is preaching of the fulfilling and redemptive work of God in Christ. We might be able to delimit this further, to a certain extent schematically, by speaking of Paul's "resurrection-eschatology." For it is in Christ's death and subsequent resurrection that the mystery of the redemptive plan of God has manifested itself in its true character and that the new creation has come to light.

SECTION 10. IN CHRIST, WITH CHRIST. THE OLD AND THE NEW MAN

Before inquiring further into the basic christological-eschatological struc-

41. Cf., e.g., Michaelis, TDNT, VI, pp. 876ff.; and also my Col., p. 157.
42. Ibid., p. 143.
ture of Paul's preaching, an important implication of what has been dealt with in the previous section should be pointed out separately. It relates to the highly important question of how that which once took place in Christ also concerns others (his own, the church, etc.) and by virtue of which principle what took place in him and was accomplished by him is applicable to them and benefits them. Here is one of the most typical motifs of Paul's preaching, which has come to be seen as most closely connected with the significance he ascribes to Christ as the Last Adam and Inaugurator of the New humanity. For this reason we now purpose to go further into this relationship—an important link in the fundamental structure of Paul's preaching—first by way of an interlude.

Undoubtedly one cannot say that Paul derives the redemptive significance of Christ for his own exclusively from his position as the Last Adam and gives expression to it only in these "Adam-categories." The apostle not infrequently speaks of this in a less pregnant fashion and adopts the usage frequently followed elsewhere in the New Testament that Christ has executed his redemptive work "for us," i.e., in our behalf. This is so particularly when his suffering, death, and resurrection are spoken of. It is not Paul but Christ who has been crucified for his people (1 Cor. 1:13). God made Christ to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). He has become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). He gave himself for our sins (Gal. 1:4; cf. 1 Tim. 2:6; Phil. 2:14); in due season died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6); died for us when we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8); died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3). In these and other pronouncements Paul gives expression to the redemptive significance of Christ's activity in a more traditional fashion, at the basis of which terminology lie various ideas that are still to be discussed more fully (e.g., of sacrifice, ransom, etc.).

It is typical of Paul's preaching, however, that he joins this general formula "for us" (in the sense of "in our behalf") with another, the purport of which is that Christ forms such a unity with those for whom he appears that it can be said that they are "in him" (2 Cor. 5:17), and that on this account what once took place "in Christ" is applicable to them. While the formula "in Christ," "in him," etc., appears in various connections and even exhibits something of the character of a stereotype, the application to his own of what once took place and is yet to take place with Christ often occurs with the words "with Christ," "with him," etc. In connection with the latter one is to think particularly of those pronouncements so typical of Paul's preaching which speak of being crucified, dead, buried, and raised with Christ coming anew (ho aiôn ho mellôn). But here we glimpse the idea in his characterization of Christ as He 'who was to come'; for as ho mellôn He is the head of ho aiôn ho mellôn. 44. Cf. E. E. Ellis, Paul and His Recent Interpreters, pp. 31ff.; J. de Franke, Adam and the Family of Man, ET, 1965; see also the literature cited above, p. 58, n. 90.

45. See above, Section 84.
46. Usually indicated by hyper with the genitive, but also by peri with the genitive (cf. 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 5:10); likewise in the combination peri hamartias (Rom. 8:5); cf. also Riesenfeld, TDNT, VI, pp. 54ff.

47. See also below, Chapter VI.
48. In this sense still, e.g., K. Deissner, Paulus und die Mystik seiner Zeit, 2nd ed., Darmstadt, in which he places the emphasis, over against the history of religions interpretation, on the "spiritual-personal character of communion with Christ" in Paul, pp. 115ff.; cf. also E. Sommerlath, Der Ursprung des neuen Lebens nach Paulus, 2nd ed., 1927, pp. 97ff.
49. So, e.g., A. Deissmann, St. Paul, p. 132: "It is justifiable, I think, to speak of Hellenistic influence here, when we remember the importance in Greek mysticism of inspired persons who are filled with their god, and gifted with power in their god." Deissmann goes on to emphasize strongly the distinctive character of Paul's mysticism.
50. For a survey of these older religionsgeschichtliche interpretations, such as those of Heimüller, Brückner, Wrede, Reitzenstein, et al., see, e.g., Deissner, Paulus und die Mystik seiner Zeit, pp. 1-17.
51. Cf. above, pp. 29ff.
Christ does not have its ultimate ground in the ceremony of incorporation into the Christian church, but rather in already having been included in the historical death and resurrection of Christ himself. Of particular significance is the pronouncement of 2 Corinthians 5:14ff., where a clear transition becomes perceptible from the "Christ for us" to the "we with [or in] Christ":

