Pastor Tillich:
The Justification of the Doubter

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To Maria, Anna, Sarah, and Rebecca

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Abstract

This dissertation is a study of Paul Tillich's early theological development from his student days until the end of the First World War, set against the backdrop of church politics in Wilhelmine Germany and with particular reference to his early sermons. The central questions are: Where did Tillich 'land' theologically after the war? And how did he get there?

The project offers a different focus from the majority of Tillich scholarship which understands Tillich primarily as a philosophical theologian. For before and during the First World War, Tillich was Pastor Tillich. Notwithstanding his philosophical study and academic ambitions, in the period 1904–18 he was studying theology to become a pastor, leading a Christian student group, working periodically as a pastor in Berlin churches, and preaching to soldiers. Through exposition of Tillich's early sermons, the pastoral context of his early thought becomes clear.

Alongside the chronological boundary of 1919, the account is limited to one central theme, Tillich's notion of the justification of the doubter. In 1919 Tillich wrote an essay, *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* [Justification and Doubt], for the faculty in Berlin, claiming the main problem of his systematic thought was the religious dialectic of doubt. This 1919 essay is compared with Tillich's writing across genres before and during the First World War.

The influence of Schelling on Tillich's theology is well established. This dissertation also explores the role of Søren Kierkegaard, Ernst Troeltsch, Martin Kähler, Wilhelm Herrmann, Wilhelm Lütgert, Fritz Medicus and Tillich's father Johannes Tillich, distinguishing between Tillich's later autobiographical statements and the witness of archival sources.

Drawing on material largely unknown to English-language scholarship, this chronologically and thematically focused dissertation on the issue of doubt in Tillich's early theology offers a significantly original, contextualised account of Tillich's early life in Germany. It should therefore be of interest not only to Tillich scholars, but to any interested in the history of modern theology, as an example of how biography and theology are intertwined.

Long Abstract

This dissertation is a study of Paul Tillich's early theological development concerning doubt, from his student days until the end of the First World War, set against the backdrop of church politics in Wilhelmine Germany and with particular reference to his early sermons. The project offers a different focus from the majority of Tillich scholarship which understands Tillich primarily as a philosophical theologian. For before and during the First World War, Tillich was Pastor Tillich. Notwithstanding his philosophical study and academic ambitions, in the period 1904–18 he was studying theology to become a pastor, leading a Christian student group, working periodically as a pastor in Berlin churches, and preaching to soldiers. Through exposition of Tillich's early sermons, the pastoral context of his early thought becomes clear.

Alongside the chronological boundary of 1919, the account is limited to one central theme, Tillich's notion of the justification of the doubter. In 1919 Tillich wrote an essay, *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* [Justification and Doubt], for the faculty in Berlin, claiming the main problem of his systematic thought was the religious dialectic of doubt. The eight main chapters of the dissertation, this 1919 essay is compared with Tillich's writing across genres before and during the First World War.

The first of these main chapters, chapter two, *Justification and Doubt*, addresses the first of my research questions concerning the justification of the doubter: How did Tillich land theologically after the war? I offer a detailed account of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* from 1919, occasionally drawing out contrasts and continuity with the publication of the same title from 1924. Tillich frames the theme as a quest to overcome the division between religious and cultural life, finding unity in one theological principle derived from the doctrine of justification: The principle takes up doubt into itself in believing affirmation of the absolute paradox, i.e., to affirm that doubt does not preclude standing in the truth. In long excursions on certainty and the critique of apologetics as 'intellectual work' analogous to works-righteousness, Tillich contrasts his position with Karl Heim in particular. Against Heim, Tillich insists the doubter should be left with his good truth-conscience since we relate truly to God "through unending doubt".

The chronological account of Tillich's development concerns all the other main chapters and answers my second question: How did Tillich's notion of the justification of the doubter emerge? In chapter three, *Defence, Doubt, and Gracelessness,* material from Tillich's student days (1905–1909) is compared with Tillich's later autobiographical narratives. Church-political debates in Wilhelmine Prussia concerning the doctrinal orthodoxy of its pastors (where Tillich's father Johannes defended the conservative stance) are placed alongside student Tillich's determination to defend confessional standards at the national Wingolf conference 1906. Privately, Tillich was struggling with doubt about historical revelation, brought on by historical criticism but chiefly his philosophical studies.

Despite Tillich's later insistence Kähler taught him the centrality of justification, there was no grace in Tillich's uncompromising stance as Wingolf leader, of which Kähler may have been critical. Furthermore, Tillich's *Monismusschrift* (1908), influenced by his study of Fichte and others under Fritz Medicus, offers criticism of Kähler's anti-metaphysical stance. Justification is merely a subordinated locus of his attempt to express Christianity in terms of idealist philosophy.

Chapter four, *Overcoming Despair*, considers Tillich's sermons in Lichtenrade (1909). Tillich's self-examining piety drove him to despair as he wrestled for assurance in preparation of his sermon for Sunday 31st May 1909. Abandoning a first draft, Tillich re-writes the sermon and speaks for the first time about Christ meeting the doubting sinner in the darkness of despair with a message of double grace: You need do nothing, you need not hold anything to be true. I characterise this crisis as a breakthrough, first evidence of the justification of the doubter.

Chapter five, *Schelling and History*, gathers Tillich's academic work from 1909–11, including two dissertations on Schelling and his lecture on certainty and the historical Jesus. Schelling provided Tillich and his modern-positive tradition with a way of thinking about Christianity in the light of the history of religions, after Troeltsch's challenge. Tillich notes Schelling's insistence that humanity is God-positing regardless of unbelief. It is also significant that Tillich affirms the notion of an undoubtable condition of thought, whether as Schelling's concept of 'unpreconceivable being' or Fichte's I (*das Ich*).

With Schelling, Tillich sees a wider application for justification. However, it is first in the Kassel lecture on the historical Jesus that he connects the idealist notion that knowledge is limited to the self-certainty of the subject with the claim that *autonomy* is justification in the area of thought. This is expressed as the rejection of the misunderstanding that faith is an intellectual work. This could have been the influence of his Lutheran tradition, encouraged by Schelling. I argue it emerged from Tillich's engagement with Wilhelm Herrmann.

Chapter six, *The Prodigal Doubter*, explores sermons from Tillich's curacy in Nauen (1911–1912). In Tillich's adaptation the parable of the Prodigal Son, the pious of the day do not come with empty hands but grasping rags of love, faith, zeal and orthodoxy. By characterising the creedal assent of the pious as a self-righteous 'work', Tillich echoes Wilhelm Herrmann's defence against 'positive' detractors. Tillich will speak sharply against provocatively liberal figures but distances himself from conservative Christians he deems self-righteous.

Tillich attempts thereby a *levelling* of the distinction between the believer and the unbeliever through a law-gospel dialectic emphasising human inability. Reimagining piety as piety in godforsakenness, he insists that even in an age of doubt, all share in the predicament from which all are saved. Those who now protest against the church do in that protest exhibit forms of faith: they are of the truth and will come to the truth.

Chapter seven, *Convincing the Doubter*, explores Tillich's Moabit sermons (1912–1913), apologetic evenings and memorandum *Kirchliche Apologetik*. In his memorandum, Tillich calls for apologetics as an answer to the decline of the church. Tillich hopes to demonstrate atheism's philosophical error, the abyss of its autonomy, leading toward the insight that the paradox of thought (that thought alone comes to its end) is the paradox of Christianity, that thought requires foundation in Christianity. Thus the doubter is convinced, but not justified. In Tillich's Moabit sermons, the answer to doubt is Christ, the image of God in the soul.

In chapter eight, *Doubt and System*, Tillich's 1913 systematics is presented as an indication of Tillich's position in the year preceding the war. The tripartite system (Apologetics, Dogmatics, Ethics) locates theology in a truth-theoretical account where God is the absolute. Human thought is presented as a conflict between intuition and reflection, in need of redemption. Doubt is grounded in truth, and every human is principally justified. But since distressed thought is *redeemed* by the absolute paradox, we do not have the justification of the doubter in the same clarity as 1919.

Finally, in chapter nine, *Tillich at War*, I tackle Tillich's war sermons and correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch (1917–1918). Perhaps most strikingly in his Christmas sermons, Tillich speaks about the loss of faith among the soldiers. He also offers an unfinished theodicy with three moments, increasingly emphasising the weakness and suffering of God. Tillich's sermon from late October 1917 to mark the 400th anniversary of the Reformation is a clear expression of the justification of the doubter. Tillich subsequently explains and develops this new understanding of 'faith without God' in correspondence with Hirsch.

In my *Conclusion*, chapter 10, I present a characterisation of Tillich's development of the justification of the doubter with reference to several themes. I also argue for the continuing significance of Tillich's intervention as a useful pastoral response in an age of doubt.

Drawing on material largely unknown to English-language scholarship, this chronologically and thematically focused dissertation on the issue of doubt in Tillich's early theology offers a significantly original, contextualised account of Tillich's early life in Germany. It should therefore be of interest not only to Tillich scholars, but to any interested in the history of modern theology, as an example of how biography and theology are intertwined.

Note on Translations and Orthography

Nearly all primary and secondary sources are in German. Unless stated otherwise, I present my own translation of citations without comment. In cases where it was important to point to the German concept or turn of phrase behind my translation, it is included after the relevant English word or phrase in square brackets and italicised, like this: [*urständlich*]. Unless stated otherwise, the German original was not italicised.

English words appearing in square brackets without italics are merely my own editorial additions to make the translation clearer. This is sometimes necessary because German uses gendered articles and pronouns to orient the reader. Latin phrases are always italicised, regardless of the original.

On occasions where I quote an author like Schelling who uses other orthographical forms such as spacing to emphasise a word, I have always changed this to italics. When an author employs alternative quotation marks such as guillemets, I always convert to standard English quotation marks.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The justification of the doubter

Martin Luther's *Sermon on Preparation for Death* (1519)[1] draws on and reshapes the medieval tradition of *ars moriendi*, urging his readers to abandon themselves to the Sacraments, "throw[ing] them in the weighing scales against sin, death and hell".[2] The devil, painting imposing pictures of these three terrors, troubles the dying and drives believers to despair. Luther's consolatory advice is to not fight these images but simply "let them fall".[3] The believer should fix eyes upon better images: of the death of Christ and his saints, of sin taken from the believer at the Cross, and of the overcoming of hell through Christ's descent into hell.[4] The devil's images flee before Christ and his saints; the believer can partake of the Sacraments, saying:

> God has promised me and given me a completely certain sign in the Sacraments that Christ's life has overcome my death in his death, his obedience has eradicated my sin in his suffering, his love has destroyed my hell in his abandonedness [*Verlassenheit*].[5]

If the devil whispers that the believer is *unworthy* to receive the Sacrament, Luther gives further consolation: worthiness has nothing to do with

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[1] Martin Luther, 'Ein Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben', in Dietrich Korsch (ed), *Martin Luther Deutsch-Deutsch Studienausgabe. Band 1: Glaube und Leben* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 45–73 = *WA* 2, 680–697.
[2] Luther, 'Bereitung zum Sterben', 51.
[3] Luther, 'Bereitung zum Sterben', 55.
[4] See Luther, 'Bereitung zum Sterben', 55–59.
[5] Luther, 'Bereitung zum Sterben', 65.

the believer as such; it is all of grace, through faith. "Just take care you believe that [the Sacraments] are trustworthy signs and true words of God. Then you are and remain certainly worthy. Faith makes worthy, doubt makes unworthy."[6]

I do not know whether Paul Tillich ever read Luther's sermon. But around 400 years later, doubting whether Christianity is true, and wondering if he could continue to be a theologian, young theology student Tillich would have found such consolation cause for despair.

There should be no equivocation of Luther's concept of doubt – concerning God's graciousness to the sinner – with 'modern' doubt about the truth of the Christian faith or even the reality of God. For the Lutheran tradition, the call to (merely) believe was gospel, good news, a call to trusting abandonment to God's grace, the unburdening of the sinner's fears. Yet for the modern doubting subject, assailed by historical criticism and philosophical objections, the notion that *simply* believing would provide the road to blesséd certainty appears to mock or ignore the situation of the doubter.

Paul Tillich's notion of the justification of the doubter is a pastoral intervention to console the doubter's despair. It is related to well-known tropes of Tillich's writings, such as 'the God above God', and his theory of religious symbols. It is expounded (without the phrase) in his famous American sermon *You Are Accepted,* and in the closing passage of *The Courage to Be*. This aspect of Tillich's theology is deeply pastoral, one might even say missional, asking:

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[6] Luther, 'Bereitung zum Sterben', 65.

> [W]hat can you say to a man, for whom all expressions of religious faith have disappeared in the fire of doubt, but a doubt which is serious and not a cynical play?[7]

Tillich's answer to that question is the justification of the doubter, which is the doctrine of justification applied to the situation of the doubter:

> Not only he who is in sin but also he who is in doubt is justified through faith. The situation of doubt, even of doubt about God, need not separate us from God. There is faith in every serious doubt, namely, the faith in the truth as such, even if the only truth we can express is our lack of truth. But if this is experienced in its depth and as an ultimate concern, the divine is present; and he who doubts in such an attitude is "justified" in his thinking.[8]

> [J]ust as you are justified as a sinner (though unjust, you are just), so in the status of doubt you are in the status of truth.[9]

Tillich has thus turned what has become an impossible demand upon the doubter – Luther's call for the despairing sinner to simply believe – into gospel and sweet relief for the despairing doubter: There is *faith* in every serious doubt. Thus, as doubter, one stands justified. Writing in America, Tillich remembers:

> The personal and theological consequences of these ideas for me were immense. Personally, they gave me at the time of their discovery, and always since then, a strong feeling of relief.[10]

This dissertation explores just this discovery during Tillich's life in Germany, tracing the emergence of the justification of the doubter in his early writings, with special reference to his early sermons. The central questions are: Where did Tillich 'land' theologically after the war? And how did he get there? The scope is therefore limited to the period of his student days up to his first full-

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[7] Paul Tillich, 'The God above God', in E. Sturm, W. Schüßler & Chr. Danz (eds) *Paul Tillich. Ausgewählte Texte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 401–405; here: 401.
[8] Paul Tillich, 'Author's Preface' (1948), xxix.
[9] Paul Tillich, 'Author's Preface' (1948), xxx.
[10] Paul Tillich, 'Author's Preface' (1948), xxix.

length statement of the justification of the doubter in his 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*.

2. Tillich scholarship

i. Tillich's early biography

Lars Christian Heinemann notes that reception of Tillich has overemphasised biographical aspects.[11] Nevertheless, I begin all main chapters with a biographical sketch, setting the scene for exposition of the sources. Furthermore, I refer to significant political and church-political developments. To understand and evaluate Tillich's theological contribution we must assess its strength as a response to a biographical and historical situation.

Tillich experienced the relief of the justification of the doubter following a neo-Pietist, 'positive' (i.e., conservative) Lutheran theological upbringing. His father was a positive pastor who fought against the perceived attacks of liberal theology. Tillich's relief is significantly shaped by the tension from which his thought emerged; the son of a theologically liberal pastor may have had a different set of questions.[12]

English-language writing on Tillich has been dominated by the narrative of Marion and Wilhelm Pauck.[13] Their biography remains a great achievement,

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[11] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 37.

[12] In contrast, Rudolf Bultmann's father was becoming successively more liberal in Bultmann's teenage years. See Konrad Hammann, *Rudolf Bultmann. Eine Biographie.* 3. Auflage (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 10. I believe this difference in origin is reflected in Bultmann's iconoclasm of demythologization and Tillich's alternative, the de-literalisation of religious symbols.

[13] See Marion Pauck and Wilhelm Pauck, *Paul Tillich. His Life and Thought. Volume I: Life* (London: Collins, 1977). For an evaluation of recent biographies see Werner Schüßler, 'Tillich's life and works', in Russell Re Manning (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3–17; here: 16n1.

drawing on interviews with Tillich at the end of his life. However, this strength of closeness to Tillich is also its weakness, being overly dependent upon Tillich's own narration and further amplifying its contours. Thus, their story of Tillich's beginnings is dominated by the First World War, with the experience of harrowing battles becoming a revelatory point in which a buttoned-up, nationalistic and conservative Tillich (a shy boy) is metamorphosed into a wild and liberal religious socialist (a man).

There is therefore a subplot to my project: attending to the tension between Tillich's autobiographical statements and the sources from the archives. The relationship between Tillich's memories and his earliest writings are an example of the challenges of writing any (auto)biography.[14] For we remember in piecemeal ways and narrate our lives teleologically. By giving due attention to his thought before the war, including its church-political background, I hope a more accurate portrait of sustained intellectual evolution will emerge, including key developments which occurred well before the war.

ii. Tillich's early sermons

Within Tillich scholarship, his American sermons have been the subject of several dissertations.[15] The German sermons were published as *EGW* VII in 1994. Editor

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[14] Although it is well beyond the scope of my project to explore this, the cognitive sciences shed interesting light on the nature of memories and narratives and may help historians become suitably critical of sources. See Wolf Singer, 'Wahrnehmen, Erinnern, Vergessen. Über Nutzen und Vorteil der Hirnforschung für die Geschichtswissenschaft', *Pastoraltheologie* 99/9 (2010): 330–342.

[15] For a thorough account of the history of research into the American sermons, see Stefan S. Jäger, *Glaube und religiöse Rede bei Tillich und im Shin Buddhismus. Eine religionshermeneutische Studie.* Tillich Research 2 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 115–133. Jäger's account was instrumental in convincing me of the need for more attention to the early sermons.

Erdmann Sturm wrote articles outlining their overall character.[16] Others have commented exclusively on the war sermons.[17] However, no extended work has been done on the theology of Tillich's pre-war sermons, with the exception of Andreas Rössler's unpublished dissertation (1971), despite him not having Sturm's edition. Rössler however focuses on understanding Tillich's implicit homiletic theory.[18] Stefan S. Jäger (2011) introduces Tillich's early sermons in his impressive investigation of faith and homiletic theory in Tillich, in comparison with Shin Buddhism. However, Jäger only exegetes one exemplar from the end of the war.[19]

Monographs focussing on the early Tillich (on which more below) do not show interest in the early sermons. This is likely due to constraints of scope. However, the overall implication is that Tillich's preaching is deemed something incidental or irrelevant to his philosophical theology, a pastoral performance and accommodation unbecoming of the 'great' Tillich. I show that the experience of preaching – the theology developed in the situation of having to preach – also influenced Tillich's direction of travel in his more academic work.[20] Tillich

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[16] See for example Erdmann Sturm, 'Holy War Claims Life and Limb. Paul Tillich's War Theology (1914–1918)', *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte/Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 2(1) (January 1995): 60–84; Erdmann Sturm, 'Zwischen Apologetik und Seelsorge – Paul Tillichs frühe Predigten (1908–1918)', *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 124/3 (1999): 241–268. The latter was translated into English: see Erdmann Sturm, 'Between Apologetics and Pastoral Care: Paul Tillich's Early Sermons (1908–1918)', *BNAPTS* 26/1 (Winter 2000): 7–20.

[17] See Matthew Lon Weaver 'Thrown to the Boundary: Tillich's World War I Chaplaincy Sermons', *BNAPTS* 32/2 (Spring 2006): 21–27; Matthew Lon Weaver, *Religious Internationalism: The Ethics of War and Peace in the Thought of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 35–63; Sandra Windolph, 'Die Feldpredigten von Paul Tillich 1914–1918', *Schweizerischen Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 108 (2014): 297–317; Jörg Ulrich, 'Wir kämpfen einen guten Kampf. Paul Tillichs Grabpredigten im Ersten Weltkrieg', in Friedemann Stengel and Jörg Ulrich (eds) *Kirche und Krieg: Ambivalenzen in der Theologie* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlags-Anstalt, 2015), 107–118.

[18] See Andreas Rössler, *Die Predigttheorie Paul Tillichs* (Diss. Universität Tübingen, 1971). A copy can be found in the *PTAM,* Box S71/7.