...we have come to the insight that one died for all. Therefore they all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh.... Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is new creation....

From this it is to be concluded that "having died," "being in Christ," "being new creation," the fact that his own are no longer judged and "known according to the flesh" (namely, according to the worldly mode of existence), has been given and effected with the death of Christ himself. Of this determination by and involvement of his own in that which once took place with Christ the formula "in Christ" now gives the expression so typical of Paul's preaching.

Accordingly, it becomes increasingly apparent that the expression "dying and rising with Christ" does not have its origin in the sphere of the individual mysticism of experience, nor in the automatism of the initiatory rites of the Hellenistic mysteries, but is of an entirely different nature. The attempt has been made to give expression to this "objectivity" of being in Christ and with Christ in all sorts of ways. It has become more and more apparent, however, that the Adam-Christ parallel not only casts a clear light on the significance that Paul ascribes to Christ himself, but also on the way in which he sees his own as involved in him and with him in his redemptive work. This is very clear, for example, from the words of 1 Corinthians 15:22: "...for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

The concern here (as distinguished from what is intended in 2 Cor. 5) is with the resurrection of the dead at the parousia. What really matters, however, is that here "in Christ" is paralleled with "in Adam." Herewith the character of this "in" becomes plain. As the decision has fallen in Adam with respect to the "all" who pertain to him, that they should die, so in Christ that they shall live. Adam and Christ

52. For the question whether baptism symbolizes dying and rising (with Christ) see below, pp. 401ff.
53. Cf. the important essay of F. Neugebauer, "Das Paulinische 'In Christo,'" NTS, 1938, 98-124. (1938)
54. Thus Schweitzer, e.g., has pointed to the notion also occurring in the Jewish writings of the unity of the Messiah with the predestinated congregation of the saints, calling this the germ cell of Paul's "Christ-mysticism." Materially this exegesis harks back to the old Reformation interpretation. Thus, e.g., Zanchius, in his commentary on Ephesians 2:5, writes: "God has made us alive in the person of Christ, since through Christ's death, sin having been expiated, he liberated all the elect, howsoever many had been from the foundation of the earth and would be to the end of it, so many he considered the members of Christ in his selfsame head" (Hieron. Zanchii Comment. in epistolam sancti Pauli ad Ephesios, I, ed. A. H. de Harogh, 1886, p. 169).

55. As a variant of the future in 1 Cor. 15:22, the aorist is elsewhere to be found: "He has made you alive with Christ" (Col. 2:13; cf. Eph. 2:5). That it is evident from these aorists that these pronouncements in Ephesians and Colossians are from a later hand, as C. Mason supposes ("L'Epître de Saint Paul aux Colossiens," pp. 126, 127), is without foundation. It is a matter in 1 Cor. 15:22, too, of an accomplished decision; cf. also E. Ferry, Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheser-Briefe, 1946, pp. 110ff.
56. With this the conception of K. Barth is in conflict, that "it is Christ who vouches for the authenticity of Adam, and not Adam... for Christ" (Christ and Adam, ET 1956, pp. 58ff.). Still less acceptable is the conception to it, that Adam in Rom. 5 is only apparently as Christ a First, the Head of humanity, in that, however, he is "one among others" and thus represents humanity (ibid., pp. 9, 24, 44). As has been clearly shown by Bultmann, "Adam and Christ in Romans 5," in "The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul," ET 1967, pp. 40ff., in no respect whatever is justice done to the significance Paul ascribes to Adam. The relationship of Adam and his descendants is here not that of "one among all" but of "all in one."
58. Thus Oepke, TDNT, II, pp. 541-542. He elucidates this as follows: "The first and the second Adam are progenitors initiating two races of men. Each implies a whole world, an order of life or death. Each includes his adherents in aid under himself.
59. For this term and its applicability see above, p. 58. Further still, e.g., C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 1947, p. 80, cf. p. 86; S. Hanson, The Unity of the Church in the N.T., 1946, pp. 68ff., 84ff. The term was apparently introduced in the Old Testament studies of H. Wheeler Robinson. See also J. de Francie, Adam and the Family of Man; Berkouwer, Sin, pp. 512ff.

here stand over against each other as the two great figures at the entrance of two worlds, two aeons, two "creations," the old and the new; skill in their actions and fate lies the decision for all who belong to them, because these are comprehended in them and thus are reckoned either to death or to life. This is now expressed by "in Adam" and "in Christ." And it is therefore in this sense that Adam can be called the type of him who was to come.
put on the new man, that is being renewed... in accordance with the image of his Creator (Col. 3:9).

Frequently the old man is taken in an individual sense and the crucifying and putting off of the old man as the personal breaking with and fighting against the power of sin.64 "Old" and "new" then designate the time before and after conversion or personal regeneration, and the corresponding manner of life. But we shall have to understand "old" and "new man," not in the first place in the sense of the ordo salutis, but in that of the history of redemption; that is to say, it is a matter here not of a change that comes about in the way of faith and conversion in the life of the individual Christian, but of that which once took place in Christ and in which his people had part in him in the corporate sense as described above. This is at least the obvious meaning of Romans 6:6: our old man was crucified (namely, with Christ), that is, on Golgotha. Christ's death on the cross was their own (cf. Rom. 6:2; Col. 3:3) and affected them in their existence. The old man, the old mode of existence of sin, was then judged and cursed. For although Christ himself was free of sin, he was nevertheless "in the likeness of sinful flesh" and united himself with them in their existence; and their sin, their old man, was condemned in his flesh (Rom. 8:3; cf. 7:4). Here again, therefore, "the old" stands over against "the new": not first of all in a personal and ethical sense, but in a redemptive-historical, eschatological sense. It is not as yet a matter here, therefore, of that which must come about and be changed in the believer, but of that which was done "objectively" to the old man in Christ, of the einmalig crucifixion of the old man on Golgotha with Christ. Hence, the words can follow in Romans 6:6: "that the body of sin might be rendered powerless." Because the old man was condemned and put to death in Christ's death on the cross, the body of sin, the flesh, the old mode of existence of sin, has lost its dominion and control over those who are in him. In Christ's death and resurrection they have been transferred to the new order of life—the life order of the new creation, the new man.65

Unquestionably there is also mention of the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new man by believers themselves (Eph. 4:22f.; Col. 3:9ff.), just as it is said that they have crucified the flesh (Gal. 5:24), and that they have put off the body of sin. This refers, as will be demonstrated still further, to the transition that has come about in their life by baptism. Yet even understood in this way the expression old and new man retains a supra-individual significance; this transition has been effected in their life because they have been incorporated into the

60. On the working out of this corporate unity between Christ and believers, see further below, Section 37. With a view to this Oepke correctly writes: "On the other hand, a place must be found for the plenitude of pneumatic interconnections which are here felt by Paul and which may even be comprehended psychologically and empirically."

61. For the rejection of the "mystical" interpretation see also the clear exposition of Nygren, Commentary on Romans, pp. 236ff.

62. Cf. below, Chapter IX.

63. One should observe the masculine heis and not hen. S. Hanson, The Unity of the Church in the N.T., pp. 81ff., writes: "This expression has, so to say, a personal character; it means: 'You are all one man in Christ Jesus.' After heis we must add anthrôpodos or a similar word. 'In Christ Jesus,' in the New Aeon, all are one man." In this connection see also the interesting views of the biblical "root-thinking" of H. Hoerl, Die Rechtfertigungsverkündigung des Paulus nach neuerer Forschung, 1940, pp. 26ff. He writes: "It is not the individual that is the fundamental, the first, the original, the primary datum, but it is also not society; rather it is the ancestral father, as type and mediator of life, as the one who comprises his followers and disciples in himself... Therefore it is the case with respect to the church as a community —it is not to be construed in the first place as a community, but in its roots as the embodiment and unfolding of its progenitor Christ. It is not primarily congregation, community of believers, but it is, as 1 Cor. 12:12 says, 'Christ (ho Christos), or, as Paul, expanding, says elsewhere, 'the body of Christ.' " See further below, Chapter IX.