[19] See Stefan S. Jäger, *Glaube und religiöse Rede bei Tillich*, 177–183.

[20] This reminds me of Barth's own claim that it was preaching which loosened him from the grip of liberal theology.

scholarship would benefit from recognizing the theology being done in the sermons if it would take the sermons seriously as a source. Even if the Tillich of these sermons is not always the theologian many revere: this too is Tillich.

Tillich's philosophical writings are of course important and relevant. At the beginning of my research I had rather hoped to bracket out some of the more difficult early philosophical texts and write a monograph exclusively on the early sermons. It became clear to me this was not appropriate, and I had to discover new interests. I do not want to replace the Schelling narrative,[21] but complicate it, and underline another framework in which Tillich's development makes sense: that Tillich should also be read as a pastor, with pastoral concerns, influenced by and responding to his church political situation, and his theological tradition.

iii. Recent work on the early German Tillich

By focusing on the early Tillich up to 1919, and not Tillich's German work in general, I am reducing my project to an area which has seen great development and industry in recent years. Tillich's two dissertations on Schelling from 1910 and 1912 had received commentary since publication, and his correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch 1917–1918 increasingly after the publication of *EGW* VI (1983). But Tillich scholarship has been fuelled by the renewed effort to publish archival material since 1994.[22] The new material included student essays from 1906 and 1908, the early sermons from 1909–1913 and at war, essays on Schelling

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[21] Particularly when expounding Tillich's notion of the justification of the doubter I have underlined the place he affords doubt in his system, doubt as constituent of thought. Putting it this way underlines the folly of attempting an account of the early Tillich without recourse to his study of Schelling and idealism.

[22] The 1994 edition of sermons from 1909–1918 (*EGW* VII), including sermons from the First World War, was the first of many edited by Erdmann Sturm. The relevant volumes for the period my project covers include Tillich's earliest texts and drafts before and after the war (*EGW* IX and X/1) and also his Berlin lectures after war (*EGW* XII), though the latter are not thematically relevant.

and Fichte from 1910, his 1911 lecture on certainty and the historical Jesus, his 1913 draft *Systematische Theologie*, and the 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*. In particular, the publication of *EGW* IX (1998) and X (1999) were a milestone in Tillich research for our understanding of Tillich's beginnings.

Two publications immediately following this milestone included the new material. Uwe Carsten Scharf (1999) managed to translate the 1913 systematic theology in his monograph on the Tillich's concept of a paradoxical 'breakthrough'.[23] Christian Danz (2000) interpreted Tillich's whole *ouevre* in relation to the concept of finite freedom, drawing heavily on the transcendental philosophical roots of Tillich's early work on Fichte and Schelling, but focusing on showing Tillich's American systematics has the same basic structure.[24]

Doris Lax (2006) offered first lengthy commentary on several of the new sources.[25] The volume *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920),* edited by Christian Danz and Werner Schüßler in 2008, established the potential of these archival sources to deepen our understanding of Tillich's development, with essays on the 1919 draft from Folkart Wittekind, Arnulf von Scheliha, Gunther Wenz and Ulrich Barth.[26]

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[23] Uwe Carsten Scharf, *The Paradoxical Breakthrough of Revelation. Interpreting the Divine-Human Interplay in Paul Tillich's Work 1913–1964*. TBT 83 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1999).

[24] Christian Danz, *Religion als Freiheitsbewußtsein: eine Studie zur Theologie als Theorie der Konstitutionsbedingungen individueller Subjektivität bei Paul Tillich*. TBT 110 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000).

[25] See Doris Lax, *Rechtfertigung des Denkens. Grundzüge der Genese von Paul Tillichs Denken dargestellt und erläutert an vier frühen Schriften aus den Jahren 1911–1913* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). Editors Lax and Hummel also wrote essays in English. See Gert Hummel, 'Tillich's 1913 "Systematische Theologie" and his 1925 Dogmatik: a comparison', in J. Richard, A. Gounelle, R. P. Scharlemann, *Etudes sur la Dogmatique de Paul Tillich* (Paris/Québec: Cerf/PUL, 1997), 361–381; Doris Lax, 'The Tillich of the Years 1911–1913: The Trinitarian Principle of the 1913 Systematische Theologie', *BNAPTS* 32/1 (Winter 2006): 19–27.

[26] See Folkart Wittekind, 'Allein durch den Glauben. Tillichs sinntheoretische Umformulierung des Rechtfertigungsverständnisses 1919', in Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds) *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920).* Tillich-Studien 20 (Wien/Berlin: Lit, 2008), 39–65; Arnulf von Scheliha 'Die Rechtfertigungslehre bei Paul Tillich und Emanuel Hirsch.

Recent German monographs have explored various themes in light of the new sources. Georg Neugebauer (2007) devotes over 100 pages to Schelling's Christology before describing Tillich's reception of Schelling in 1910–1913, and in his work as a whole.[27] Stefan Dienstbeck (2011) compares the structure of the German theological systems of 1913 and 1925 with Tillich's American *Systematic Theology*.[28] Lars Christian Heinemann (2017) is focused on understanding the development of Tillich's theory of symbols up to 1923/24, offering an impressive account of the early writings in their own right.[29]

Alongside Scharf, two recent English-language monographs also deal with aspects of the early Tillich. Russell Re Manning (2005) is concerned with Tillich's theology of culture, offering a substantial treatment of the relationship between Schelling and Tillich's dissertations on Schelling.[30] Robert Meditz (2015) considers Tillich's view of Judaism, drawing on Tillich's dissertations on Schelling.[31] Two recent monographs in French also cover the period before the

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Problemgeschichtliche Perspektiven und systematische Entscheidungen', in Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds) *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920).* Tillich-Studien 20 (Wien/Berlin: Lit, 2008), 66–84; Gunther Wenz, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel. Tillichs Entwurf zur Begründung eines theologischen Prinzips von 1919 im halle-wittenbergischen Kontext', in: Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds) *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920)*. Tillich-Studien 20 (Wien/Berlin: Lit, 2008), 85–116. Ulrich Barth, 'Religion und Sinn. Betrachtungen zum frühen Tillich', in U. Barth (ed), *Kritischer Religionsdiskurs* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 431–451. Published earlier as: Ulrich Barth, 'Religion und Sinn. Betrachtungen zum frühen Tillich', in Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds), *Religion - Kultur - Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920)*. Tillich-Studien Bd. 20 (Wien/Berlin: Lit, 2008), 197–213.

[27] Georg Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie. Eine Untersuchung zu Offenbarung und Geschichte bei Tillich vor dem Hintergrund seiner Schellingrezeption*. TBT 141 (Berlin / New York: De Gruyter, 2007).

[28] Stefan Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie: Stadien der Systembildung Paul Tillichs.* Forschungen zur systematischen und ökumenischen Theologie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011). See also his useful concise summary: Stefan Dienstbeck, 'Von der Sinntheorie zur Ontologie. Zum Verständnis des Spätwerks Paul Tillichs', *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 57/1 (2015): 32–59.

[29] Lars Christian Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol. Eine systematisch-genetische Rekonstruktion der frühen Symboltheorie Paul Tillichs*. Tillich Research 10 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2018).

[30] Russell Re Manning, *Theology at the End of Culture. Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture and Art* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005).

[31] Robert E. Meditz, *The Dialectic of the Holy. Paul Tillich's Idea of Judaism within the History of Religion*. Tillich Research 7 (Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

war: Mark Boss (2014) uncovers the subtleties of Tillich's position within alternative post-Kantian philosophies.[32] Benoît Mathot (2015) traces the development of Tillich's understanding of apologetics throughout his whole *oeuvre*.[33]

This project was initially planned with three themes: Tillich's political development, theology of culture, and the justification of the doubter (these themes reflecting the three themes Tillich wrote about 1919–1920). Correspondence with Erdmann Sturm convinced me of the folly of attempting such thematic breadth. Thus, I decided to focus on the justification of the doubter. In secondary literature on the early Tillich surveyed above, Mathot's theme of apologetics is related, but no monographs focus squarely on the issue of doubt. The closest to my work, thematically speaking, is Otto Schnübbe's 1985 study of justification in Tillich's theology. However, Schnübbe, writing before the discovery of archival material, begins with the 1924 publication *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*.[34] Johannes Kubik's dissertation (2011) is devoted to the reception and possible application of Tillich's theology in religious pedagogy. Nevertheless, his helpful discussion of Tillich's understanding of justification from 1910 to 1930 is relevant.[35]

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[32] Marc Boss, *Au commencement la liberté. La religion de Kant réinventée par Fichte, Schelling et Tillich* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2014).
[33] Benoît Mathot, *L'apologétique dans la pensée de Paul Tillich*. Tillich Research 6 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2015). Despite my limited ability in French, I engage with Mathot in chapter 7. Thanks be to 'Google translate'.
[34] Otto Schnübbe, *Paul Tillich und seine Bedeutung für den Protestantismus heute. Das Prinzip der Rechtfertigung im theologischen, philosophischen und politischen Denken Paul Tillichs* (Hannover: Lutherhaus Verlag, 1985).
[35] Johannes Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik. Religion, Korrelation, Symbol und Protestantisches Prinzip*. Arbeiten zur Religionspädagogik 49 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011), 205–310.

Since the publication of the 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, all the major German monographs on the early Tillich, as well as various recent German essays, have explored the connection between 1919 and earlier or later writings, even as they pursue research questions distinct from my own.[36] In what follows I enter into conversation with this scholarship, thoroughly chastised by its volume and erudition. However, I console myself with two thoughts. First, that the publication milestones in 1998 and 1999 have yet to be taken up in English-language scholarship. And second that among monographs of any languages, it is striking that efforts to grasp Tillich's early development, however impressive, do not care at all for the early sermons as a source or attempt to understand them alongside more philosophical genres.

Therefore, with my chosen focus on Tillich's justification of the doubter as a way of interpreting Tillich's early work up to 1919, focusing on the sermons, I am making significant contribution to Tillich scholarship. By writing in English and going beyond the coverage of Tillich's dissertations on Schelling, I hope to be able to open a window on a world unknown to English-language theology and offer a new portrait of young Paul Tillich.[37]

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[36] Erdmann Sturm offered first commentary on the 1919 draft before it was published. See Erdmann Sturm, 'Das absolute Paradox als Prinzip der Theologie und Kultur in Paul Tillichs „Rechtfertigung und Zweifel" von 1919', in: Gert Hummel (ed), *The theological paradox: interdisciplinary reflections on the centre of Paul Tillich's thought: proceedings of the V. International Paul Tillich Symposium held in Franfurt/Main 1994*. TBT 74 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), 32–45. Other significant essays not yet mentioned above include: Jörg Dierken, 'Zweifel und Gewißheit. Zur religiösen Bedeutung skeptischer Reflexion bei Paul Tillich', in: Jörg Dierken, *Selbstbewußtsein individueller Freiheit. Religionstheoretische Erkundungen in protestantischer Perspektive* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 299–323; Christian Danz, 'Glaube und Autonomie. Zur Deutung der Rechtfertigungslehre bei Karl Holl und Paul Tillich', *IYTF* 1 (2005): 159–174; Ulrich Barth, 'Protestantismus und Kultur. Systematische und werkbiographische Erwägungen zum Denken Paul Tillichs', in: Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds), *Paul Tillichs Theologie der Kultur. Aspekte – Probleme – Perspektiven*. Tillich Research 1 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 13–37.

[37] My identification of the lack of recent English-language scholarship on the early Tillich up to 1919, (since the publication milestone in 1998–1999) is no disparagement of the previous generation of scholarship in English, even if the language barrier has always played a role. I cannot survey all that here. One of the most impressive accounts in English remains Adrian Thatcher, *The Ontology of Paul*

The intended readers of this dissertation are threefold. First, I imagine theologians with interest in twentieth century theology. Second, I imagine theologians with advanced interest in Tillich's theology, but who lack great command of the German language. For such readers, the volumes of archival material published since 1994, and the accompanying German-language secondary literature, remain largely inaccessible. The third group is those Tillich scholars proficient in German who have passed over an analysis of the early sermons, or not deemed them of interest. At times I will be explaining the obvious to seasoned German-language Tillich scholars. At other times I will lose general readers by pursuing questions of translation and interpretation of some of Tillich's hardest texts. Thus, my imagined reader is at times a contradiction, 'Schrödinger's' reader: both aware of German secondary literature on the early Tillich, and yet somehow also unable to read it, requiring an introduction. However, my book serves an important purpose, mediating between the demanding world of German Tillich scholarship and the need for general overview and 'story' of Tillich's early development in English.

4. Method

My research method is historical-critical. I have taken the 1919 draft and tested each period of Tillich's early development against that standard. It has been important to keep in mind that each of the writings I treat as sources are not necessarily interested in giving me the answers to the questions I have. I am not

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Tillich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), particularly for his situation of Tillich's ontology in its Schellingian roots and the history of philosophy in general.

claiming the justification of the doubter is that which Tillich had been trying to develop all along.

On occasions my rhetoric may suggest something close to this when I speak of building-blocks, steps, or pieces of the puzzle being developed in Tillich's thought. However, whenever I use such language it is being used self-consciously as an interpretive fiction. This is not a structuralist reader-response theory. It is simply a part of any properly historical-critical project to become aware of one's own creative role in writing history. My description of Tillich's development will always be a construction of steps of development which are not Tillich's, but my own analytic categories. This happens through my engagement with the texts, but it is important to see they are in the end my own attempt to *make* sense.

For the reader it is important to say I believe what Tillich attempted with the justification of the doubter is a pastorally useful response to modernity, worthy of attention. Therefore, the reader should expect a sympathetic portrayal of Tillich, with neither conservative confessionalist disappointment,[38] nor hypercritical disdain.[39]

Another aspect of my interest is my relative disinterest in Tillich's interpretation of Schelling. Readers will be helped (and some relieved) to know I

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[38] See for example Oswald Bayer, 'Wort und Sein', in: Gert Hummel et al (eds) *Being versus word in Paul Tillich's theology / Sein versus Wort in Paul Tillichs Theologie. Beiträge des VII. Internationalen Paul-Tillich-Symposions in Frankfurt/M. 1998* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 13–23.

[39] Friedrich Wilhelm Graf writes disdainfully that Tillich was "like a mixture of a chameleon and snake-human, […] able to sensitively adapt to all possible living environments". Graf, 'Tillichs Durchbruch', 37. Graf's approach is part of his programme of historicising great theological figures, being suspicious of "heroic self-images" emerging after the end of the Second World War. See Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, 'Old harmony? Über einige Kontinuitätselemente in 'Paulus' Tillichs Theologie der Allversöhnung', in: Hartmut Lehmann/Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds), *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften, Band 2: Leitbegriffe – Deutungsmuster – Paradigmenkämpfe. Erfahrunden und Transformationen im Exil*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004), 375–415; here: 375. I agree with Graf that every interpreter of Tillich should "offer an account of the unavoidable perspectivity of their approach". Graf, 'Old Harmony?', 380. But I do not think historicization requires dehumanizing sneer.

did not read Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling as a teenager. In the course of the following chapters, I have had to explore Schelling's philosophy, at least through Tillich's lens, and I hope advanced readers will see I have dutifully worked through the material. But my main interest in this project lies elsewhere, specifically the pastoral dimension of Tillich's early life. This is reflected in the questions I ask, and the space I devote to the early sermons.

5. Chapter overview

The dissertation proceeds with eight main chapters and a conclusion. The first of these main chapters, **chapter two, *Justification and Doubt***, addresses the first of my research questions concerning the justification of the doubter: How did Tillich land theologically after the war? I offer a detailed account of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* from 1919, occasionally drawing out contrasts and continuity with the publication of the same title from 1924. Tillich frames the theme as a quest to overcome the division between religious and cultural life, finding unity in one theological principle derived from the doctrine of justification: The principle takes up doubt into itself in believing affirmation of the absolute paradox, i.e., to affirm that doubt does not preclude standing in the truth. In long excursions on certainty and the critique of apologetics as 'intellectual work' analogous to works-righteousness, Tillich contrasts his position with Karl Heim in particular. Against Heim, Tillich insists the doubter should be left with his good truth-conscience since we relate truly to God "through unending doubt".

The chronological account of Tillich's development begins in **chapter three, *Defence, Doubt, and Gracelessness***. Material from Tillich's student

days (1905–1909) is compared with Tillich's later autobiographical narratives. Church-political debates in Wilhelmine Prussia concerning the doctrinal orthodoxy of its pastors (where Tillich's father Johannes defended the conservative stance) are placed alongside student Tillich's determination to defend confessional standards at the national Wingolf conference 1906. Privately, Tillich was struggling with doubt about historical revelation, brought on by historical criticism, but chiefly his philosophical studies.

Despite Tillich's later insistence Kähler taught him the centrality of justification, there was no grace in Tillich's uncompromising stance as Wingolf leader, of which Kähler may have been quite critical. Furthermore, Tillich's *Monismusschrift* (1908), influenced by his study of Fichte and others under Fritz Medicus, offers criticism of Kähler's anti-metaphysical stance. Justification is merely a subordinated locus of his attempt to express Christianity in terms of idealist philosophy.

Chapter four, *Overcoming Despair*, considers Tillich's sermons in Lichtenrade (1909). Tillich's self-examining piety drove him to despair as he wrestled for assurance in preparation of his sermon for Sunday 31st May 1909. Abandoning a first draft, Tillich re-writes the sermon and speaks for the first time about Christ meeting the doubting sinner in the darkness of despair with a message of double grace: You need do nothing, you need not hold anything to be true. I characterise this crisis as a breakthrough, first evidence of the justification of the doubter.

Chapter five, *Schelling and History*, gathers Tillich's academic work from 1909–11, including two dissertations on Schelling and his lecture on certainty and the historical Jesus. Schelling provided Tillich and his modern-

positive tradition with a way of thinking about Christianity in the light of the history of religions, after Troeltsch's challenge. Tillich notes Schelling's insistence that humanity is God-positing regardless of unbelief. It is also significant that Tillich affirms the notion of an undoubtable condition of thought, whether as Schelling's concept of 'unpreconceivable being' or Fichte's I (*das Ich*).

With Schelling, Tillich sees a wider application for. However, it is first in the Kassel lecture on the historical Jesus that he connects the idealist notion that knowledge is limited to the self-certainty of the subject with the claim that *autonomy* is justification in the area of thought. This is expressed as the rejection of the misunderstanding that faith is an intellectual work. This could have been the influence of his Lutheran tradition, encouraged by Schelling. I argue it emerged from Tillich's engagement with Wilhelm Herrmann.

Chapter six, *The Prodigal Doubter*, explores sermons from Tillich's curacy in Nauen (1911–1912). In Tillich's adaptation the parable of the Prodigal Son, the pious of the day do not come with empty hands but grasping rags of love, faith, zeal and orthodoxy. By characterising the creedal assent of the pious as a self-righteous 'work', Tillich echoes Wilhelm Herrmann's defence against 'positive' detractors. Tillich will speak sharply against provocatively liberal figures but distances himself from conservative Christians he deems self-righteous.

Tillich attempts thereby a *levelling* of the distinction between the believer and the unbeliever through a law-gospel dialectic emphasising human inability. Reimagining piety as piety in godforsakenness, he insists that even in an age of doubt, all share in the predicament from which all are saved. Those who now

protest against the church do in that protest exhibit forms of faith: they are of the truth and will come to the truth.

Chapter seven, *Convincing the Doubter*, explores Tillich's Moabit sermons (1912–1913), apologetic evenings and memorandum *Kirchliche Apologetik*. In his memorandum, Tillich calls for apologetics as an answer to the decline of the church. Tillich hopes to demonstrate atheism's philosophical error, the abyss of its autonomy, leading toward the insight that the paradox of thought (that thought alone comes to its end) is the paradox of Christianity, that thought requires foundation in Christianity. Thus the doubter is convinced, but not justified. In Tillich's Moabit sermons, the answer to doubt is Christ, the image of God in the soul.