64. Cf., e.g., Greijdanus (Rom., I, p. 299) on Rom. 6:6: "... the apostle means that the old man, the sinful corruption in the believer, has been put to death at the go-out of Christ's death on the cross, so that he is now free of sin, and the body of sin is powerless, 'in Christ Jesus,' in the New Aeon, all are one man, " See further below, Chapter IX.

65. Cf. N. A. Dahl, "Christ, Creation and the Church," in The Background of the Old Testament, pp. 436ff. "In a similar way, the 'new man' is not simply the converted individual, but an eschatological entity, personal, corporate and pneumatic, nearly identical with Christ himself..."

66. See below, Chapter VI, Section 37.
body of Christ by baptism, and they may thus apply to themselves in faith that which has taken place in Christ. They have put off the old man, as crucified and buried in Christ (Col. 2:11), and have put on the new man, the new creation of God that has come to light in Christ's resurrection. This renewal is a continuing process (Col. 3:9), just as the mortification of the old man is a continuing process (Eph. 4:22). But it is the redemptive-historical transition, effected in Christ's death and resurrection, that is working itself out in this process. And it all rests on their being-in-him, as the second Adam. For this reason the new man can be spoken of as being created in accordance with God (Eph. 2:10), or being renewed in accordance with the image of his Creator (Col. 3:9ff.). These are all Adam-categories, for they have been (re-)created in him (Christ) as in the new Adam (Eph. 2:10), and as they have borne the image of the first (earthly) Adam, so, by virtue of this same corporate relationship, they will bear the image of the last (heavenly) Adam (1 Cor. 15). Indeed, this corporate unity with Christ dominates the idea of the new man so strongly that believers, as the body of Christ, even in their totality can be called "the one new man" (Eph. 2:15; cf. Gal. 3:28), and that it can be said of them that they together, in the building up of the body of Christ, will be permitted to attain to "the perfect man," the mature man in Christ (Eph. 4:13).67

The corporate idea of the all-in-One derived from the significance of Adam — thus we may conclude — works itself out in all sorts of ways in the Pauline explanation of the redemptive event that made its appearance in Christ. It teaches us to understand the redemptive-historical character not only of that which has once occurred in Christ, but also of the way in which those who belong to Christ participate once and continuously in the salvation wrought in Christ.

SECTION II. REVEALED IN THE FLESH.
FLESH AND SPIRIT

If in the preceding sections Christ's resurrection has rightly been shown to be the beginning of the new creation for Paul, the question naturally arises as to what significance must be ascribed to Christ's life on earth before his death and resurrection. It has frequently been observed that Paul goes into very few details in his epistles as to Jesus' life on earth, his miracles and preaching, and the meaning of all this. Now, one will have to take into full account the fact that Paul's epistles build on a foundational preaching in which he has made known the apostolic tradition to the church. This is evident from specific references to what he had already said and what the church may thus be considered to know (cf. e.g., 1 Cor. 13:1, 2; Gal. 1:11; 2 Thess. 2:5; 3:10). Only in certain connections in his epistles does he repeat fragments of this tradition because there was a particular occasion for it (1 Cor. 11:23ff.; 15:2ff.). In the same sense he appeals only incidentally to specific pronouncements of Jesus (1 Cor. 7:10; cf. v. 25; 9:14; 1 Thess. 4:15), from which it appears that in general the point of departure for his instruction lay in them. If one looks more closely, it becomes apparent that his epistles contain all kinds of conscious or unconscious reminiscences of phrases and allusions to words of Jesus (cf., e.g., Rom. 12:14; 15:9; Gal. 5:14; 1 Cor. 13:2).68

This does not alter the fact that in Paul's epistles the significance of Jesus' advent and life on earth before his resurrection is usually not drawn from specific words or works of the Lord, but is approached more from a general redemptive-historical point of view. It is typical of this approach that the apostle prefers to characterize Jesus' life on earth before his resurrection as his existence "after the flesh," or "in the flesh." One has only to think of the following pronouncements:

...who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom. 1:3).
...God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3).
...of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh (Rom. 9:5).
...even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him no more (2 Cor. 5:16).
...who made both one, and...abolished in his flesh the enmity (Eph. 2:14ff.).
...but now he has reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death (Col. 1:22).
...who was revealed in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

On the one hand, in several of these pronouncements the accent is laid on the wholly unique, eschatological character of Christ's advent and life on earth. He was even then the Son sent by God (Rom. 9:5), the long-expected Son of David (Rom. 1:3); His advent was revelation (1 Tim. 3:16) of what till that moment had been hidden, fulfillment of God's counsel.69 He was the Christ out of Israel (Rom. 9:5), the long-expected Son of David (Rom. 1:3). But his revelation took place "in the flesh," that is, he assumed the mode of existence of the present world. "Flesh" does not refer only to the physical, nor merely to the human as such, but to the human in its weakness, transitoriness, that which Paul elsewhere terms being "of the earth, earthy" (1 Cor. 15:47), and what in Galatians 4 is called being "born of a woman." In Romans 8:3 he speaks of "the likeness of sinful flesh," in which God sent his Son. "Flesh" and "sinful flesh" need not coincide. But sin in the nature of the case takes place in the flesh and stamps the human mode of existence as "the sinful flesh." It is in "the likeness" of this that God sent his Son, a phrase with which Paul elsewhere expresses the difference between correspondence and identity (cf. Rom. 6:5). Christ came, therefore, in the weak, transitory human state, without sharing in the sin of the human race. It was in that way, in that mode of existence, that he was called "known" before his resurrection (2 Cor. 5:16).

In this "flesh" he lived and he died, or as it is also called: "in the body

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67. In addition see below, Chapter XI, pp. 455ff.
68. On this and on the whole question of Paul's knowledge of the "historical" Jesus see my Paul and Jesus, pp. 50ff., and the literature referred to there.
69. Cf. above, pp. 46ff.
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of his flesh” (Col. 1:22), which expression likewise refers not only to the physical as material organism, but to the whole of Christ’s existence as a man subject to transitoriness, dishonor, frailty (cf. 1 Cor. 15:42ff.). And it was also in this flesh, i.e., his human existence delivered up to the death of the cross, that the enmity was abolished, the church reconciled, and sin condemned (Eph. 2:14, 15; Col. 1:2; Rom. 8:3).

It is Christ’s being revealed in the flesh (to be understood in this way) that is the specific significance of Christ’s life before his resurrection, and which is to be adored (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16a). The revelation, the sending of the Son, the fullness of the time, already took effect with it. But the new creation is that of Christ’s resurrection. For this reason the death of Christ is a turning point in the mode of existence of the old aeon. Christ dies to it, through death he dies to the flesh, to the old aeon (cf. Rom. 6:7, 9ff.). It is this turning point to which Paul orients himself and to which he wants believers to orient themselves (Rom. 6:11; 8:10; Col. 3:3). Not only does Christ’s life in the flesh come to an end, but an all-important and all-embracing Transition takes place, namely, from the existence of the old to that of the new, from the old aeon to the new creation. By dying Christ has thus snatched his people away from the present aeon (Gal. 1:4). From this moment on faith no longer “knows,” that is to say, judges, “after the flesh” (2 Cor. 5:16). It regards all things from another point of view, namely, that the aeon of the sole dominion of the flesh is done away with and the mode of existence of the Spirit has been entered upon.

For in Paul it is the Spirit who stands over against the “flesh” described in this way:

...of the seed of David according to the flesh, designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness in virtue of his resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:3, 4).

...who was revealed in the flesh, justified by the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:16).

...the body is dead, ...the Spirit is life (Rom. 8:10).