In **chapter eight, *Doubt and System***, Tillich's 1913 systematics is presented as an indication of Tillich's position in the year preceding the war. The tripartite system (Apologetics, Dogmatics, Ethics) locates theology in a truth-theoretical account where God is the absolute. Human thought is presented as a conflict between intuition and reflection, in need of redemption. Doubt is grounded in truth, and every human is principally justified. But since distressed thought is *redeemed* by the absolute paradox, we do not have the justification of the doubter in the same clarity as 1919.

Finally, in **chapter nine, *Tillich at War***, I tackle Tillich's war sermons and correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch (1917–1918). Perhaps most strikingly in his Christmas sermons, Tillich speaks about the loss of faith among the soldiers. He also offers an unfinished theodicy with three moments, increasingly emphasising the weakness and suffering of God. Tillich's sermon from late October 1917 to mark the 400th anniversary of the Reformation is a clear

expression of the justification of the doubter. Tillich subsequently explains and develops this new understanding of 'faith without God' in correspondence with Hirsch.

In my ***Conclusion*, chapter 10**, I present a characterisation of Tillich's development of the justification of the doubter with reference to several themes. I also argue for the continuing significance of Tillich's intervention as a useful pastoral response in an age of doubt.

Chapter 2

Justification and Doubt

1. Introduction

For Tillich, the war ended a little earlier. He was removed from the Western front on grounds of ill health (a nervous breakdown of sorts) and transferred to the barracks in Berlin-Spandau on 30th July 1918. There he recovered and took on pastoral duties. The war would continue until the armistice of 11th November, after the proclamation of a republic on 9th November. Just as in Russia, peace had come through the toppling of powers. Tillich was relieved of his duties as army chaplain on 15th December 1918.

After over four years of military service, Tillich had returned to his academic path. He became a *Stadtvikar* (assistant minister) from 1st January 1919,[1] giving him regular income, and became an unpaid *Privatdozent* (lecturer) on 24th January,[2] his habilitation having been successfully transferred from Halle to Berlin. His first lecture series took place in the Summer semester of 1919 on 'Christianity and societal problems of the present' for students from all faculties,[3] repeating it in the summer recess for those who had returned from the war.[4]

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[1] Sturm, Erdmann, 'An der engen Pforte der historischen Methode vorbei. Paul Tillichs Habilitation in Halle (1916) und seine Umhabilitierungen nach Berlin (1919) und Marburg (1924)', *IYTR* 10 (2015): 273–331; here: 313n80. A *Stadtvikar* appears to be a full-time post with considerably reduced duties often given to young academics in order to give them time to teach and research at university before they found a permanent job. Thanks to Jürgen Kampmann, who pointed me in the right direction.

[2] His public lecture (now lost) bore the title *Das Dasein Gottes und die Religionspsychologie*. See Sturm, 'An der engen Pforte', 285–286.

[3] Tillich, Das Christentum und die Gesellschaftsprobleme der Gegenwart (Sommersemester 1919); EGW XII, 27–258.

[4] Sturm, 'Historische Einleitung. Paul Tillichs frühe Berliner Vorlesungen (1919–1920)', *EGW* XII, 1.

The political theme of his lectures is Tillich's response to the dizzying political situation in Berlin 1918–1919. It is therefore quite appropriate to understand Tillich's political theology as a major concern at this time, which had being growing towards the end of his time at the Western Front.[5] We know that after the events of November 1918 he joined a Berlin circle of those who called themselves "religious-social", meeting in the house of popular pastor Friedrich Rittelmeyer (1872–1938).[6] In a situation where the church authorities remained conservative nationalists, Tillich's attendance (initially in uniform) would have been controversial.[7] Rittelmeyer had been one of five signatories of an anti-war *Aufruf für Frieden und Verständigung* published in the liberal theological newspaper *Die Christliche Welt* for the anniversary of the Reformation in 1917.[8]

In May 1919, presumably encouraged by this circle, Tillich and Wegener gave a talk on *Christentum und Sozialismus* at the Berlin-Zehlendorf chapter of the anti-war *USPD* (Independent Social Democrats). They were swiftly questioned by the conservative church consistory.[9] In September he would meet

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[5] Tillich's embrace of religious socialism is seen by some commentators as a knee-jerk reaction to the new situation in Berlin, psychologizing the changes as "compensation strategies for the loss of security in life and innerwordly original trust", a "highly impulsively advanced process of self-understanding and learning". Alf Christophersen, 'Wie Paul Tillich den religiösen Sozialismus entdeckte. Protestantische Selbstvergewisserung während des Ersten Weltkriegs', in: J. Negel/K. Pinggéra (Hg.), *Urkatastrophe. Die Erfahrung des Krieges 1914–1918 im Spiegel zeitgenössischer Theologie*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 2016, 227ff; here: 231.239. Similarly, see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, 'Tillichs Durchbruch', *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 8/2 (2014), 50. Of course, the impact of the revolution was dizzying and Tillich's theory far from settled. But in chapter 9 we will see in late 1917 Tillich's enthusiasm for Trotzky's peace efforts and openness to changes in German politics. Furthermore, writing in September 1919, Tillich claims to have felt angered at the way society was structured during the war, beginning in the summer of 1918. See *EGW* V, 143. Therefore, calling his political development a mere compensation strategy and reaction to the new political situation in Berlin overlooks the change below the surface he dared not candidly express at the Western Front.

[6] See *EGW* X/1, 237. Troeltsch even attended once, see Günther Dehn, *Die alten Zeit*, 212.

[7] Tillich's contributions to the discussion were received enthusiastically by Rittelmeyer, and he was remembered at that time as a left-leaning liberal, a fan of Friedrich Naumann (1860-1919). See Günther Dehn, *Die alten Zeit*, 220–212.

[8] For the text of the declaration, see Karlheinz Lipp, *Berliner Friedenspfarrer und der Erste Weltkrieg: Ein Lesebuch* (Freiburg: Centaurus, 2013), 188. Tillich's friend Wegener supported the authors; see Lipp, *Berliner Friedenspfarrer*, 202–203.

[9] For the text of their answer, see Paul Tillich und Richard Wegener, *Der Sozialismus als Kirchenfrage*,

Karl Barth for the first time at the Tambacher Tagung. I cannot discuss his politics more here, but it should be clear it was a fast-moving time for Tillich's political development, set against a backdrop of revolution, street battles, and assassinations of left-wing leaders in Berlin that we can barely imagine today.[10]

In this context, Tillich was concerned to reset the church's relation to culture after the war. On 16th April 1919 he presented his essay, *On the Idea of a Theology of Culture,* to the Kant Society in Berlin.[11] No longer opposition to culture, no longer constant bewailing and demonstration of society's errors, but instead interpretation of the religious essence of culture.

Tillich's 1919 draft of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* belongs to this same period.[12] It was written in the Summer or Autumn of 1919.[13] He sent a final version of the draft to the faculty for consideration for a grant, and to give insight into his position. The submitted draft of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* was not a new topic Tillich developed in Berlin (this is probably true in the case of Tillich's political writings). Rather, it was written using considerable preparatory writings

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MW/HW III, 31–42.

[10] For example, the *Spartakus-Aufstand* took place around 100 metres away from Tillich's father's house.

[11] Paul Tillich, 'Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur', in E. Sturm, W. Schüßler & Chr. Danz (eds) *Paul Tillich. Ausgewählte Texte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 25–41; also: *MW* 2, 69–85. For an English translation see Victor Nuovo, *Visionary Science. A Translation of Tillich's "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture" with an Interpretive Essay* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 17–39, or the translation by William Baillie Green in Mark Kline Taylor (ed), *Paul Tillich. Theologian of the Boundaries. Selected Writings* (London: Collins, 1987), 35–54.

[12] We possess one manuscript and a later corrected typoscript of this draft. See Paul Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel' in *EGW* X/1, 128–185 (*Manuskript*) and 185–230 (*Typoskript*). For my exposition I use the typoscript and refer to it hereafter as 'the 1919 draft'. This is not to be confused with preparatory drafts of the published essay, to which I do not refer, but which can be found in *EGW* X/1 432–453.

[13] At the end of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel,* Tillich mentions the title of his forthcoming culture essay on the theology of culture. See *EGW* X/1, 228; *EGW* X/1, 184. The boundaries of the dating are therefore between the latter essay's presentation (16th April) and publication (the end of 1919). See *EGW* X/1, 128; Sturm, 'An der engen Pforte', 313n80; Erdmann Sturm, 'Historische Einleitung', *EGW* XII, 1–26. In May 1919 he was busy with the church's reaction to the talk at the *USPD*.

from the Western Front. Given the points of similarity between his correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch and the 1919 draft on doubt, on which more in chapter nine, the new ideas appearing in the essay are fruit of the war period, formulated alongside his correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch, 1917–1918.

In this chapter, I will present Tillich's 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*. Tillich commented at the time that it "gives insight into the problems and goals of my systematic thought [...] as the presentation of my main problem, the religious dialectic of doubt."[14] I do not offer much commentary except where I think something needs explaining, occasionally making a connection with his publication from 1924 of the same title.[15] This chapter is simply my 'snapshot' of Tillich's position in 1919 on this theme, of how he landed after the war. Commentary on the geneaology and deep structure of his notion of the justification of the doubter is the subject of chapters three to nine.

2. *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* in 1919

The 1919 draft is set up as part of a quest to overcome the division between religious and cultural life. Tillich explores the "inner dialectical relationship between Protestantism and modern-autonomous culture",[16] to find unity in

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[14] *EGW* X/1, 127–128. The letter cited can be found at PTAH 114:003.
[15] Paul Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel', in: *Vorträge der Theologischen Konferenz zu Gießen*, 39. Folge (Gießen: 1924), 19–32; Paul Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', in E. Sturm, W. Schüßler & Chr. Danz (eds) *Paul Tillich. Ausgewählte Texte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 123–137 = *MW* 6, 83–97. An English translation is available from the author upon request. Below I cite the 2008 edition. Tillich's 1924 essay was originally presented as a paper at a theological conference in Gießen, while teaching in Marburg. The conference was attended by Rudolf Bultmann, who apparently "attacked" Tillich in the discussion afterwards. Back in Marburg, there were further discussions in a small group. See *EGW* V, 168.
[16] *EGW* X/1, 186.

spiritual life built upon autonomy. Tillich sees his solution as way between "speculative" theology which loses itself in negativity, and traditional church theology.

The search for religious and cultural unity means the search for a unifying theological principle. The distinction between formal and material principle of Protestantism (authority of Scripture and doctrine of justification by faith) is not strictly valid since there can only be one principle, says Tillich.[17] The one theological principle which would come into question would have to be one which carries subjectivity in itself yet can still become the basis for religious life. But in order to take up subjectivity without losing the objectiveness and monism of the principle, the principle must "contain every possible form of subjectivity [...] without itself being touched by subjectivity. Only the unconditioned itself can do justice to this demand."[18]

Tillich therefore suggests the one principle needs two "moments", the first absolute, abstract and primary (taking the place of the material principle), the second relative, concrete (in which the essence of the old formal principle is contained). The first moment stands over the second in critique, but the moments remain in tension. Unlike speculative theology, which "brings a third moment to rule [...] a synthesis of absolute and relative", Tillich's principle "can only present itself in this tension" of the two moments and "the sublation of the tension can be posited as endless goal, not empirical solution."[19]

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[17] See *EGW* X/1, 188–189.
[18] *EGW* X/1, 190.
[19] *EGW* X/1, 190.

i. Part one: The doctrine of justification from the viewpoint of the paradox

At the outset of his search for a theological principle, Tillich takes the material principle of Protestantism, justification by faith alone, and identifies its paradoxical character, since "with the help of categories of law applied to the relation of God and humans the categories of law are sublated in their validity for this relation."[20] Tillich judges various renderings of the doctrine according to the criterion of the paradox, and many are found wanting because they weaken the paradox. As one might expect from a pupil of Martin Kähler, he is critical of Albrecht Ritschl and subjective theories of the atonement for an ethical flattening of justification which weakens the paradox. But he also flags up the danger of mechanistic understandings which understand Christ as God's means to get around the paradox.[21] Roman Catholicism is characterised as mere submission to authority while Pietists focus on the nature of their own faith rather than the affirmation of the paradox.[22] Justification comes by faith, but without all these misunderstandings, and also not as "act of affirmation of the paradox" which is a condition of salvation. The most appropriate articulation of the paradox is God's absolute No and absolute Yes in a unified act of divine judgement over the individual. Faith is "the immediate personal affirmation of this judgement, the recognition of both the Yes as well as the No or rather of the unity of both as divine judgement over me."[23]

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[20] *EGW* X/1, 191.
[21] See *EGW* X/1, 192–193.
[22] See *EGW* X/1, 193–195. In contrast to the 1924 version, where Tillich points to the reliance of Protestant 'breakthrough' upon Catholic 'realisation', there are no ecumenical olive branches in 1919.
[23] *EGW* X/1, 197.

Tillich now introduces the "situation" of theology after Protestant orthodoxy, Enlightenment and biblical criticism. In 1924 he judges doubt to have emerged from justification as a principle (and particularly its reduction to a doctrine).[24] In 1919 this theme is already present, but with an additional critique of liberal theological attempts to make the doctrine effectively dependent upon a moral principle or a moral certitude of God,[25] and of the tendency within Protestant orthodoxy to make the formal principle paramount, only to see it decimated by biblical criticism.

If justification by faith can become a principle, Tillich does not think it can do so in modernity by means of guilt-consciousness alone. Nor does he see a direct route from the struggling conscience to the grounding of certainty of God or revelation, "for the sphere of certainty of salvation assumes both, and not the other way around."[26] In this point he is (implicitly) criticising his teacher Kähler, and (explicitly) Karl Holl's hope that modern literature might awaken guilt-consciousness by means of a "feeling of negativity".[27]

The lack of God-consciousness is the religious problem of the age,[28] and so justification must speak to more than the traditional dilemma of assurance of

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[24] Paul Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 127.
[25] In 1924 this is mentioned only in passing as "the Kant-Ritschlian lines" which Karl Heim's critique is deemed to have overcome.
[26] *EGW* X/1, 198. I use the word 'certainty' to translate *Gewißheit*. In some cases, the more natural English expression would be 'assurance'; one should normally translate *Heilsgewißheit* as 'assurance of salvation' because that is the equivalent term in comparable contexts. 'Sureity' would be another option. Nevertheless, for the sake of comparability, I have stuck to 'certainty' in all these instances in this chapter. Therefore, the reader should bear in mind that when she reads 'certainty', which might sound quite rigid and impersonal, the German word *Gewißheit* often has a softer, more relational feel.
[27] On the difference between Tillich and Holl, see Christian Danz, 'Glaube und Autonomie. Zur Deutung der Rechtfertigungslehre bei Karl Holl und Paul Tillich', in Christian Danz, Werner Schüßler und Erdmann Sturm (eds), *Wie viel Vernunft braucht der Glaube? Internationales Jahrbuch für Tillich Forschung* 1 (2005), 159–174.
[28] In 1924, this is called loss of religious immediacy, and he refers to its consequence as a triple loss, of God, truth, and meaning. See Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 128.

salvation. There is no way back to a revived formal principle (authoritative Scripture) after the birth of subjectivity. Yet this subjectivity can "drive out a principle from justification"[29] which can function as the theological principle which unites cultural and religious life.

ii. Part two: The justification of the doubter

Tillich now asks: If faith is the affirmation of the paradox of justification – that unity of God's No and Yes over me – then how can this paradox be formulated when God is doubted? What can justification mean when its presuppositions are doubted?[30] In this large section of the essay, Tillich first claims doubt has become an ineliminable part of our cultural life: any attempt to overcome doubt is as unsuccessful as any attempt to gain assurance of salvation by becoming sinless. Apologetics is therefore the church's 'intellectual work': a kind of self-justification, as embarrassing as the attempt to justify oneself in the ethical sphere.[31]

Despite the parallels drawn out between the situations of the sinner and the doubter, Tillich is critical of any attempt to *redeem* (rather than justify) the doubter, such as he sees in Karl Heim, who groups both kinds of quests for certainty (of salvation and of truth) in the expression "*tiefster Not*" (i.e., deepest need, distress, or affliction). For Heim, one is redeemed by entering into a situation of salvation and truth, mediated by "a defined concrete [*bestimmtes*

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[29] *EGW* X/1, 199.
[30] See *EGW* X/1, 199.
[31] See *EGW* X/1, 200. In 1924, the analogy is rendered more explicitly , with reference to a "law of truth" which the doubter cannot fulfill. See Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 128.

Konkretes] which is at once both carrier of salvation and of the truth."[32] But, so Tillich's critique, autonomy is thereby denied because it requires redemption.

Classification of doubt as sin, as self-deception, or an expression of bad will means truth-conscience is destroyed by moral-religious conscience. This leads to legalistic "intellectual-ascetic self-mutilation"[33] in the attempt to subdue truth-consciousness and the "feeling of condemnation [*Verworfensein*]"[34] as the subject is trapped between two compulsions of conscience (ethical and intellectual):

> The unassailable doubt in God reveals condemnation before God, a deep paradox which is an inverted image of the true paradox to which we want to lead. A doubling of God is created: The God who is doubted, the objectified [*gegenständliche*], personal God of doctrine of prayer etc. on the one hand and the God who condemns – the dark objectification of the aroused, unsatisfied, despairing consciousness – on the other hand. Guilty before this God because of doubt in the other and yet no consciousness of this differentiation, a bearing of the torture of this self-destroying paradox. Which "good news" can make free here? Alone this, that the doubt in God in the first, objectified [*gegenständlichen*] sense is no doubt in God in the second foundational [*urständlichen*] sense; that God is, before every determination and objectification [...] the truth to which we can only truly and thus "justly" relate through unending doubt.[35]

The God to whom one (in 1919) truly relates *through* unending doubt is, of course, "the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt"[36] in Tillich's American period. In 1919 it is expressed using the

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[32] *EGW* X/1, 201.
[33] *EGW* X/1, 203.
[34] *EGW* X/1, 203.
[35] *EGW* X/1, 203–204.
[36] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (1952), 190.

Schellingian distinction *urständlich – gegenständlich*, which distinguishes that which cannot be thought from that which can be made an object of thought. The way forward is to "leave the radical doubter with his good conscience and yet give him the possibility of faith."[37] However, apologetics does not offer the solution required.

a. Critique of all apologetics (general doctrine of certainty)

In 1919, the critique of apologetics plays a large role.[38] This section of the essay (titled as my sub-heading here), is only one of five sub-sections in part 2, yet takes up over a quarter of the entire essay. Tillich attends to various kinds of apologetics, which correspond to various conceptions of certainty.

First, any attempt to ground certainty in *evidence* is criticised, along with pragmatism. Talk of evidence in an Anglo-American context makes us think of logical positivism, natural science, or analytic philosophy of religion. But here Tillich's habitus is theology in the wake of idealist philosophy which tries to make "the absolute" the foundation of religious certainty. Evidence here is the unmediated evidence of self-consciousness, pure form and pure content. "[P]ure form […] is the way of the spirit to react to every content. […] it is about the purely formal categories of the recognition of every possible reality."[39] "[P]ure content [is] the utterly unmediated, insofar it is nothing but pre-conceptual datum of consciousness."[40] On such evidence no religious objectification can be grounded, for this leads beyond such unmediated evidence:

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[37] *EGW* X/1, 204.
[38] In the 1924 version, attempts to prove God in intellectual or emotional ways are also a kind of 'work' which always fails. See Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 129. But the critique of apologetics plays a minor role.
[39] *EGW* X/1, 205.
[40] *EGW* X/1, 205.