Flesh (body) and Spirit do not stand over against one another here as two “parts” in the human existence or in the existence of Christ. There is no question here (nor in Rom. 8:10!) of a dichotomistic distinction in an anthropological sense. Nor is the contrast ethical, as is indeed the case in other contexts (Gal. 5:13, et al.), even though there, too, on the foundation to be further indicated here. Rather, “flesh” and “Spirit” represent two modes of existence, on the one hand that of the old aeon which is characterized and determined by the flesh, on the other that of the new creation which is of the Spirit of God. It is in this sense that the difference is also to be taken between the first Adam as “living soul,” i.e., flesh, and the second as life-giving Spirit. The contrast is therefore of a redemptive-historical nature: it qualifies the world and the mode of existence before Christ as flesh, that is, as the creaturely in its weakness; on the other hand, the dispensation that has taken effect with Christ as that of the Spirit, i.e., of power, imperishableness and glory (1 Cor. 15:42; 45, 56; Phil. 3:21). It is within this redemptive-historical contrast of flesh and Spirit as the mode of existence of the old and new creation that Paul now views the life of Christ before and after his resurrection. In virtue of his resurrection from the dead, Christ, “according to the Spirit of holiness,” is declared to be the Son of God in power (Rom. 1:4); he is “justified” (i.e., vindicated, disclosed in his true significance) by the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:16). It is in that new existence of the resurrection and of the Spirit that the church may now know Christ (2 Cor. 5:16), and may also judge itself as joined with him. The body, that is to say, life, insofar as it still belongs to the old aeon, is (subject to) death because of sin, but the Spirit, the Author of the new creation, gives life because of the righteousness accomplished in Christ (Rom. 8:10). For this reason the church is no longer “in the flesh,” i.e., subject to the regime of the first aeon and the evil powers reigning in it, but “in the Spirit,” brought under the dominion of freedom in Christ (Rom. 8:2ff., 9, 13; 2 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 3:21). All the facets of the contrast of flesh and Spirit, which are to be treated still further in what follows, become transparent and luminous out of this basic eschatological structure of Paul’s preaching and constitute a highly important element of it.

In the history of the investigation—as we have seen—the “flesh and Spirit” contrast has frequently been viewed as a proof that Paul withdrew from the original eschatological consciousness of the primitive Christian church and became dependent on Hellenistic thinking. The contrast of flesh and Spirit was, moreover, at one time interpreted in an idealistic sense, as that between the Absolute and the historical and therefore relative; at another as the “ethical” struggle between the higher and the lower in man. Without regard, however, to the fact that one is compelled thus to come to accept all manner of mutually contradictory basic motifs in Paul’s preaching, one also in this way misjudges the real nature of the work of the Spirit in Paul. For this nature is not to be understood as a Christianizing of the Greek or Hellenistic pneuma-concept, however understood, but finds its clear and “natural” background in the Old Testament thinking and speaking about the Spirit. There the Spirit appears repeatedly in the closest relationship with the acting of God in history. The Spirit represents the creating and re-creating power of God that governs the world and history and conducts them to their final goal. He is the Creator and the Precursor of the great future, he equips the coming Messiah-Savior for his task, and he will pour out his gifts without measure on the eschatological people of God (cf., e.g., Isa. 8:20; 51:9, 11; 59:21; 61:1; Joel 2:28, 29; Zech. 4:6; 12:10; et al.). In the New Testament the Spirit is consequently spoken of, by Paul too, in all sorts of ways in connection

70. The uncommon expression “Spirit of holiness” (pneuma hagionyn) will have to be judged simply as an equivalent, resting on Old Testament usage, of “Holy Spirit”; cf. Froeschl, TDNT, 1, pp. 114-115.
71. For this exegesis see also below, p. 115, n. 57.
72. Cf., e.g., Chapter VI, Section 58.
73. Cf. above, Chapter I, Sections 2, 3, 4.
74. Cf., e.g., Baumgärtel, TDNT, VI, pp. 365ff.; also Ingo Hermann, Kyrios und Pneuma, Studien zur Christologie der paulinischen Hauptbriefe, 1961, pp. 125ff.
with and in terms of this promise (cf., e.g., Acts 2:16; Rom. 2:29; 5:5; 8:15; 2 Cor. 3:3; 6; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:13). It has rightly been observed, therefore, that the content of the pneuma-concept in Paul admits of being most sharply defined and filled in when he is understood as the gift of the end time.26 (see further below, Section 14).