> 'The absolute is an idol', as Kähler used to say – wrongly, when he wanted to make an objection to philosophical thought, rightly, when he rejected the grounding of religious certainty on this product of non-evident thought.[41]

The second kind of certainty, *practical* certainty, is the kind of certainty which apparently survives all doubt, a reality-feeling [*Realitätsgefühl*] which exists as the epistemological I even when the psychological I is doubted:

> This stream of practical certainty, this sphere of the experience of reality is in principle unlimited. […] This certainty is of course never evidence – every one of its moments is problematic […]. But the stream itself […] has the evidence of absolute immediacy, even when our feeling of reality does not find any object. Then the experience of reality, transposed into the shadowlike, has as such evidence.[42]

Apologetic attempts to make religious certainty a kind of practical certainty rely on positing a psychological relation to the religious object as one might find in occult or theosophic experiences. Indeed, Tillich thinks "the notion of a kind of unintuited psychological being […] is the most common form of practical-religious certainty, the pure psychological certainty of experience".[43] Tillich appears to be forwarding some kind of Cartesian, foundational notion of certainty, since all other certainties are grounded in the certainty of the "stream of experience" which I cannot deny. Even if I deny the reality of my psychological-physical I, I cannot deny my consciousness of being so.

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[41] *EGW* X/1, 205.
[42] *EGW* X/1, 207.
[43] *EGW* X/1, 207.

However, Tillich's aims to show that apologetic attempts to move from practical certainty to religious certainty fail. Even the heaviest doubt cannot shake consciousness of reality. What doubt devastates is "the experience of the meaning of reality".[44] For "the power of the religious feeling of reality [*Realitätsgefühl*] is not grounded in the form of reality but in the meaning of the content which is experienced as real […]."[45] But there is no link from practical certainty of reality to certainty about meaning.

In the apologetics of experience-theology [*Erfahrungstheologie*], "the emotional work of the epiphany of experience [is] forced"[46] as the doubter is pointed to the fact, rather than the content of experience. Thus, humanity is given "an unbearable burden",[47] since the experience of the world could only ever lead one to belief in special but worldly beings; never to the absoluteness of the religious object.

Tillich suggests an incredibly high standard of what would count as religious certainty: "for the religious consciousness, the certainty of God must also stand firm in conditions of uncertainty of any reality, including one's own psychological-physical [reality]."[48] God is more certain than my own self. Such a standard, says Tillich, is expressed in mystical accounts of the dissolution of the I in moments of ultimate certainty of God.

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[44] *EGW* X/1, 208.
[45] *EGW* X/1, 208. Folkart Wittekind calls this Tillichs meaning-theoretical reformulation of his understanding of justification. See Wittekind, Folkart, 'Allein durch den Glauben. Tillichs sinntheoretische Umformulierung des Rechtfertigungsverständnisses 1919', in Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds) *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der frühe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920).* Tillich-Studien 20 (Wien/Berlin: Lit, 2008), 39–65.
[46] *EGW* X/1, 209.
[47] *EGW* X/1, 209.
[48] *EGW* X/1, 208.

The third kind of apologetics subject to Tillich's critique is that which works with the certainty of *conviction*. Specifically, Fichte's notion of conviction [*Überzeugung*], which does not merely mean opinion but "the conviction behind which the personality stands as a whole [...] as characteristic of I-ness [*Ichhaftigkeit*] [...] the free self-positing of the I".[49] This cannot refer to any Not-I, any object, and so cannot convince that God exists as a being, for "the predicate of being belongs to the sphere of objects".[50]

Thus, the apologetics of moral(ity)-theology [*Moraltheologie*] which attempts to move from the sphere of values to the sphere of being also fails, since recognition of value in such a scheme amounts merely to "heightened I-consciousness" which is always susceptible to "the fundamental experience of value-nothingness [*Wertnichtigkeit*]".[51]

b. Critique of Karl Heim's apologetics of the concrete absolute

While up to this point the criticism of apologetics has focused on broad tendencies, Karl Heim now becomes the focus of criticism. Tillich is responding to Heim's book *Glaubensgewißheit* (1916), where the categories of reason (subject-object relation, space and time) all appear to crumble on account on their internal contradictions.[52] Tillich criticises Heim not for his negative work but for his presentation of the 'concrete absolute' as the solution once reason has been destroyed by negativity. *Any* concrete absolute could appear, and it is

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[49] *EGW* X/1, 210. For a discussion of Fichte's concept of *Überzeugung*, see Manfred Kühn, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte: ein deutscher Philosoph* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2012), pp. 354–357.
[50] *EGW* X/1, 210.
[51] *EGW* X/1, 212.
[52] Karl Heim, *Glaubensgewißheit. Zur Lebensfrage der Religion* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1916).

entirely contingent that in Heim's apologetic, Jesus of Nazareth appears as the one secure point in which everything holds together.[53]

Indeed, any account of why it is valid to give Christ this position would rely upon external grounding, making use of those categories already destroyed by Heim's critique of reason. Heim's deduction "only makes sense for someone who has not stepped outside of substantial unity with Christ […]. But it is precisely this towards which doubt is directed."[54]

Tillich also thinks Heim tries to avoid historical debates by saying the recognition of miracles is dependent upon one's philosophy of history. But Tillich, implicitly echoing Troeltsch's arguments about historical and dogmatic method,[55] says Heim "overlooked that there are methodological ideals which are generally accepted."[56] Thus, unless one completely abandons historiographical principles – something moderns cannot do – doubt becomes insuperable.

Tillich sees Heim's apologetic project as an enduring concern for *redemption* from doubt, and thus to a "rebirth of thinking".[57] As such Christ stands against all of life and culture, and there is great conflict between faith and knowledge: "Heim attempts to avoid the conflict by driving the unbelieving process of knowledge to its self-dissolution and thus to a turn to faith."[58] If Heim

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[53] Tillich's critique here is similar to Otto Ritschl's review of Heim. See Otto Ritschl, 'Rezension zu Karl Heims Glaubensgewißheit. Eine Untersuchung über die Lebensfrage der Religion', *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 24/25 (1917), 440–442.
[54] *EGW* X/1, 213.
[55] Ernst Troeltsch, 'Über historische und dogmatische Methode der Theologie (1900)', in: *Ernst Troeltsch Lesebuch. Ausgewählte Texte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck/UTB, 2003), 2–25.
[56] *EGW* X/1, 214.
[57] *EGW* X/1, 215.
[58] *EGW* X/1, 215.

would admit it is possible to successfully think "outside of a conscious orientation toward Christ … then the absoluteness of his Concrete is [sublated] […]."[59]

But this work of Heim, meticulously pulling out the rug from under reason for the sake of the one concrete absolute, is "perfectionism and asceticism",[60] an intellectual work analogous to ethical works-righteousness, for it is "the last and most genial attempt to overcome doubt".[61]

The doubter who reads Heim's apologetics but still doubts with good conscience will feel tremendous pressure to succumb to "temptations from the part of preachers of the work, of the church and Pietist apologetics"[62] who all promise to relieve his burden. But the doubter must reject such "relief through feelings and moral postulates, through apparent evidences and apparent paradoxes" and keep his "intellectual conscience […] as sharp and unconditioned as Luther's ethical [conscience]."[63] This is a serious criticism: Heim and other apologists are likened to priests selling indulgences to lighten the burden of guilt-consciousness. Instead, like the sinner called to believe he is justified *as* sinner, the doubter is called to a kind of faith: faith "that in this condition of doubt he occupies the only possible position regarding the unconditioned."[64]

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[59] *EGW* X/1, 215.
[60] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[61] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[62] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[63] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[64] *EGW* X/1, 218. Heim only plays a minor role in 1924, as one of the theologians who is too Christocentric and thus not truly attending to the radical doubter, despite his own critique of apologetics. See Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 132–133. The sharp criticism of Heim's project as an intellectual work is missing.

c. Faith as affirmation of the absolute paradox

As a good Lutheran, Tillich says we are saved by faith alone. But if the doubter is to be saved by faith, this doubter's faith "can have none of the contents towards which doubt is directed"[65] and must instead be directed toward "that which is presupposed in every doubt".[66]

The only way out for the doubter is "to affirm, in faith, that doubt does not dissolve standing in the truth."[67] This is the absolute paradox. Every grounding of this affirmation, every attempt to show it is correct, would be subject to doubt and "rob intellectual justification of the power of the paradox. Faith in the unconditionedness of the absolute paradox is just the meaning of faith in the area of knowledge."[68]

Thus "the dialectic of doubt drives to a God above God, to a God of the doubter, yes of the atheist."[69] This concept of the God above God can only mean

> the unconditioned itself [which] is absolute meaning [*Sinn schlechthin*], the expression of the fact there is a meaning at all, the positing of a sphere of meaning. […] Doubt of absolute meaning is not possible, for doubt assumes the affirmation of the sphere of meaning and [affirms] more clearly, the more deeply [doubt] is experienced.[70]

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[65] *EGW* X/1, 218.
[66] *EGW* X/1, 218.
[67] *EGW* X/1, 218.
[68] *EGW* X/1, 218.
[69] *EGW* X/1, 219. This is (I think) just the second time Tillich used this phrase God above God. Adrian Thatcher finds the first reference to *der Gott über Gott* in Tillich's 1915 Habilitationsschrift, in opposition to the supernaturalist *Gott unter Gott.* See Paul Tillich, *Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen, sein dialektischer Charakter und das Prinzip der Identität, dargestellt an der supernaturalistischen Theologie vor Schleiermacher*, Königsberg: H. Madrasch, 1915), 44; Adrian Thatcher, *The Ontology of Paul Tillich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 83.
[70] *EGW* X/1, 219.

However, this concept is not merely some abstract deduction or demonstration that doubt assumes meaning. Rather, justification is carried by "the meaning which is paradoxically revealed to the experiencing I, the meaning which means an unconditioned Yes and an unconditioned No over the doubter at the same time."[71] This grasping of this meaning is "full of faith, living, personal".[72] The Yes and the No are important; "the experience of the unconditioned necessarily has paradox-character and, which is the same thing, necessarily has faith-character; for faith is affirmation of the absolute paradox."[73]

Tillich believes one should think of the unconditioned as meaning (*Sinn*) and not something that exists (*Seiendes*). Furthermore, in contrast to the first volume of his American systematics, where the language of being plays a large role, here in 1919 the absolute paradox is not expressed as absolute being (*absolut Seiendes*), absolute value, or absolute I, since all these stand under doubt.[74] Rather, all that is (*alles Seiende*) carries the meaning: absolute reality, absolute value and absolute I, in a paradox way.[75] To carry meaning in a paradox way means every being, value and I is both affirmed and negated, revealing "absolute meaning [*Sinn schlechthin*], the unconditioned, the absolute paradox."[76]

The trust of the Reformers, *fiducia*, personal faith directed to a personal God may therefore seem entirely misplaced. But this is not the case, for such an

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[71] *EGW* X/1, 219. In 1924, the paradoxical revelation of meaning from 1919 becomes the "breakthrough of unconditioned certainty", the breakthrough of the "living truth", the breakthrough of "divine foundational revelation", the revelation of "the God of the godless, the truth of the truthless, the fullness of meaning of those emptied of meaning." Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 129–130.
[72] *EGW* X/1, 219.
[73] *EGW* X/1, 219–220.
[74] See *EGW* X/1, 220.
[75] *EGW* X/1, 220.
[76] *EGW* X/1, 220.

absolute experience of meaning (*absoluten Sinnerlebnis*) takes *for consciousness* the characteristics of absolute being, value and I; consciousness "hypostasises the unconditioned in these three forms."[77] The abstract concept of meaning has to find intuitive (*anschauliche*) fulfilment "in the unmediated religious process of the believing affirmation of the absolute paradox".[78] This means for consciousness, the character of absoluteness which all beings receive through the paradox becomes "participation in an absolute being [*absoluten Seienden*]".[79] Analogously, values become contained in absolute value and the I becomes a fellowship with an absolute I. *For this reason* (i.e., the transformation of the quality of unconditionedness into absolute being, value and I *for consciousness*), "surrender to the absolute paradox, to meaning itself, receives a quality of trust which presumes some kind of personification of meaning."[80]

We saw how in part 2, doubt in God in an objectified (*gegenständlichen*) sense does not entail doubt in God in the non-objectified (*urständlichen*) sense.[81] Now in part 3, Tillich explains the connection between concepts of God such as absolute being, value and I (concepts which in fact "hover between intuition and concept"[82]), and the unconditioned. The object of faith is the unconditioned, but the unconditioned "takes the form of being, without ever being allowed to be thought of as being, takes the form of person, without ever being allowed to be thought of as person."[83] Thus in the justification of the doubter, faith, *fiducia*, means "[t]o give oneself to the world-meaning [*Weltensinn*] in its whole paradox

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[77] *EGW* X/1, 221.
[78] *EGW* X/1, 221.
[79] *EGW* X/1, 221.
[80] *EGW* X/1, 221.
[81] See *EGW* X/1, 203.
[82] *EGW* X/1, 221.
[83] *EGW* X/1, 221.

depth, to be destroyed and lifted up, negated and affirmed by it along with the whole world of being and values […].[84] Objectifications are therefore merely revelations of the "liveliness and concreteness of the absolute paradox."[85]

iii. Part three: The absolute paradox as principle of theology and culture

The final main section of the essay draws out how the application of justification to the intellectual sphere is relevant to theology and fulfils Tillich's dream of the unity of religious and cultural life.[86] First, Tillich emphasises how theoretical attention to doubt applies to a real practical problem which has parallels with the situation of the sinner in traditional Lutheran theology: sin causes despair of one's own life's value; doubt causes "despair of meaning of life at all."[87] Second, the sense of tragic fate [*Verhängnis*] which accompanies the doctrine of sin is increased by ethical doubt (which questions the conscience schooled in authoritative sources of morality) and is significant for the development of the ethical personality. The rationale of these two points is that theology cannot carry on as if doubt were not an issue.

Third, Tillich shows the connection between the absolute paradox and religious symbols (which he here calls "conditioned representation"). Sanctification of *thought* after radical doubt does not mean the complete overcoming of doubt. But "the absolute paradox cannot enter consciousness

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[84] *EGW* X/1, 221. The mention of nontheistic relation to a meaning of the *world* suggests to me a deep relation to Schleiermacher's early reference to the intuition of the *Universum*. Like Schleiermacher's later, more theological changes to his terminology, Tillich's public lecture and publication from 1924 moves from a meaning of the world to a "ground of meaning" which is "presence of God before knowledge of God". Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 129–130.
[85] *EGW* X/1, 221.
[86] It lays some foundations of what later became Part IV in 1924 (The consequences of the justification of the doubter).
[87] *EGW* X/1, 223.

otherwise than through definite representations, movements of will and feeling."[88] Every concept, including religious concepts, "means something, aims towards something",[89] and so through conditioned representation the unconditioned is meant.[90] Therefore through grasping the absolute paradox, a starting point appears "upon which cultural contents can crystallise".[91] Here we have something which corresponds broadly to Tillich's later theory of symbols and certainly to the 1924 material where Tillich talks of intellectual sanctification where contents and 'the names' may be the fruit of absolute faith.[92] Whether one can have some kind of rested conviction or theological system depends upon the extent to which "the absolute paradox resonates through the system in a living way, animating and carrying the whole."[93]

In contrast, the demand that an intellectual system be entirely certain is a way of making sanctification a condition of justification. The person who claims to have no doubt and have the whole truth is like the person who says he is without sin. Yet for the believer doubt and guilt are (in a sense) cancelled such that, by faith (affirmation of the absolute paradox), the believer has no doubt or sin. Since "the church cannot sustain intellectual perfectionism any more than the individual",[94] there is no hubristic *prima facie* claim of the absoluteness of Christianity. But the church *moves towards* absoluteness the more the absolute paradox is affirmed in its life.

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[88] *EGW* X/1, 225.
[89] *EGW* X/1, 225.
[90] Tillich is using the phenomenological term '*Meinen*', probably according to Husserl.
[91] *EGW* X/1, 225.
[92] See Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 130.135.
[93] *EGW* X/1, 225.
[94] *EGW* X/1, 226.

Yet only through the concrete can the unconditioned be grasped. The concrete thing must be both affirmed and negated by the unconditioned. "Christians intuit this double in Christ, [for] in him the church is given the concrete fulfilment of the absolute paradox and yet he stands as [something] relative, an object under doubt."[95] Attention is directed to Christ but beyond and through him to the absolute itself. Therefore, the struggle to articulate the absoluteness of Christ in church history is "the fight for the possibility of purely intuiting the absolute paradox in Christ, with its full Yes and No also over him."[96] This struggle has no guaranteed outcome, though one can have a conviction about its end. But there can be assured faith in every moment where there is a believing affirmation of the absolute through the concrete.[97]

The difference between Heim's concrete absolute and this affirmation of the absolute through the concrete is important to note. As Erdmann Sturm comments, for Heim, faith is directed toward Christ "as the absolute concrete", whereas for Tillich faith is directed toward the absolute *through* the concrete.[98]

A systematic theology issuing from these concerns will have as its material that which emerges from the Spirit of Christ. "The norm, the sustaining ground and the leading principle of this work is the absolute paradox as it is affirmed in believing certainty and recognised in creative conviction. All this is to happen in

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[95] *EGW* X/1, 227.
[96] *EGW* X/1, 227.
[97] In 1924, this exposure of Christ to relativity and history means that Protestantism should talk of Christ such that "behind [him] the powerful sound of foundational revelation in all religions and cultures is audible." Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 136.
[98] See Erdmann Sturm, 'Das absolute Paradox als Prinzip der Theologie und Kultur in Paul Tillichs „Rechtfertigung und Zweifel" von 1919', in: Gert Hummel (ed), *The theological paradox: interdisciplinary reflections on the centre of Paul Tillich's thought: proceedings of the V. International Paul Tillich Symposium held in Franfurt/Main 1994.* TBT 74 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), 32–45; here: 43.

the consciousness of not only standing under the Yes but also under the No of the unconditioned."[99] Then the demand formulated at the outset of the essay, to find a theological principle which carries subjectivity in itself, has been met.

The consequences of such an understanding for theology are that it is released from any authoritative binding or absolute medium of revelation and opened up for "every kind of creative spirit to stream in."[100] Thus the opposition of religion and culture is overcome because both stand together "on the shared ground of believing affirmation of the absolute paradox"[101] from which can grow (conditioned, yet not contentless) conviction. Everything is profane (grounded autonomously) and everything is religious (stands under the absolute paradox). Thus, the theology of the absolute paradox overcomes the dichotomy and creates the unity of the cultural and the religious to be explored in a theology of culture.[102]

3. Conclusion

We have seen the complexity of the framework in which Tillich addresses the issue of justification and doubt. In 1919, the religious dialectic of doubt is explored not only to attend to a perceived pastoral problem but enlisted in the service of a unifying theological principle which is in the position to stop religion and culture drifting apart, and there are long excursions on apologetics and

[99] *EGW* X/1, 227–228.
[100] *EGW* X/1, 228.
[101] *EGW* X/1, 228.
[102] See *EGW* X/1, 228. Tillich refers here explicitly to his essay on the theology of culture from the same year.

certainty. Furthermore, in 1919 Tillich uses Schelling's terminology, refers to Fichte, and contrasts his position with Karl Holl and Karl Heim.

Having presented the content of Tillich's 1919 draft, the following chapters will ask the question how Tillich developed his position on the justification of the doubter before and during the war. In these chapters we will understand more about the various influences upon Tillich and his interlocutors. I will refer back to this draft on many occasions, often citing key passages again.

Yet despite the complexity of form, the core message of Tillich's justification of the doubter rests on his simple analogy between the predicament of the sinner and the predicament of the doubter. Just as the sinner stands condemned and despairs of her ability to be declared righteous in God's sight, so the doubter stands condemned with despair at her inability to believe properly, to have the truth. Or: if the sinner begins legalistic asceticism, subduing guilt-consciousness, and thus also her ethical conscience, then – analogously – the doubter can also attempt legalistic "intellectual-ascetic self-mutilation"[103] subduing truth-consciousness, and thus intellectual conscience. The good news for the despairing doubter is thus analogous to the good news for the despairing sinner: If the sinner is justified by faith, not by ethical works, then the doubter is justified, not by intellectual works, like the work of proof or the work of trying to believe.

Just as Luther could say the passive righteousness gifted to the sinner by grace through faith was a firm and sure comfort to the conscience, so Tillich could say that justification gifted to the doubter is a great consolation. Yet the doubter's

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[103] *EGW* X/1, 203.

faith is not a faith in objectifications but the affirmation "that doubt does not dissolve standing in the truth."[104] We saw in the opening chapter that Tillich wrote of the discovery of the justification of the doubter as a great relief. The question of how and when this discovery and relief are discernible in Tillich's early theological development will concern for all the following chapters, beginning with his student days.

[104] *EGW* X/1, 218.

Chapter 3

Defence, Doubt, and Gracelessness (1904–09)

1. Introduction

Tillich moved to Berlin in 1901 when his father became pastor of a large city church. Completing his secondary education in 1904, Tillich was philosophically interested, apparently having read Kant while still at school. A year before starting university, his mother had died of cancer. Whether this was a factor or not, Tillich never strayed far from his family in his student years, living at home for four of the nine semesters, and continuing to join them for long summer retreats to the sea.

His first Winter semester (1904/05) was spent at home in Berlin and was followed by a sickly summer semester in Tübingen (1905), before Tillich moved to the main stage of his studies in Halle (Winter semester 1905/06 – Summer semester 1907). His final three semesters were spent back home in Berlin, preparing papers and revising for his final exams, which took place in February 1909.

Characterising these years as close to home is also figuratively true. The choice of Halle was a decision to seek out positive theology and professors with theological ancestors in the German Awakening movement, some of whom were personal friends of Tillich's father. Tillich's professor Lütgert even shared holidays with the Tillich family on the Baltic Sea coast.[1]

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[1] See *EGW* V, 42.

Furthermore, he enrolled in his father's old student society *Wingolf*, becoming part of a nationwide network of Christian student groups where a particularly large number of theology students found their social and spiritual home.[2] His father, like other prominent alumni including Halle professors, was involved in the society's affairs in a way unimaginable to any contemporary student society. The close involvement of Tillich's father is exhibited in the extant correspondence between the two.

In this chapter, I explore Tillich's student experience and theological development as a student. I am specifically interested in the notion of the justification of the doubter, and themes which appear related to it. In what follows, I prepare my account of this period of Tillich's life by sketching two backgrounds.

First, I describe Tillich's autobiographical account of his theological development while an undergraduate, gleaned from various autobiographical writings written between 1936 and 1960. I concentrate on five themes most relevant for understanding Tillich's position on justification and doubt: his relationship with his father, his view of liberal theology, the influence of his teacher Kähler, his account of confessional controversies in Wingolf, and his beliefs about philosophy. Next, to situate Tillich, I briefly sketch the conflict between liberal and conservative parties in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century church-political controversies, showing the role Tillich's own father played in debates.

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[2] See Georg Neugebauer, 'Δι' ἐνὸς πάντα – Tillich im Wingolf', *IJTF* 11 (2016), 149–174.

Finally, against these two backgrounds, I portray Tillich's theological development as a student, drawing on archival material. Important and fascinating differences emerge between Tillich's later autobiographical narrative and his earliest writings. I can therefore construct a more accurate narrative of Tillich's development referring to the relationship between Tillich and his father, Tillich's journey from opposition to appreciation of liberal theology, and the role of historical criticism and philosophical challenges. The focus in this survey is the development of what would become the justification of the doubter.

I show there is greater contrast between Kähler and Tillich than Tillich suggests in autobiographical writings. Against Tillich's claim that Kähler's emphasis on justification was vital for Tillich's early development, evidence from Halle and Berlin Wingolf 1905–1909 shows no emphasis on justification in Tillich's early pastoral approach and student writings. Justification by faith can only be heard in an abstract, philosophical key. Tillich was more concerned with questions of religious epistemology and assurance, answering them in ways quite different from Kähler.

2. Tillich on Tillich: the autobiographical writings

At the beginning of his new life in America, Tillich introduces himself to the public with an autobiographical essay, 'On the Boundary' (1936).[3] An

[3] Paul Tillich, 'On the Boundary,' in *The Interpretation of History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 1–73. The 1936 account was posthumously published in a stand-alone edition, *On the Boundary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), newly translated and with thoroughgoing stylistic revisions. I will cite the more widely accessible 1966 version.

autobiographical preface introduced the collection of essays *The Protestant Era* (1948),[4] and Tillich was asked to contribute another account to a multi-author edited volume in 1952.[5] The narrative of these three essays is augmented by Tillich's letter describing Halle written to Thomas Mann in 1943,[6] and recollections about his student friend Hermann Schafft from 1960.[7] Five relevant themes emerge.

i. Father and son

A central conflict of Tillich's early life is presented as an inner fight with the impressive authority of his father:

> I was able to reach intellectual and moral autonomy only after a severe struggle. My father's authority, which was both personal and intellectual and which, because of his position in the church, I identified with the religious authority of revelation, made every attempt at autonomous thinking an act of religious daring and connected criticism of authority with a sense of guilt.[8]

In order to overcome his father's authority, he says he made use of his father's principles, including the belief there could be "no conflict between a true philosophy and revealed truth".[9] Thus in long discussions with his father "the break-through occurred. From an independent philosophical position a

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[4] Paul Tillich, 'Author's Preface,' in *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), xxiii–xlv.
[5] Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections,' in C.W. Kegley and R.W. Bretall (eds.) *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: MacMillan, 1952), 3–21. The first chapter of *My Search for Absolutes* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967) is a version of this essay.
[6] Tillich to Thomas Mann. 23rd May 1943, *GW* XIII, 22–27. Material from this letter provided detail for Mann's novel *Dr. Faustus*. Christoph Schwöbel shows how Mann took passages from Tillich's letter almost verbatim as well as embellishing with poetic licence. See Christoph Schwöbel, 'Thomas Mann, Paul Tillich und Halle', in *Tillich-Studien* 20, 19–36.
[7] Tillich, 'Erinnerungen an den Freund Hermann Schafft' in *GW* XIII, 27–33. For more on Schafft, see Lukas Möller, *Hermann Schafft – pädagogisches Handeln und religiöse Haltung. Eine biografische Annäherung* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2013).
[8] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 36–37. In 1948 Tillich remembers the tendency of the Lutheran preaching of his childhood (i.e., including his father's preaching) to be overly moralistic and "overburden the personal centre and to make the relation to God dependent on continuous, conscious decisions and experiences"; Tillich, 'Author's Preface', xxix. In 1952 he writes: "My father was a conscientious, very dignified, completely convinced and, in the presence of doubt, angry supporter of the conservative Lutheran point of view"; Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', 8.
[9] Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', 8.

state of independence spread out into all directions, theoretically first, practically later."[10] This struggle against "heteronomy" eventually put political and theological distance between Tillich and his father, with Tillich moving toward the left politically by 1912,[11] and, *earlier* than that, beginning to "side with liberal theology".[12]

ii. Liberal theology

The remark in 1936 about siding with liberal theology before 1912 contradicts other statements:

> My Christology and dogmatics were informed by the interpretation of Christ's crucifixion as the event in history through which the divine judgment against the world becomes concrete and manifest. […] it was difficult and even impossible for me to reconcile my thinking with liberal dogmatics, which replaces the crucified Christ with the historical Jesus and dissolves the paradox of justification into moral categories.[13]

This juxtaposition between siding with liberal theology and a continuing "negative attitude toward liberal dogmatics"[14] is puzzling. A further piece of the puzzle is Tillich's appreciation for liberal theology's historical-critical achievements, an issue on which he says he "parted company with the Halle theologians":[15]

> When I read the work of Ernst Troeltsch I finally shed the last remnants of my interest in the theology of mediation and its apologetics and turned to church history and the problem of historical criticism. The documentary

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[10] Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', 8.
[11] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 40. This claim can only apply to the Reichstag elections of 1912, the first time Tillich was old enough to vote. In chapter 7 we will see some evidence of this in Moabit sermons where he sympathises with the concerns of social democrats. He likely voted for the left-liberal *Fortschrittliche Volkspartei* (FVP) in 1912; contemporaries remember him siding with Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919) in late 1918. See Günther Dehn, *Die alten Zeit, die vorigen Jahre* (Munich: Kaiser, 1964), 212.
[12] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 40.
[13] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 48–49.
[14] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 49.
[15] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 49.

> proof of this change of interest is a set of propositions which I presented to a group of theological friends in 1911.[16]

He is referring to the 128 theses on certainty and the historical Jesus presented in Kassel, September 1911.[17] But it is not clear when he read Troeltsch; his narrative is concerned with gesturing toward his position in 1911, not tracing development.

Another deficit of liberal theology is it lacks "insight into the 'demonic' character of existence", "true understanding of human nature and the tragedy of existence", and "depth and paradox".[18] Tillich says he and his friend Hermann Schafft were struck by the paradoxes of Christian life as emphasised by Kähler, whose lectures, *ad lib* excurses and speeches at Wingolf evenings "decided our theological fundament: the Protestant principle of *sola gratia, sola fide* […] against all attempts […] to found the faith in morality or historical science."[19] Schafft had introduced the reading of Kierkegaard to Wingolf. Tillich and his peers discovered herein "a great confirmation of the great paradox we had learned through Kähler from Paul and Luther."[20]

Tillich has various aspects of liberal theology in mind. He sides with liberal theology against his father's confessional heteronomy, and against the dogmatic attempt to ignore historical criticism. But he sides with traditional theology, in particular the doctrine of justification, against what he perceives as the moralism of liberal theology, and a lack of paradox and psychological insight.

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[16] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 49–50.
[17] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus', in *MW/HW* VI, 21–38.
[18] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 24.
[19] Tillich, 'Erinnerungen an Schafft', 28.
[20] Tillich, 'Erinnerungen an Schafft', 29. See Tillich to Thomas Mann, 24.

iii. Kähler and justification by faith

Martin Kähler (1835–1912) was Professor for Systematic Theology and New Testament in Halle. He was strongly influenced by Friedrich August Tholuck (1799–1877), a prominent theologian of the German Awakening. Kähler emphasised the centrality of the doctrine of justification by faith and famously rejected the significance of historical study of Jesus for the life of faith, which should be based on the biblical Christ.[21]

Tillich said in 1936 he was "indebted" to Kähler "for the insight he gave me into the all-embracing character of the Pauline-Lutheran idea of justification."[22] In 1948, this is framed as the help Kähler provided in helping Tillich sense the power of the "Protestant principle" and inspiring innovations on the theme of justification:

> Under his influence a group of advanced students and younger professors developed the new understanding of the Protestant principle in different ways. The step I myself made in these years was the insight that the principle of justification through faith refers not only to the religious-ethical but also to the religious-intellectual life. Not only he who is in sin but also he who is in doubt is justified through faith.[23]

Tillich characterises the justification of the doubter as *his own* development of Kähler's teaching on justification, which attempted "to reconcile the doctrine of justification with radical historical criticism. […] I applied the doctrine of justification to the sphere of human thought."[24]

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[21] See Johannes Wirsching, *Gott in der Geschichte. Studien zur theologiegeschichtlichen Stellung und systematischen Grundlegung der Theologie Martin Kählers* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963).
[22] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 48.
[23] Tillich, 'Author's Preface', xxix.
[24] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 50–51. Hermann Schafft was also part of this development. See Tillich, 'Erinnerungen an Schafft', 29.

In his letter to Thomas Mann in 1943, Tillich says Kähler, alongside his emphasis on justification by faith, gave his students "the insight that our thought is also broken and needs "justification" – and therefore that dogmatism is the intellectual form of pharisaism."[25] The Paucks' account oversimplifies Tillich's own witness, crediting Kähler himself with the notion of the justification of the doubter:

> It was from Kähler that Tillich gained the insight that man is justified by grace through faith, not only as a sinner but even as a doubter. The discovery of this idea brought him immense relief.[26]

iv. Confessional controversy in Wingolf

Time in Wingolf was "most happy but also a most important experience".[27] Here he found "friendship, spiritual exchange […] education, joy of living, seriousness about the problems of […] Christian communal life".[28] Tillich is more specific about his time as leader of the Halle Wingolf chapter (Sommersemester 1907). In this period, tensions arose between "liberal ideas in theory and practice" and "Christian principles" which led to practical policy problems and thorough discussion at the level of the national Wingolf union.[29] In this period he says he learned to appreciate the value of creeds:

> If a community gives general recognition to a confessional foundation whose meaning transcends subjective belief or doubt, it will hold together even while allowing room for tendencies toward doubt, criticism, and uncertainty.[30]

He says his friend Schafft's "practical-pastoral and moderate-church attitude […] differentiated itself from my own tendency to theologically pointed

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[25] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 24.
[26] Pauck and Pauck, *Paul Tillich. His Life and Thought*, 19.
[27] Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', 11.
[28] Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', 11–12.
[29] Tillich, 'On the Boundary' (1936), 18.
[30] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 31–32.

formulations."[31] However Tillich, talking about the different groups within Wingolf, distinguishes himself from those who exhibit "spiritless theological orthodoxy".

v. The relation between theology and philosophy

Another aspect of Tillich's vocal opposition to liberal theology in his autobiography is also specifically a rejection of what he calls Ritschlian anti-metaphysical "escape-theology", which does not attack naturalism but retreats to the apparently safe island of the ethical personality. Tillich says that as a student in Halle, he demanded a "theology of attack" with metaphysics and interpretation of history.[32]

Tillich describes three theological groups in conflict in Germany, the conservative mediating theologians like Kähler, the all-too-bourgeois Ritschlian school of belief in ethical progress and a group who "wanted to renew classical German philosophy",[33] to which Tillich belonged. The conservative theologians and the philosophers, claims Tillich, were passionately attentive to culture. Tillich does not characterise himself as standing with the conservative Halle theologians.

Tillich says his "fundamental theological problem arose in applying the relation of the absolute, which is implied in the idea of God, to the relativity of human religion".[34] He does not say how he encountered this philosophical concern as a student, other than briefly referring to Fritz Medicus (1876–1956)

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[31] Tillich, 'Erinnerungen an Schafft', 29.
[32] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 25.
[33] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 25. Tillich's criticism of Ritschl is, like Kähler's, polemic.
[34] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 40.

as his teacher in philosophy and expert on Fichte, and the tale of discovering Schelling's works in a bookshop.[35]

Surveying autobiographical accounts, it is striking (particularly in light of what we will see later in this chapter) that Tillich describes his student experience as a great time of learning. Tillich is pictured freeing himself from the overbearing authority of his father (heteronomy) using the principle that all truth is God's truth. He sides with liberal theology in this respect, also in his affirmation of historical criticism, while also seeing great deficits in the liberal tradition.

The Tillich of the autobiography is indebted to Kähler for insight into the all-pervading nature of the doctrine of justification, and for recognising that dogmatism is pharisaic. Furthermore, his time in Wingolf, apart from his personal development, is the occasion for learning about the value of creeds for groups while respecting the individual's conscience (though, in his recollection of Schafft, he remembers Schafft as more moderate). Finally, he presents himself neither with the conservative Halle mediating theologians, nor with the Ritschlians, but as belonging to a group who "wanted to renew classical German philosophy".[36]

By characterising his student days as times of learning, Tillich emphasises positions at which he later arrived, and not positions he held as a student. There is no reason to claim Tillich intends to deceive his readers, for it is probably a feature of any autobiography (or biography, for that matter) that teleology is at play. But this rhetorical feature means the reader of Tillich's later

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[35] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 47.
[36] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 25.

autobiographical writings may be prone to attribute Tillich's later positions to young Tillich, and not grasp the character of student Tillich's theology. As we will see in section 4 below, this is precisely the effect of the autobiographical accounts.

3. Johannes Tillich and the Prussian church

The earliest autobiographical account was published in 1936. Tillich had by then moved to America and lived through the Weimarer Republic. Tillich's Prussian church of the Wilhelmine era must have seemed long past. It is surely a lost era for many theologians nowadays, especially when the decades before the First World War are reduced in our church-historical imagination to a theologically sponsored highway to hell.

Therefore, I now offer a short sketch of one key issue in church-political debates of the era, vital for understanding young Tillich: the fight between liberal and positive theologians, expressed in controversies concerning the appointment of professors (*Professorenfrage)*, the role of the creeds (*Apostolikumsstreit)*, and the doctrine of pastors (*Lehrprozesse*).[37]

Positive and liberal theologians had long had their differences. The context of debates at the end of the 19th Century, a context which perhaps led to increased sharpness, was Prussian church reform which had led to increased

[37] For an excellent study of the various phases of controversy, see Julia Winnebeck, *Apostolikumsstreitigkeiten. Diskussionen um Liturgie, Lehre und Kirchenverfassung in der preußischen Landeskirche 1871–1914* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016).

centralisation, despite the creation of district and provincial synods.[38] Like these local organs, the general synod was dominated by positive pastors. But in the end the *Evangelische Oberkirchenrat* (*EOK*), which reported to the Kaiser Wilhelm II, had overruled the synods on sensitive issues like the appointment of theology professors through his *Kultusministerium* (we might nowadays say ministry of education and religious affairs).

The defining case in the *Professorenfrage* was the 1888 appointment of Adolf von Harnack in Berlin. In Harnack's case, the Kaiser, on the advice of liberal professors, vetoed the opinion of both the general synod and the *EOK*. Thus, when Harnack wrote an article in the liberal church newspaper *Die Christliche Welt* in 1892, saying one could consider altering the apostle's creed by removing the virgin birth, he "ignited one of the sharpest church debates in German Protestantism",[39] the *Apostolikumsstreit*.

The creation of an extra chair for Adolf Schlatter in Berlin was an attempt to quiet the backlash.[40] But positive Christians were determined, if they could not stop liberal professors, to at least root out the most liberal pastors, who were answerable to local consistories. Thus *Lehrprozesse* (trials determining doctrinal soundness) were also regular source of controversy in the early twentieth century.

Therefore, for young students of theology like Tillich, doubt of church doctrine had church-political consequence. Clearly, these debates are of significance for understanding Paul Tillich's early thought about doubt. Even

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[38] See Oliver Janz, *Bürger besonderer Art: Evangelische Pfarrer in Preußen 1850–1914*. Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin 87 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1994), 16–28.34–37.
[39] Janz, *Bürger besonderer Art*, 166–167.
[40] See Janz, *Bürger besonderer Art*, 168.

more significance must be given to them however, when we understand just how heavily his father was embroiled in defending the positive cause.

Geheim Konsistorialrat Dr. Johannes Tillich (1857–1937) was a fervent orator and defender of the conservative theological and political viewpoint. His profile and contributions were deemed significant enough for some sermons, lectures and reports to be published in pamphlets for local distribution.[41] Having started as a country pastor, he soon began to take on leadership roles, give rousing messages at festivals and synodal meetings (while Tillich was still a student), and eventually rose through the church ranks to take a leading role in the church government from 1909, thus being established in a milieu of church elites.[42] He was also intellectually gifted, becoming an examiner for the church exams in philosophy. It is unsurprising young Paul Tillich was in awe of his father.

Johannes was a 'positive' Christian, strongly influenced in his studies by J. T. Beck's "solid biblicism united with a good dose of Würtemberg Pietism", in Tübingen.[43] He was a Wingolf member and heavily involved in internal battles

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[41] These materials from Johannes Tillich's *Nachlaß* are in the Marburg Paul Tillich Archive. To my knowledge, previous Tillich scholarship has not even mentioned their existence, let alone taken note of their content.

[42] Johannes Tillich was ordained 1883 in the *Evangelische Landeskirche der älteren Provinzen Preußens* and served as minister until his retirement in 1918. After working as *Pfarrer* in the village of Paul Tillich's birth, Starzeddel 1885–1891, he was promoted first to *Superintendent* of a *Kirchenkreis* (deanery) in Schönfließ/Neumark 1891–1899, and then to the more prestigious position as *Pfarrer* of the Berlin *Bethlehemsgemeinde* 1900–1918. Once in Berlin, he rose to a high rank within the leadership structures of the church, being named *Konsistorialrat* in 1909 and *Geheimer Konsistorialrat* in 1915. After retirement in 1918 he continued to be active in the *Konsistorium* until 1927. In 1925 he was awarded an honorary doctorate in theology for his services to the church. See Johannes' unpublished handwritten autobiography *Aus meinem Leben*, (PTAM Box 63B; unfortunately, a large section of this ruled booklet, from the point of his wife's death in 1903, has been inexplicably excised. A typed transcript of the booklet's contents is in Box 63A). See also the obituary in *Der Elternfreund*, 12. Jahrgang, Nr. 10, October 1937; *PTAM* Box 063A.