SECTION 12. CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

However much Paul's Christology finds its point of departure in Christ's death and resurrection and to whatever degree he draws the lines from hence on the one hand to the incarnation and on the other to the future of the Lord, all this does not alter the fact that the whole of his preaching of the historical and future revelation of Christ is supported by the confession of Christ as the Son of God, in the supra- and prehistorical sense of the word. It can even rightly be said that the sending of the Son by the Father in the fullness of time presupposes his pre-existence with God (cf. Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3 with such passages as 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6ff.; Col. 1:16ff.; Rom. 8:29).27 This pre-existence of Christ with the Father so emphatically declared by Paul underlies his whole Christology and makes it impossible to conceive of all the divine attributes and power that he ascribes to Christ exclusively as the consequence of his exaltation. It is true that he often speaks in this sense of the Kyrios exalted by God, to whom he prays (2 Cor. 12:8, 9), whose name is to be "called upon" in the church (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 10:13), from whom one may expect that which God alone has the power to grant (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:13), whose judgment shall all appear (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:10), and whose gospel, kingdom, and Spirit are spoken of as those of God (cf. Rom. 1:1; 15:16; Eph. 5:5; Rom. 8:9, et al.).28 But this "exaltation Christology" is at the same time not for a moment to be divorced from the significance of Christ's person as such. This is also evident from the (few) places where Paul calls Christ himself God, to be blessed forever (Rom. 8:5; cf. 2 Thess. 1:12; Tit. 2:13),29 whereby one cannot, of course, think of a conferred or acquired dignity or mode of existence; but then further in particular from the pronouncements on his pre-existence. It is this pre-existence of Christ with the Father that we must take fully into account in the interpretation of the name frequently and continuously employed by Paul of Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 1:3; 4, 9; 5:10; 8:3, 9; 2 Cor. 1:19; 2 Cor. 1:19; Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:4, 6; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:10). For this reason, too, we cannot accept Cullmann's thesis that "it is only meaningful to speak of the Son in view of God's revelatory action, not in view of his being."30 However true it is that the name Son of God again and again denotes the entirely unique relationship of Christ to the Father in the divine redemptive work revealed in him, one cannot, precisely because of this pre-existence (that is, the existing prior to the revelation) of the Son, permit the being of the Son to be lost in his revelation as the Son of God. God sent his Son (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4), and this sending does not create the Sonship, but presupposes it.31 For the same reason, on the other hand, there is mention of the consummation of Christ's work of redemption, in the words of 1 Corinthians 15:28 (when the Son has subjected all things to the Father, then will he himself be subjected to him, that God may be all in all), this cannot mean the end of the Sonship.32 One will rather have to judge the "post-existence" of the Son intended here in the light of what is elsewhere so clearly stated of his pre-existence.

All this does not alter the fact — and this is the element of truth in Cullmann's argument — that when he speaks of Christ's pre-existence, Paul regards and designates this not as separate from, but precisely in its bearing on Christ's revelation in redemptive history. So far as the latter is concerned, it can be said that he makes the line of redemptive history go back to Christ's pre-existence and represents his pre-temporal divine Sonship to the church from the viewpoint of Christ's revelation in redemptive history. As the Pre-existent One, too, the Son of God is the Christ, the object of God's election (Eph. 1:4), and as such the one in whom the grace of God has been given to the church before times eternal (2 Tim. 1:9; cf. Eph. 1:3), likewise the one in whom the church itself had already been comprehended, chosen, and sanctified (Eph. 1:4; 2:10; cf. Rom. 8:29).

In this connection those pronouncements are to be mentioned in particular which describe Christ as the Image of God:

...Christ, who is the Image of God (2 Cor. 4:4).
...who [Christ] is the Image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15).
...who, being in the form of God (Phil. 2:6).

These formulations are so important because Paul gives expression to the divine glory of Christ in a way that is very significant.