[43] Johannes Tillich, *Aus meinem Leben* [typed transcript], 25; *PTAM* Box 063A.

over principles, which led him to be more convinced of the positive position.[44] In the Berlin *Domkandidatenstift* (an elite practical training institution fulfilling some functions of a modern curacy), he became a protégé of the director, Rudolf Kögel (1829–1896),[45] who he says helped him shed the narrow biblicism of Beck and small-minded aspects of Pietism.[46] However there is no doubt he was Pietist in his style of spirituality,[47] and also in its forms, emphasising the importance of family devotionals, praising the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* for their publishing efforts and praxis in this regard.[48]

As a positive Christian, Johannes saw himself and his church standing in the defensive in the wake of attacks on Christianity and a massive decline in Christian reverence among the population.[49] For a period he regularly contributed a church-political review for the conservative, staunchly monarchist *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (NPZ).[50] But the defensive stance was not just against the culture but particularly against the worldly infiltration of the church through

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[44] Johannes Tillich, *Aus meinem Leben,* 27.

[45] Kögel was *Hofprediger* and known as the "preacher to princes and the prince among preachers"; Dehn, *Die alte Zeit*, 108). With Adolf Stöcker he founded the Positive Union in 1876. He later became the Ephorus (director) of the *Domkandidatenstift* in Berlin. The Positive Union was formed after a split of the centre ground church party, *Evangelische Vereinigung*. Members included Cremer, Kähler, Lütgert and Schlatter. See Günther Wolf, *Rudolf Kögels Kirchenpolitik und sein Einfluss auf den Kulturkampf* (Diss. Universität Bonn, 1968).

[46] Johannes Tillich *Aus meinem Leben,* 32.

[47] For example see Johannes Tillich, Antrittspredigtüber Joh. 15.16. Gehalten am 18. November 1900, 4; PTAM Box 063B.

[48] Johannes Tillich, *Die häusliche Erbauung. Referat erstattet der Kreissynode Friedrichswerder I in Berlin am 26. Mai 1903* (Berlin: J.F. Starcke, 1903), 7; *PTAM* Box 063B. He was also involved in the Eisenach conferences where Pietists in the Lutheran church joined with representatives of the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*.

[49] Johannes Tillich, *Die häusliche Erbauung*, 6.

[50] The *Neue Preußische Zeitung* was founded as the unofficial newspaper of the Prussian Conservative Party in 1848, and was usually referred to as the *Kreuzzeitung* because of the imposing iron cross on the title page. Dagmar Bussiek describes the emergence of the conservative mileau which founded both party and newspaper in *"Mit Gott für König und Vaterland!": Die Neue Preußische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung) 1848–1892* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2002). In the *Nachlaß* of Johannes Tillich, alongside the various printed sermons bearing his name are a collection of cuttings of newspaper articles from 1907–1908 (see PTAM Box 063B). Tracing authors of articles in the NPZ is often impossible because of the tradition of anonymity and the lost archive, see Bussiek, *Neue Preußische Zeitung,* 14; 65–67; 200n872. There seems nevertheless no good reason to doubt his authorship if these cuttings are in the *Nachlaß*.

liberal theology. The synod meetings where he spoke had been dominated by attempts to secure more 'positive' influence in universities through pushing for the appointment of conservative professors and attempts to rid the church of pastors who preached and taught the most liberal theology through procedures of church discipline.[51]

Johannes' strategy – the strategy of the synods dominated by positive pastors – was to insist on the timeless validity of the church's confessions of faith and insist liberal contradiction was tantamount to stepping outside of the bounds of the church. Church discipline and defrocking of liberal pastors was therefore merely a procedural formality carried out for the sake of clarity and order.[52] The provincial synod also voted to publish statements including formulations designed to exclude liberals. The key formulation brought forward by Johannes at the Brandenburg Provincial Synod in 1906 was Christological: "[O]ur churches are built on the eternal foundation who is Jesus Christ, God's only begotten son, our one mediator and saviour."[53]

Paul Tillich's father was at the centre of power struggles within the Prussian church and was determined liberal theology should be beaten back. This all sets the scene for understand the seriousness of doctrinal doubt in Tillich's positive milieu, and thus the implications of doubt for the student Paul Tillich.

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[51] For his fighting talk, see Johannes Tillich, Predigt bei dem Eröffnungsgottesdienst der elften ordentlichen Brandenburgischen Provinzialsynode, gehalten am 18. Sonntag n. Tr., den 22. Oktober 1905, in der Domkirche zu Berlin. For arguments for discipline against false teaching see Johannes Tillich, Rede auf der Provinzialsynode 1906 [no title; pencil: "1906"; probably proceedings of the 1906 Provinzialsynode], PTAM Box 063 B.

[52] See N.N. [Johannes Tillich], *NPZ* 106 4th March 1907 Abend-Ausgabe; *PTAM* Box 063B.

[53] Johannes Tillich, Rede auf der Provinzialsynode 1906, PTAM Box 063 B.

4. Tillich from the archives

With the autobiographical narrative and church-political background to hand, we are now able to better understand and compare the witness of the archival sources. We find a manifold witness of letters[54] and friends' recollections,[55] painting a portrait of Tillich's character, interests and concerns. There are also two surviving student essays, *Fichtes Religionsphilosophie in ihrem Verhältnis zum Johannesevangelium* (1906)[56] and *Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz zwischen monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion?* (1908) which is referred to as the *Monismusschrift*.[57] Furthermore, there are pieces of Wingolf journalism[58] and two sermons.[59]

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[54] The Paucks' biography cites various letters, referring to a private collection or the Harvard archive. See *Paul Tillich. His Life and Thought*, 22. Heavily edited excerpts of letters are in *EGW* V (edited by Renate Albrecht and Margot Hahl). Some longer translated excerpts of letters appear in a posthumous publication from Wilhelm Pauck. See Wilhelm Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir of the Nineteenth Century' in: Wilhelm Pauck, *From Luther to Tillich. The Reformers and their Heirs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 152–209. Subsequent searches have not discovered the whereabouts of most originals. See Erdmann Sturm, 'Über einige vermisste Briefe und Vorträge des jungen Tillich', *IJTF* 11 (2016), 175–180. Princeton librarian Kenneth Henke kindly sighted some boxes in Marion and Wilhelm Pauck's papers, but found nothing. We must rely on longer excerpts in Pauck's essay, and shorter excerpts in *EGW* V. This sorry state of affairs is the result of various Tillich researchers (the Paucks and Renate Albrecht) hoarding letters in their private collections, instead of depositing them in the archives. See Peter H. John, 'Tillich: The Words I Recorded, the Man I Knew', *BNAPTS* 29/1 (Winter 2003), 4–11; here: 5. I believe Albrecht's practice had hagiographic motives.

[55] See *EGW* V (more 'private' letters) and *EGW* VI (more 'professional' and theological letters).

[56] Paul Tillich, 'Fichtes Religionsphilosophie in ihren Verhältnis zum Johannesevangelium (1906)', in *EGW* IX, 1–19.

[57] Paul Tillich, 'Welche Bedeutung hat der Gegensatz zwischen monistischer und dualistischer Weltanschauung für die christliche Religion? (1908)', in *EGW* IX, 20–93 (*Urfassung*) and *EGW* IX, 94–153 (*Schönschrift*). The former is a handwritten draft; the latter is an edited and shortened edition with neatly presented handwriting, with comments from his lecturer Fritz Medicus and friend Hermann Schafft. I always refer to the *Schönschrift* version.

[58] Copies of a handful of originals are in *PTAM*, Box 005A. Seldom excerpts are presented in *EGW* V. While Tillich was a student, it appeared twice monthly!

[59] The examination sermon, 'Examenspredigt über 1. Kor. 3, 21–23' in *EGW* X.1, 1–8, and another sermon preached to his Wingolf society, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung ist Christusbegeisterung', *EGW* VII, 19–23. The latter was held just after his exams, but still belongs to his student days.

Thus we now begin to read Tillich (from the archives) against Tillich (in the autobiographies). Not in order to impugn his autobiographical motives, but understand how far he had to travel, theologically, to develop the notion of the justification of the doubter.

i. Father and son against liberal theology

While Tillich's father was campaigning in local synods, student Tillich had analogous concerns in Wingolf. The Wingolf *Chargiertenkonvent* (national meeting of representatives) of February 1906 was a key event. Controversy had been stirred when a student from (liberal) Göttingen wrote an article in the 1905 *Wingolf-Blätter* (the society's newspaper), denying Wingolf had to be specifically Christian or theologically determined.[60]

Responding, Halle Wingolf had submitted a resolution in advance of the *Chargiertenkonvent*, insisting on the validity of existing formulated Christian principles. Tillich took a leading role in this fight for the positive cause, formulating the "sharply polished" Halle resolution himself.[61] Tübingen submitted their mediating resolution declaring positive and liberal understandings of Christianity equally justified.[62] The 1906 *Wingolf-Blätter* carried the transcripts of the debate and several articles from each side. Tillich's teacher Lütgert and Tillich's friend Hermann Schafft wrote articles sharply critiquing the 'subjectivism' of the liberals.[63]

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[60] Neugebauer, 'Δι' ἐνὸς πάντα', 153.
[61] See the remarks of Karl Themel in *EGW* V, 34.
[62] N.N., 'Bundesprotokoll des II. Quartals des Wintersemesters 1905/06', *Wingolfs-Blätter* 35/12b (24.März 1906), 1–2. Found in *PTAM* Box 005A.
[63] Neugebauer, 'Δι' ἐνὸς πάντα', 154–155.

Archival material shows Tillich's father attended the 1906 *Chargiertenkonvent* as esteemed Wingolf alumnus. Other alumni present included Professors Lütgert and Bornhäuser, who along with Johannes Tillich even formulated resolutions for voting, dominating what was officially a student debate.[64] All had agreed the chapters were to be "grounded on Christ" which meant "faith in Christ", but liberal chapters wanted to understand this "purely religiously" (i.e., allowing room for liberal theological interpretations), whereas Halle and other positive chapters wanted it understood dogmatically, which would effectively mean liberal theologians could not assent to the Wingolf principles.[65] Despite the efforts of the positive side, space for liberal interpretations was granted.[66]

Depressed at the result, yet buoyed by his election as leader of the Halle chapter, Paul Tillich wrote an article for the *Wingolf-Blätter* of February 1907. For the Halle students, says Tillich, the principle of Wingolf is clear: "Our Wingolf ideal is that of a Christian fellowship on a positive biblical foundation [...] when communal prayer and *Erbauungskränzchen* [edification circles] exist."[67] Halle Wingolf under Tillich was a fortress of positive theology and neo-Pietist spirituality.

Liberal theology, he says, is characterised by trust in the subject's power. Lack of theological definition leads to lack of ethical norms – lax morals and complaint of restricted autonomy arising because Christ is no longer the centre

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[64] Heinrich Birmele, 'Protokoll des Chargiertenkonvents zu Halle a.S. am 22. und 23. Februar 1906', *Wingolfs-Blätter* 35/12b (24.März 1906), 2–8; *PTAM* Box 005A. See also Paul Tillich, Letter to Grandfather, März 1906, *EGW* V, 35–36.
[65] Birmele, 'Protokoll des Chargiertenkonvents', 4.
[66] See Pauck and Pauck, *Paul Tillich*, 27–28.
[67] Paul Tillich, 'Die Bundesentwicklung der letzten drei Semester, ihre Ursachen und ihr Resultat. Ein Appell an die Philister', *Wingolfs-Blätter* 36/10, 20. Februar 1907.

of meetings. The fight in Wingolf is between Christianity and subjectivism. Spineless mediating voices effectively support subjectivism, which now dominates the Wingolf union.[68]

Georg Neugebauer interprets Tillich's article as an attempt to paint the Halle position in a more moderate light, when Tillich writes:

> It is not about the fight for the equal rights of positives and liberals in Wingolf; this has always been present (individual mistakes are not evidence to the contrary), but [it is] about the fight for the rule of subjectivism against the *basis of the Christian society* [*christliche Verbindungsgrundlage*].[69]

However, this is Tillich's polemical misrepresentation. The positive position was an attempt to effectively exclude liberals from assenting to the principles. By saying the debate at the *Chargiertenkonvent* was not merely another perennial debate between conservatives and liberals, but instead a power-grab of subjectivists, Tillich is discrediting the liberal voices as mere subjectivism. Tillich speaks of liberalism in terms reminiscent of Lutheran criticism of Roman Catholicism, as trust in the subject's power, and as we saw above, he *attacks* mediating voices in the debate as capitulating to the subjectivist agenda.

There was no middle ground for Tillich. The article from February 1907 therefore inevitably attracted strong criticism, forcing him to reply in May 1907 with a more conciliatory tone.[70] He thus remembers correctly in his 1960 obituarial recollections that his (positive) friend Hermann Schafft's "practical-

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[68] Tillich, 'Die Bundesentwicklung', 20.
[69] Tillich, 'Die Bundesentwicklung', 20. See Neugebauer, 'Δι' ἐνὸς πάντα, 149–174.
[70] Paul Tillich, 'Zur Klärung', *Wingolfs-Blätter* 36/15, 3. Mai 1907.

pastoral and moderate-church attitude […] differentiated itself from my own tendency to theologically pointed formulations."[71]

His stylised 1936 autobiography is in contrast inaccurate, for "a confessional foundation whose meaning transcends subjective belief or doubt […] allowing room for tendencies toward doubt, criticism, and uncertainty"[72] would have been rejected by student Tillich for muddying the dogmatic meaning of the creeds and allowing subjective, i.e., liberal interpretations.

As a student, Tillich stands on the side of his father, fighting for the positive cause. Johannes was formulating Christological red lines at the Brandenburg Provincial Synod of 1906, implying an increase in *Lehrprozesse* to cleanse the church of the liberal scourge. Paul was formulating Christological red lines at the 1906 *Chargiertenkonvent*, with the aim of causing liberals to leave Wingolf. Therefore, looking back on this period, Paul writes to his father for his 50th birthday in July 1907 that

> the beautiful and best part of our conversations is that you allowed me to work with you freely and without compulsion and thus led me more and more toward what is most precious to you. You cannot know what a joy it was for me that it was possible for both of us standing shoulder to shoulder to fight for the same goal. And my greatest wish for the future is that this may remain so, giving me independence and yet unity with you.[73]

The double assurance that Tillich is free and under no compulsion stands in great contrast to the later claim that "every attempt at autonomous thinking [was] an act of religious daring and connected criticism of authority with a sense of guilt."[74] The genre of birthday letter could mean the words of unity are

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[71] Tillich, 'Erinnerungen an Schafft', 29.
[72] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 31–32.
[73] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, July 1907; cited by Pauck and Pauck, *Paul Tillich*, 22–23.
[74] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 36–37.

exaggerated.[75] But even if not, the contrast need not be a contradiction if we consider the possibility Tillich only later became aware of the compulsion he was truly under. For example, not only was Johannes at the national conference; he travelled to Halle to hear his son open the Summer semester 1907 as new leader, even transcribing his words.[76]

How should we interpret this contrast between autobiography and the early sources? Had the struggle to contradict his father not yet started in 1907? Or did Tillich forget how similar he was to his father? We will see below that letters between from 1906 reveal the struggle had indeed started, but that Tillich also generally erases his early conservatism: Tillich was conflicted about his father's theological tradition, even as he vigorously defended it in public.

ii. Great inner contradictions

Following the national Wingolf debates, letters between Tillich and his father in May and June 1906 express doubts about positive theology, and indeed theology at all. In the first extant letter, Tillich complains Kähler's Apologetics is difficult and says he struggles with the circular nature of Kähler's system.[77] Tillich's father replies that Kähler rightly makes faith the entrance to the circle of theology; faith created through "the word of God in Scripture".[78]

Tillich responds, going beyond criticism of Kähler, questioning whether theology is possible at all:

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[75] Ulrich Schmiedel suggested this possibility.
[76] See the transcript in Neugebauer, 'Δι' ἐνὸς πάντα', 166–171.
[77] See Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, [May] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 157. Missing in *EGW* V. Tillich did not date his letters, so we have to estimate the date based on (Pauck's reading of) the father's letters.
[78] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 26.05.1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 157–158. Missing in *EGW* V.

> I am on a rather serious war-footing with the problems of theology, with the fundamental issues of apologetics as well as with certain special problems. It seems to me there is a contradiction between the objective truth that Christianity is supposed to offer and its historical mediation.[79]

Furthermore, he expresses preference for Lütgert's attempt to ground Christian "demands" [*Forderungen*] in anthropological phenomena, rather than Kählers assumption Christianity is true.[80] The doubt mentioned is neither about the Bible's historicity, nor the morality or coherence of certain doctrines. Rather, Tillich is concerned by philosophical criticism of the notion of special revelation, and whether religious experience could justify belief.

This letter coincides with the growing influence of Medicus, *Privatdozent* for philosophy, under whom Tillich learned much about Fichte, that great critic of revelation.[81] As we saw above, Tillich remembers his fundamental theological problem as the relation of the absolute to the concrete.

Responding to Paul Tillich's letter on 16th June 1906, his father writes: "your remarks […] perplex and trouble me."[82] Johannes' diagnosis is that Paul has experienced a one-sided intellectual development, which focuses on philosophical, theoretical and systematic questions. The theoretical discussion of Wingolf statutes and work on dogmatics and apologetics begun too soon have led to a dangerous, all too theoretical understanding of Christianity.[83]

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[79] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, 15th June 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 158. Missing in *EGW* V. The date is based on a reference in his father's next letter.
[80] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, 15th June 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 158. Missing in *EGW* V. The date is based on a reference in his father's next letter.
[81] For more on Tillich's philosophical training, see Marc Boss, 'Which Kant? Whose Idealism? Paul Tillich's Philosophical Training Reappraised', in Russell Re Manning and Samuel Shearn (eds), *Returning to Tillich. Theology and Legacy in Transition* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 12–30.
[82] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 16.06.1906; *EGW* V, 36–39; here: 36. The full letter appears to be printed. In Pauck's essay there is only an excerpt.
[83] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 16.06.1906, *EGW* V, 36–37.

Johannes' suggested cure is to cease the attempt to prove and systematically construe Christianity in a speculative-theoretical way and focus on exegesis of the Bible, accompanied by humble prayer. Philosophy should only be followed where it helps to sustain Christianity.[84] In the same letter, Johannes responds to a particular concern of Paul's: "You write that objective truth cannot be historically mediated; that is Fichte, Kant, who can have no living concept of history at all."[85] Although Schelling is not mentioned here, clearly he is the figure where Paul Tillich later finds such a living concept of history; it is possible his father was implying this.

Another concern and manifestation of doubt was the relation of truth and experience.[86] Johannes replies there is a difference between mere feeling (*Gefühl*) and spiritual experience which is impressed upon "our whole spirit, our whole personality", which is able to distinguish between mere subjectivity and "generally valid objective truth".[87]

Tillich's reply, presumably in late June, expresses his heartfelt thanks. He agrees his theological interest has been chiefly intellectual. He also describes aspects of change in his outlook, revealing that work on dogmatics has led him to "great inner contradictions", particularly philosophy has made dogmatics "almost untenable".[88] Furthermore, "the exciting power of Fichte's idea of autonomy" has given him a critical stance and liberated him somewhat from his "educational experience".[89] Yet such autonomy dissolves itself and suspends

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[84] See Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 16.06.1906; *EGW* V, 37.
[85] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 16.06.1906; *EGW* V, 38.
[86] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 16.06.1906; *EGW* V, 38.
[87] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, 16.06.1906; *EGW* V, 38.
[88] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, [late June] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 160.
[89] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, [late June] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 160.

human action. Thus, Tillich believes there should be an "absolute criticism of autonomous intellectualism".[90]

Herrmann's "rejection of speculation" has become attractive to the young student, charting a course between "radical criticism" and "orthodox intellectualism".[91] Following Herrmann involves detaching himself from his present opinions and turning to a new method, "in complete contrast to what I have held until now. But I believe there is a great blessing in all this so you do not need to be apprehensive".[92] Johannes Tillich's reply to this letter shows he is indeed apprehensive about his son's "break with intellectualism", characterising it "a radical change of thought".[93]

This correspondence shows us there was instability in Tillich's theological position during his student years. Even while he was fighting for the demise of theological liberalism, he was privately wrestling with whether he could even be a Christian theologian, finding Wilhelm Herrmann (1846–1922) from liberal Marburg to be his most helpful guide.

iii. Historical criticism of the bible

As we saw above, in 1936 Tillich remembers early appreciation for liberal theology's historical-critical achievements, an issue on which he says he "parted company with the Halle theologians".[94] Writing in 1948 to Martin Niemöller, the same sense of ease comes across in his recollections. Tillich talks about how as students influenced by Kierkegaard, "the poetic character of the Christmas

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[90] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, [late June] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 160.
[91] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, [late June] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 160.
[92] Paul Tillich, Letter to Johannes Tillich, [late June] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 160.
[93] Johannes Tillich, Letter to Paul Tillich, [late June] 1906, cited in: Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 160.
[94] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 49.

and Easter stories" and the "mythical-symbolic character of the paradise-stories" were taken for granted.[95] Having left Halle in the summer of 1907 and moved to Berlin, Tillich writes to his friend Alfred Fritz that he is relaxed about historical criticism of the New Testament (at least on questions of authorship, which he mentions explicitly).[96]

However, there is evidence Tillich was not this relaxed as a student (i.e., that the letter from 1907 refers only to questions of authorship). This makes most sense of the sources. There are three indications Tillich's theological milieu was not relaxed about these issues. First, Tillich's father appears to have misunderstood Kähler's approach and believed in the power of historical apologetics, thinking positive professors could show "that we may have trust toward the Bible, not just because we know it well, but because it is historically true."[97] Here, historical work is confirmatory rather than critical.

Second, when asked in 1943 by Thomas Mann to recollect his time in Halle, Tillich says conservative mediating theologians like Kähler, rather than accepting the historical-critical method, "held on to the stricter concept of revelation and tried to defend traditional exegesis."[98] Third, Tillich says "belief in miracles, the question of the validity of historical criticism, the Christological problem […] the question of the bodily resurrection of Jesus"[99] played a big role in debates among Halle Wingolf students. Historical criticism was far from an established norm.

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[95] Paul Tillich, Letter to Martin Niemöller, 27.12.1948; *EGW* V, 317.
[96] Paul Tillich, Letter to Alfred Fritz, *EGW* V, 44–46.
[97] See the transcript of Johannes Tillich's comment in J. Lepsius (ed), *Verhandlungen der Zweiten Eisenacher Konferenz, 8., 9. U. 10. Juni 1903*, (Berlin: Verlag der Deutsche Orient Mission e.V., 1903), 118. Johannes is responding to a lecture by Kähler called *Der gegenwärtige Stand der Theologie*.
[98] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 24.
[99] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 27.

Given these indications of Tillich's context, the witness of his contemporary Karl Themel is helpful. He remembers Tillich within Wingolf debates as one who pushed for the biblical formulation in the Wingolf principles, having *rejected* the method and results of historical criticism.[100] Further evidence is a comment of Tillich in a talk recorded in 1961, suggesting he was afraid of the sceptical conclusions of historical-critical scholarship as a student:

> While a student, as long as I had still [...] not suffered the second big shock and drawn the systematic conclusions from it, I was – to express it drastically – afraid of every postal delivery, whether on the following morning it would bring to my house a special edition on 'bar nascha' (Son of Man) or any other matter concerning factuality, and therewith make it clear I am no Christian, I cannot believe, cannot become a theologian.[101]

This image of waiting for the post to come with the latest edition of a journal is, I believe, a creative variation of an illustration from Kierkegaard's *Postscript*.[102] In the same letter, Tillich goes on to talk about the power of the picture of Christ we receive in the New Testament, and that historical research has no bearing on faith and assurance. This certainly reflects his position in 1911.

Once again, we have a mixed testimony in various sources. Tillich's claim he is (or was) relaxed about historical criticism stands in tension with his testimony (and that of his contemporaries) that he was, to a large extent, opposed to and afraid of it. I conclude the latter is true.

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[100] Karl Themel in *EGW* V, 35.

[101] Werner Schüßler, 'Die Jahre bis zur Habilitation (1886–1916)', in R. Albrecht and W. Schüßler (eds) *Paul Tillich. Sein Werk* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1986), 9–27; here: 17. This recording apparently belonged to a private collection owned by Renate Albrecht.

[102] In the *Postscript*, the scholar is waiting for the arrival of a new work in biblical scholarship, and Kierkegaard points out that whatever new approximation may arrive, it cannot serve as an object of infinite personal interest in eternal happiness. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. and trans. Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 21.

In the earlier survey of Tillich's own narrative, I mentioned the clarity Tillich claims he finds through Troeltsch, which leads to the 128 theses in Kassel. If we take Tillich's narrative of shedding the last remnants of mediating theology (i.e., those like Kähler) on the issue of historical criticism, and believe the change took place *while a student*, then Tillich would have stood in great tension with his teachers. Evidence to the contrary is an autobiographical remark in Tillich's lectures on the history of Christian thought. Here he says the crisis came *after* Halle, through reading Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965):

> I myself experienced a real crisis in my development after I left Halle, where this kind of biblicism was firmly established, and began independently to study the history of biblical criticism. It was especially in studying Albert Schweitzer's history of research into the life of Jesus that I became convinced of the inadequacy of the kind of Biblicism in which the historical questions are not taken seriously.[103]

In light of these various witnesses from later recollections and sources from student days, Tillich also here misremembers how conservative he was as a student in Halle: This leads him on some occasions to merely present his radical stance of 1911 as if his student days had been without crisis.[104]

His biographer Wilhelm Pauck claims Tillich "was never a biblicist" and "The Bible for him was not authority or norm but source and document".[105] However, Pauck refers to the later systematics. Historical details from student days are like anecdotes to explain the teleology of the great theologian. Analogous to the autobiographical tendency to always talk about how much one *learned* as a student, his biographers want to show how much the genius

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[103] Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought. From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 521.
[104] For my exposition of the 1911 theses, see Chapter 5.
[105] Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir', 153–154.

discovered. A more accurate understanding of the past – one more awkward for Tillich's greatest fans – is thus obscured.

iv. Medicus and idealism

The Paucks claim:

> The categories of Fichte in which Medicus trained all his students enabled Tillich to attack Lütgert's theology. Tillich regarded Lütgert as the other outstanding theologian on the faculty but felt his ideas were insufficiently independent.[106]

However, in Tillich's two extant student essays, it is not Lütgert, but Kähler who comes under attack. Following the Winter semester 1905/06 lectures on Fichte by Medicus,[107] Tillich completed an essay in February 1906 comparing Fichte's philosophy of religion with the Gospel of John.[108] Tillich sees some agreement but finally great contradiction between Fichte and John.

Tillich's essay first presents Fichte's general attitude toward religion, against the background of Kant. In further sections he presents the theological contrast between Fichte and John. John's God becomes flesh, loves personally, promises resurrection and immortality, and sends his Spirit to open eyes. Fichte is the "apostle of autonomy" who does not gain as deep an understanding of the truth as the "poor fisherman" John.[109] Though Tillich retains the sense that human reason is capable, we are left with the impression he is dismissive of Fichte's idealism. Lütgert, whose corrections are still in the margins, chides Tillich's over-eager reading of John as philosopher, seeing even fewer similarities with Fichte.

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[106] Pauck and Pauck, *Paul Tillich*, 20.
[107] Published as: Fritz Medicus. *J.G. Fichte. Dreizehn Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Halle* (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1905).
[108] Paul Tillich, 'Fichtes Religionsphilosophie', 1–19.
[109] Paul Tillich, 'Fichtes Religionsphilosophie', 18.

Two years later, in the *Monismusschrift,* Tillich claims there is a form of idealistic philosophy (idealistic, teleological monism) which is entirely amenable to Christianity. The system presented, while not yet perfect, should be refined "until that philosophical worldview is attained which conforms to the person of Jesus and fully meets the standards of the Christian assurance of salvation."[110] This foreshadows Tillich's later insistence that the God of biblical religion is indeed the God of the philosophers, and his passion for system.

In the first main part, Tillich traces the appearance of the pair of opposites, monism and dualism, in Greek philosophy, early Christianity (including Judaism and the New Testament), the middle ages and the modern era. In the second part he considers the God-world relationship based on a monistic understanding but taking heed of its dualistic critiques. Here he becomes encyclopaedic in his ambition, discussing implications of a monistic or dualistic worldview for topics such as providence, prayer, the problem of evil, miracles, eschatology, ethics, the doctrine of God, religious life, and a theology of culture including art and law.

Tillich follows Kähler's criticism that Ritschl has reduced dogmatics to ethics.[111] Tillich also criticises Ritschl's call for a separation of theology and traditional metaphysics, saying one cannot escape metaphysics and that the tradition of idealism is well suited to give an account of God, with its personal categories. Furthermore, Christianity engages one's thought and its concept of God demands philosophical expression: "God, the final cause, the final ground,

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[110] Tillich, *Monismusschrift*, 153.

[111] For instance, in his 1912 licenciate dissertation *Mystik and Schuldbewußtsein*, Tillich defends the notion of divine wrath, against Ritschl, with reference to Kähler. Divine wrath is a correlate of guilt consciousness, since „Gottes persönliche Beziehung auf den Boshaften kann nicht als Gleichgültigkeit gedacht werden." *GW* I, 21n8.

the final goal of the whole of reality, that is apparently both a religious and a metaphysical statement."[112]

But in opposing Ritschl on this issue, Tillich is also opposing Kähler: "Kähler calls the absolute an idol, similarly to Ritschl. But the Ritschlian Kaftan introduces the concept again with pathos; it is in fact indispensable!"[113] There is also implicit criticism of Kähler's emphasis on sin-consciousness as the sole possibility of human self-knowledge.[114] Tillich tries to join various aspects of Christian spirituality and doctrine with what seems to me like a philosophy which would necessarily negate them. However, it is an awkward marriage. Medicus also makes sharp and insightful comments in the margins in this regard.

I cannot give a fuller account of the *Monismusschrift* here. What we should note is we see a thoroughgoing defence of a Christian form of idealist philosophy, of the compatibility between Christianity and philosophy. All the loci of dogmatics are recast in terms of teleological monism. Whereas in 1906 Fichte is chided for not being biblical enough, in 1908 the biblical motifs are shoehorned into an idealist system.[115] The concerns of Tillich in the *Wingolf-Blätter* 1907 are very different to the Tillich of the *Monismusschrift* 1908. Tillich's claim to have been in favour of metaphysics in his autobiography is thus correct. But the distance he puts between Kähler and himself in the student

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[112] Paul Tillich, *Monismusschrift*, 101.
[113] Paul Tillich, *Monismusschrift*, 101.
[114] Paul Tillich, *Monismusschrift*, 123.
[115] Christian Danz points to another difference: the rejection of understanding sin as the individual's failure of autonomy in 1906, and affirmation of this understanding in 1908. See Christian Danz, 'Freedom, sin and the absoluteness of Christianity: reflections on the early Tillich's Schelling-reception', *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 80 (2019), 115–126; here: 117.

essays does not square well with the autobiographical characterisation of Kähler as his most significant teacher.

v. *Sittlichkeit* and moralism

Wingolf was a morally strenuous affair. Leaders would offer unsolicited admonition to younger students, 'as iron sharpens iron'. In Tillich's case, this was his perceived weakness due to lack of rhetorical presence, which he later obviously corrected. The semester report, read aloud, might chide the youngest students for their laziness, provoking angry responses.[116] Situating Tillich in this context contradicts once again Tillich's autobiographical characterisation of having suffered passively under the impression of his father. For Tillich in Wingolf, fighting not only for doctrinal orthodoxy, but also moral purity, may have caused his fellow students to suffer under his reign.

Tillich rejoined the Berlin Wingolf chapter in the Autumn of 1907 after two years in Halle. His exams were at the beginning of February 1909. In an article in the *Wingolf-Blätter* from early 1909 we can see Tillich had accepted the unlikelihood of a Wingolf union with positive confessions of faith, and in lieu of doctrinal unity focused on unity around moral standards,[117] which means above all the concern for sexual abstinence of unmarried students which characterised the *Sittlichkeitsbewegung*. Females were for Tillich's Wingolf chapters in Halle and Berlin a danger – anything that exposed these young men

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[116] See *EGW* V, 41.

[117] Paul Tillich, 'Zur Bundeslage nach der Wartburg 1909 und die Arbeit der nächsten Zeit mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verhandlungen des II. Ch-C.', *Wingolfs-Blätter* 38/3, [early] 1909, [n.p.].

to such dangers, such as mixed dancing and visiting the variety theatre, was shunned.[118]

If not doctrine, then it is the historical opposition to morally problematic aspects of student life which binds the chapters together, says Tillich. The protest of Wingolf is against duelling, sexual impurity and excessive drinking. However, the pressing need is to sharply oppose impurity: to be of Wingolf is to be pure, and to fail in this area results in permanent exclusion whatever the circumstances. This strict stance, argues Tillich, should be adopted by the national Wingolf union, and whoever slows or subtly opposes such a decision will seriously damage the union and the Christian witness of the union.[119] The strict stance in the article was an expression of what had already happened in Berlin, where Tillich led the group pushing for not only a suspension but the permanent exclusion of a student who confessed to having sexual relations with a woman.[120]

Having just finished his exams, Tillich held a sermon 'Wingolfsbegeisterung ist Christusbegeisterung', at a Berlin Wingolf "*Erbauungskränzchen*" – a pietistic fellowship meeting.[121] Here, reflecting on the controversy, he characterises Wingolf as a "flaming source of Christian piety among the student body" for which each member carries responsibility.[122] There is "only one way to freedom; that is Christian fellowship".[123] "The life-strength of an organism is demonstrated in its ability to expel foreign bodies. Measured

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[118] Henri Birmele reports on Halle in *EGW* V, 31.
[119] See Tillich, 'Zur Bundeslage', [n.p.].
[120] See Pauck and Pauck, *Paul Tillich*, 23.
[121] Paul Tillich, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung ist Christusbegeisterung', *EGW* VII, 19–23.
[122] Tillich, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung', 19.
[123] Tillich, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung', 21.

by this standard, I should declare this last semester for especially high".[124] It appears several students left Wingolf (or were expelled) because they did not stand behind the whole package of Wingolf ideals so vehemently held forth by Tillich and his supporters: "The spirit with us must become intolerable for everyone who does not let himself be gripped by [that spirit], because he consumes the conscience."[125] Opponents of such enthusiasm are "the superficiality which hides its face from abysmal depths, which is appalled when an absolute demand, and absolute will, an absolute seriousness approaches them."[126]

In an American sermon, Tillich reflects on his earlier life as being marked by a suppression of joy:

> Are not many Christians—ministers, students of theology, evangelists, missionaries, Christian educators and social workers, pious laymen and laywomen, even the children of such parents—surrounded by an air of heaviness, of oppressive sternness, of lack of humour and irony about themselves? […] Such an experience of the suppression of joy, and guilt about joy in Christian groups, almost drove me to a break with Christianity. What passes for joy in these groups is an emaciated, intentionally childish, unexciting, unecstatic thing, without color and danger, without heights and depths.[127]

Tillich says joylessness almost led him to abandon Christianity. Looking at the sources, this statement would seem to fit well with his time in Wingolf, indeed as a self-description of his own constitution in those years, even when he had just completed his exams.

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[124] Tillich, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung', 22.
[125] Tillich, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung', 22.
[126] Tillich, 'Wingolfsbegeisterung', 23.
[127] Paul Tillich, 'The Meaning of Joy', in *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955).

vi. Kähler and Tillich

Having seen Tillich's unforgiving moral stance towards a student who had confessed breaking the Wingolf code, one might wonder about the place for the justification of the sinner in young Tillich's life.

Strict tendencies within Wingolf, as expressed in Tillich's 1909 sermon would have been seen critically by Kähler. The final section of Kähler's book *Zur Lehre von der Versöhnung* (1898) deals with the life of faith. Here, Kähler writes that preaching God's reconciliation (*Versöhnung*)

> [d]oes not mean gathering pious souls so that they separate themselves from the others as a special kind of human; it means rather to offer the free absolution of guilt [...] And under this charter [*Freibrief*] every strictness in differentiation must soften. That which is new is a creation and not an achievement. That which is new is the access to God, not one's own virtue of believing [Tugend der Gläubigkeit] or abstinence [...].[128]

And if God's children should stumble and fail, all this stands under God's reconciliation.[129] Kähler positions himself in opposition to separatism, excessive pietism (with self-examination of the conscience instead of joyful courage) and the American-influenced holiness movement (teaching sinless perfection) gripping German pietist circles at the time.[130] Tillich, in practical contrast to Kähler's commitment to the *Volkskirche*, was keen on building up strict pietist conventicles, devoid of grace.

It is striking that in a period of Tillich's life where he was – according to his autobiographical statements – basking in the all-pervading nature of the doctrine of justification by faith as taught by the impressive Kähler, there is little

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[128] Martin Kähler, *Zur Lehre von der Versöhnung*. Dogmatische Zeitfragen. Zweites Heft (Leipzig: Deichertsche Buchhandlung, 1898), 453.
[129] See Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 456.
[130] See Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 440. The reference is implicit.

evidence of that doctrine in his Wingolf activities. Wingolf under Tillich's influence finds its *raison d'être* finally in its moral protest against student dissipation, and not in the witness to the gospel of the justification of the ungodly.

When we consider Kähler's possible influence on Tillich's later notion of the justification of the doubter, the same section of *Zur Lehre von der Versöhnung* also offers several leads. Kähler certainly spoke openly about the reality of doubt in a Christian's life.[131] He recognised the challenge of the modern situation in contrast to Luther, for whom certainty only pertained to his salvation, and not God.[132] Now, he says, writing in 1898, "[o]ne is certain of one's "faith", [but] one remains in hovering uncertainty about God."[133] Kähler articulates what Tillich will call doubt of the presuppositions of the doctrine of justification in 1924.

In discussing the need to protect the church against errors in doctrine, Kähler insists the focus of doctrinal purity is on removing damaging elements which harm healthy growth, and qualifies his statements by saying it would be a "confusion if one wanted to make the theological form of a doctrine into an object of faith, and make this faith an achievement so [this faith] earns blessedness as a reward."[134]

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[131] See Heinrich Giesen, *Studentenväter des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Furche, 1937), 34.
[132] See Martin Kähler, *Die Heilsgewißheit*. Biblische Zeit- und Streitfragen zur Aufklärung der Gebildeten VII. 9/10 (Groß-Lichterfelde, Berlin: Edwin Runge, 1912), 5–7.
[133] Kähler, *Heilsgewißheit*, 7.
[134] See Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 430. The warning against misunderstanding faith as an 'intellectual work' expressed in 1919 and foreshadowed in Wilhelm Herrmann is along with Kähler's words here probably the result of a shared Lutheran inheritance, as I discuss more in Chapter 6 on the Nauen sermons.

Under a heading "the fight of faith", Kähler expounds a taxonomy of doubt.[135] There are doubts of knowledge [*Wissenszweifel*] which question the coherence and thinkability of doctrine, "they want a guarantee that it is worth the effort to […] deduce insight from the gospel".[136] And there are doubts of faith [*Glaubenszweifel*] which question the reality and effectiveness of the gospel. "Toward [such doubts of faith] the condescending deeds of God are directed, to them his word comes in the Holy Scriptures, promising, interpreting, convicting, punishing and encouraging."[137]

Rejecting any attempt to assuage doubt by means of proofs or demonstrations of the scientific respectability of faith, Kähler characterises faith as *trust*, "to trust the promise of a person, because one honours the ability and the attitude of the person, convinced that what [the person] promises [the person] can and will do."[138] The opposite of faith is not doubt of factual matters but doubt of a person. Faith in this sense exists only within Christianity, for "trust has its place only toward the reliable willing and the doubtless ability of a person who gives us guarantee enough for themselves."[139] We see therefore here a confirmation of Tillich's impression in his 'doubting letters' of 1906 that Kähler's response to doubt always already presumed the truth of Christianity, and his later dissatisfaction with Christocentric responses to doubt.

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[135] See Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 431–433.
[136] See Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 433.
[137] Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 433.
[138] Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 430.
[139] Kähler, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 434.

5. Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have set the scene for Tillich's early theological development, inasmuch as it is relevant for understanding how he arrived at the justification of the doubter. We have observed the contrast between autobiographical statements and the witness of the sources from his student days. We should consider the role in which Tillich casts his younger self when in autobiographical mode. He describes the struggle to free himself from his father as long and painful and accompanied by guilt. As such, his father rather becomes the villain and Paul the victim. The moralism and conservatism are credited to the account of the father. Paul is passive, suffering the pressure of authority, yet active in the struggle to free himself.

However, as we have seen the Wingolf sources paint a different picture. Paul Tillich was known to be moralistic, conservative and uncompromising, taking a leading role in promoting 'positive' positions. No doubt his development away from such positions was hard going emotionally, as indeed the letters about his doubts suggest. But this does not come across in his Wingolf articles. As a student leader, Tillich had great influence upon his fellow students.[140] There may well have been many victims of his own uncompromising stance. While one needs to be careful here not to look for a Tillichian *Turmerlebnis* and an earlier legalistic monasticism implied by that, it is clear Tillich's student days were marked by a certain *gracelessness*.

In his famous American sermon, *You are Accepted*, Tillich says:

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[140] Karl Themel says Tillich had great influence in Halle even after leaving: "[older students] were full of praise of him and quoted his words time and again. They were all good conservative people from Westfalen." *EGW* V, 34.

> [T]here is too often a graceless acceptance of Christian doctrines and a graceless battle against the structures of evil in our personalities. Such a graceless relation to God may lead us by necessity either to arrogance or to despair.[141]

We have seen a graceless acceptance and defence of Christian doctrines and a graceless attempt to ensure the morality of himself and his peers. Tillich was very concerned with Wingolf being unmistakeably distinct from the student world, concerned with Christians becoming more and more committed to bible studies and communal prayer, but barely mentions the grace of God.

We have also seen how Tillich developed away from Kähler toward his philosophy teacher Medicus in the final years of his study, developing an idealistic theological system in his 1908 *Monismusschrift*. This development and the concomitant philosophical doubts stand in considerable tension with the pietist and positive personality Tillich embodied as a student, and the alleged great influence Tillich claims to have received from Kähler. These tensions would lead to fascinating developments during Tillich's time as a pastor in Lichtenrade when, borrowing Tillich's analysis from the American sermon, he moved from arrogance to despair.

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[141] Tillich, 'You are accepted', in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

Chapter 4

Overcoming Despair (Lichtenrade 1909)

1. Introduction

In February 1909, Tillich completed his studies with the church examinations. After writing the article and sermon for Wingolf, in March 1909 he moved from his father's manse to be a replacement pastor in what was then the village of Lichtenrade, with additional duties in nearby Mahlow.[1] For three months, Tillich stood in for Pastor Ernst Ferdinand Klein (1863–1953), who was on secondment to the *Deutsche Orient-Mission*.

This move meant Tillich continued to be deeply embedded within his father's milieu of theologically conservative Lutheran Pietists with strong connections up to the highest levels of church government in Berlin. For Klein was a friend of Johannes Tillich who had married Elisabeth Kögel, daughter of the famous *Hofprediger* Rudolf Kögel (1829–1896).[2] Klein's pastoral ministry was marked by "the practice of daily devotional piety, the aggressively conversionist stance of the Salvation Army [...] and a social gospel appeal to

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[1] In the first edition of the Paucks' biography, Tillich was said to have attended the *Königliche Domkandidatenstift* for a year in Berlin. Stefan S. Jäger points out that in the German translation, every mention of the Domkandidatenstift was deleted. See Stefan Jäger, *Glaube und religiöse Rede bei Tillich und im Shin-Buddhismus. Eine religionshermeneutische Studie.* Tillich Research 2 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 175n9. My answer to Jäger's question is that the Paucks misunderstood Tillich's mention of his own father's attendance. The second English edition of Paucks' biography is corrected and omits any reference.

[2] Johannes Tillich had trained and served under director Rudolf Kögel as *Domhilfsprediger* and then *Inspektor* at the Domkandidatenstift between 1882–1885. On 3rd June 1909, he was appointed Konsistorialrat. See Johannes Tillich, *Aus meinem Leben* [typed transcript], 10; *PTAM* Box 63A.

justice for poor and labouring classes."[3] Klein had even been removed from a previous parish in Silesia after speaking up too loudly for the cause of impoverished weavers.[4]

As well as three baptismal sermons and four funeral sermons, eighteen further sermons are preserved from the three months of preaching from mid-March to mid-June 1909.[5] Tillich then stayed on in Lichtenrade through the summer months until October 1909, working on Schelling for his doctoral studies (which at this stage meant his planned licentiate in theology) and enjoying the hospitality and company of the Klein family. The pastor's daughter, Maria Klein, remembers:

> Every morning of the Summer of 1909, Tillich sat on our veranda, in Autumn wrapped in a blanket, and worked through 'a cubic metre of Schelling' as Dox said. He didn't let himself be distracted by anything.[6]

'Dox' is Richard Wegener (1883–1967), the former curate of Lichtenrade, who would quickly become a close friend. Wegener, following temporary work in another village at the beginning of 1909, returned for the summer to lodge with Tillich in the attic of the Lichtenrade manse.[7]

On summer afternoons, Tillich was at leisure. His memory of his time in Lichtenrade – and the reports of his contemporaries confirm this – is incredibly

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[3] Julius H. Rubin, *The Other Side of Joy: Religious Melancholy Among the Bruderhof* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27

[4] Markus Baum, *Against the Wind. Eberhard Arnold and the Bruderhof* (Walden, NY: Plough Publishing House, 1998), 6.

[5] See Erdmann Sturm, 'Zur editorischen Gestaltung', in *EGW* VII, VII–VIII; correcting Marion and Wilhelm Pauck, *Paul Tillich. His Life and Thought. Volume 1:* Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 31, and correcting *EGW* V, 74n4.

[6] *EGW* V, 53.

[7] The sources say Wegener witnessed Tillich's work on Schelling (*EGW* V, 53) and stayed in Lichtenrade while Tillich took trips to the centre of Berlin before they spent the nights discussing philosophy and theology (*EGW* V, 56). Thus I believe the editors of *EGW* V are mistaken to think Maria Klein is reporting a time when Tillich has already moved back to Berlin (See *EGW* V, 55). Wegener was lodging at the Lichtenrade manse for the summer, a time between two jobs.

positive. Tillich's friendship with the Klein family was warm and he was integrated into family life. At the same time, the pastor's house at Lichtenrade became a meeting place for young philosophers and theologians, including Tillich's friends Emanuel Hirsch (1888–1972) and Kurt Leese (1887–1965).[8] It was however the pastor's wife, Elisabeth Klein, whose intelligent conversation made an impression on the young students,[9] as her daughter Maria remembers:

> At the Lichtenrade coffee table in 1909 and the years after that the most different young people, mostly theologians or prospective philosophers, would discuss for hours. My mother contributed clever mediating comments, while my father, who did not make much of coffee [times], and probably also not of the discussions, was out making church visitations.[10]

Looking back on this period, Tillich is filled with nostalgia for his "Elysium" in Lichtenrade.[11] If we add Richard Wegener as an emancipatory influence,[12] and the leisure and cultural activities which Tillich enjoyed during the summer months, we could chime in with Gerhard Wehr's comment that there was nothing here of the "seriousness of life" in Tillich's spell in Lichtenrade.[13]

However, the evidence of the sermons points towards an altogether darker situation; in the pulpit, there was initially room for little else but seriousness. This could be seasonal: When Tillich starts preaching, the church is

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[8] Anton Knuth, *Der Protestantismus als moderne Religion. Historisch-systematische Rekonstruktion der religionsphilosophischen Theologie Kurt Leeses (1887–1965).* Beiträge zur rationalen Theologie 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005).

[9] A friend of Wegener's, Bruno Theek, also remembers these gatherings from Wegener's time as a curate in 1908: "Klein and his *brilliant and charming wife* were very hospitable and loved to gather young people around them, amongst which were always several candidates of theology." *EGW* V, 54; emphasis not original.

[10] *EGW* V, 52.

[11] *EGW* V, 55.

[12] Marion and Wilhelm Pauck, *Paul Tillich. His Life and Thought. Volume 1:* Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 29.

[13] Gerhard Wehr, *Paul Tillich in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg: Rohwohlt, 1979), 26.

observing Lent.[14] However, it is more than that. Tillich's meditations on the sufferings and obedience of Christ are not merely sombre, they also place exacting spiritual demands on the listeners, emphasising self-examination and the struggle for assurance of salvation. The sermons are also at times marked by pastoral severity toward those who are suffering.

My leading question here is how aspects of the justification of the doubter emerge as themes in Tillich's sermons from 1909. We learn from the sermons that the heady cocktail of Tillich's moralistic and self-examining pietistic spirituality, the doubt fostered by his theological and philosophical studies, and the praxis-shock of now embodying the role of a pastor, drove Tillich, aged 22, to despair as he wrestled for assurance of salvation.

Yet this tension is creative for Tillich's theology. It appears Tillich's own wrestling with the very traditional problem of assurance of salvation – with the justification of the sinner – was one source of his notion of the justification of the doubter. I will argue in this chapter that in despair driven by tensions and contradictions in his own piety, Tillich experienced a breakthrough of grace to the sinner and doubter as he prepared his sermon for Sunday 31st May 1909. This breakthrough coincides with a changed pastoral attitude toward the disabled in his parish.

Tillich's carefree summer in Lichtenrade may well have been encouraged by Wegener. However, the sermons point us to a further factor in his development: a theological shift driven by the tensions and contradictions in his own piety and shaped by his pastoral task.

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[14] Tillich obviously tailors his sermons to the church year. However, rather than following the Lectionary, he chooses the sermons texts himself. See Sturm, 'Zur editorischen Gestaltung', *EGW* VII, VII–X.

2. The first sermons in Lichtenrade

i. Absolute repentance

A feature of Tillich's Lichtenrade sermons is the stark boundary Tillich sometimes places between the church and the world, between Christianity and secular German life. The apparent joy and lightness of the secular subject is in fact a carelessness; below the surface is:

> the abyss, the despondency and despair, sadness which is not of a godly kind, the angst, the hidden angst of the heart [...] the fear of oneself [...] of the world [...] of God and his judgement [...] This gladness is built on sand.[15]

As this passage suggests, Tillich draws heavily on Kierkegaard, and in particular *The Sickness Unto Death*. By driving a deep wedge between 'Christian' Germany and Christianity proper, Tillich increases the spiritual pressure of his sermons. On Good Friday 1909, he speaks of an absolute difference and absolute decision: Repentance does not mean feeling pain, merely recognising one's sinfulness or bettering oneself; rather, repentance is a deed which is either complete or not at all: "God cannot have someone in part. [...] Where God is, there is complete repentance or complete hardening [*Verstockung*]."[16]

Of course, Tillich speaks to "those whose own sin would darken the glance upwards",[17] who ask "how can God be gracious to me?".[18] Jesus is indeed

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[15] No. 5, 21st March 1909, *EGW* VII, 40–41. The first time I mention a sermon, I note the date.
[16] No. 8, Good Friday 1909, *EGW* VII, 52.
[17] No. 4, Läterewoche 1909, *EGW* VII, 39.
[18] No. 8, *EGW* VII, 56.

the "friend of sinners".[19] But the tension between the assumption his hearers are such sinners "for whom the joyfulness of their Christianity has been lamed because defeat follows defeat",[20] and the expectation that repentance be "complete or not at all", is palpable. From this tension, a concern for assurance of salvation becomes central.

ii. Assurance of salvation

The desire and quest for assurance of salvation is very clear in sermons after Easter, from May 1909, though there are differences in tone and mood from one Sunday to another. On 2nd May 1909, Tillich preached on the fear and love of God. Tillich included a passage from *The Sickness Unto Death* about ordinary human fears paling into insignificance when compared to the Christian's experience of the fear of God.[21] This "complete fear [...] of God's wrath", which heeds Jesus' words about the "fire of hell", is the place from which one starts in order to know the perfect love that overcomes fear.[22]

Yet only very few Christians, thinks Tillich, progress from fear to love. The majority remain

> so oppressed, so slavish, so full of fear, [...] because they have no love toward God, because the judge who pardons them is not also the father who takes them in his arms [...] no friend to whom one can pour out one's heart, with whom one can talk.[23]

Tillich encourages these Christians who may lack assurance of salvation, by saying the presence of the fear of being lost is itself reason to believe one

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[19] No. 3, March 1909, *EGW* VII, 32.
[20] No. 6, Judikawoche 1909, *EGW* VII, 48.
[21] The passage is at the top of *EGW* VII, 72; it corresponds almost exactly to parts of the second half of the introduction in Søren Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode*, (Frankfurt am Main: Taschenbuücher Syndikat/EVA, 1984).
[22] No. 11, 2nd May 1909, *EGW* VII, 73.
[23] No. 11, *EGW* VII, 73.

need not fear being lost.[24] However despite this encouragement and the employment of gentle paternal imagery, the sermon's general mood is dark and urgent, and, on another occasion, Tillich again speaks of the fear of being lost, the fear of God's wrath:

> Dear friends, do you not feel that your heart too is bursting with this fear? Perhaps you do not know it at all, but it is like a heavy stone which presses you down [...] ask for forgiveness [...] then you will lose all fear.[25]

On 23rd May however, there are words of caution. Tillich admonishes his listeners (or himself?) not to "foolishly intervene"[26] in people's spiritual growth or "bring ourselves forwards artificially, we should not torment ourselves into repentance which is not in us".[27]

As if Tillich were correcting his own intensive spiritual urgency in the previous sermons, he now warns against pushing people in their faith and foisting feelings upon children which are foreign to them.[28] Spiritual growth is according to our nature and character, and we are all a little different. Furthermore, a fellowship of Christians "which does not also bear with seeds and stalks [...] is unbelieving toward God's work".[29] Tillich calls Christians to trust God's work of salvation in the individual.

iii. Assurance of the truth

The Lichtenrade sermons also reveal Tillich's concern for assurance of the truth of Christianity, including discussion of the sources of such assurance. For

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[24] See No. 11, *EGW* VII, 75.
[25] No. 12, beginning of May 1909, *EGW* VII, 78.
[26] No. 13, *EGW* VII, 79.
[27] No. 13, *EGW* VII, 84.
[28] No. 13, *EGW* VII, 80. Candidates for Confirmation are, of course, always in attendance of church services.
[29] No. 13, *EGW* VII, 84.

instance, he distances himself from appeals to authority, also within Protestantism:

> Where is truth? There, where a person says the Bible is truth because he learned to say so? […] Or when a person says yes to everything Christians tell him? You will admit; that is a sham [Schein], that is sleep and not truth.[30]

Yet he also speaks of the limits of human reason and thinking (*Denken*) as having been nailed to the cross at Golgotha.[31] But if authority and reason are no guarantors of the truth, where can the Christian gain assurance of the truth of her faith?

> Let us ask ourselves in the quiet of this Easter celebration completely seriously and completely honestly: Is eternal life a certainty for us, a certainty just as sure as the earthly life in which we stand?[32]

This Easter Monday sermon from April 1909 is striking because it raises the bar of Christian assurance to an incredible level: *Gewißheit* (certainty, assurance) of eternal life should be as high as our certainty of our material life. This assurance of eternal life is granted only one source. Not authority, not reason, and also not the mere feeling we are God's children. Only the triune God himself can be grounds for assurance:[33]

> On what do we ground our confidence in eternity, without which we are deceived deceivers and the most miserable of all people? On Christ, the risen one […] On the Spirit of God, who we see in him, in his life and above all in his death. And in what do we see that he had the Spirit without measure? In this: that we, through this his Spirit, can speak to God: Abba, dear father.[34]

Here, the Christian's assurance of eternal life is based on Christ and seeing the Spirit of God in Christ. This correct seeing of Christ, the recognition

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[30] No. 5, *EGW* VII, 43.
[31] No. 5, *EGW* VII, 43.
[32] No. 9, Easter Monday, 12th April 1909, *EGW* VII, 57.
[33] No. 9, *EGW* VII, 59.
[34] No. 9, *EGW* VII, 59. The words "deceived deceivers and the most miserable of all people" is an allusion to 1 Cor 15.

of Christ having the Spirit of God is however tied to the Christian's ability, through the Spirit of Christ, to speak to God as Father.[35] Yet beforehand Tillich has told his listeners the certainty of eternal life cannot be based on the feeling we are God's children.

Tillich suffers here from a common Protestant dilemma about the role of affect in faith.[36] Tillich wants to undermine an undue reliance on mere feeling for assurance, and attempts to secure an '*extra nos*' in Christ. Yet the question at hand is the veracity of that very faith – the reliability of the *extra nos*. Thus, Tillich has to find some way of making a connection with the believing subject. In this sermon, the basis for assurance is therefore the ability to speak to God in paternal terms, an ability which is, of course, impossible without affect playing a role.[37]

It is not possible here to draw out all the aporia. What is important for our purposes in tracing Tillich's theological development of the justification of the doubter is that we can see Tillich struggling to articulate an account of assurance which does not result in endless deferrals between the subject and object of faith.[38]

Tillich's handling of the problem of assurance takes place in the context of preaching ministry where Tillich has raised the bar on the level of Christian

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[35] By linking assurance with the ability to pray to God as father, Tillich is not merely following Romans 8, but also his teacher Martin Kähler, who emphasises that the practice of personal prayer deepens assurance. See Martin Kähler, *Die Heilsgewißheit*. Biblische Zeit und Streitfragen zur Aufklärung der Gebildeten VII. 9/10 (Groß-Lichterfelde-Berlin: Edwin Runge, 1912), 32–35.

[36] I am referring here to the eschewal of 'mere feelings' as a basis for assurance (or authority), often in opposition to 'enthusiasts' or as a remedy for despair. I am not suggesting the Reformers or their descendants were averse to emotion or unconcerned about the "affective salience" of doctrines. See Simeon Zahl, 'On the Affective Salience of Doctrines', *Modern Theology* 31(3), 428–444.

[37] Or indeed without reason, or without ecclesial authorities which mediate the interpretation of Scripture.

[38] Despite his reading Kierkegaard, Tillich does not talk here about the need for decision or action, but about Christ's action and the response of faith in speaking to God as Father.

assurance, to demand it be as sure as our material life. Furthermore, Tillich's more traditional questions about assurance of salvation take place in a context of sermons where he has raised the bar on the level of piety expected of his listeners. Though there are lighter sermons (No. 10 is a rare example), the tension between demand and reality is stark.

Excursus: Severity and disability

Tillich's theological response to disability in Lichtenrade may seem entirely orthogonal to the question at hand. However, the excruciating severity with which he imparts his advice to his disabled listeners is indeed relevant for Tillich's development of the justification of the doubter and is indicative of a change which Tillich undergoes in Lichtenrade.

Part of Tillich's duty during his spell in Lichtenrade was to preach to patients at a home for people with mental illnesses. In one such sermon, from March 1909, Tillich compares the patients' situation of imprisonment and relative solitude with that of the general public who run about their business with no time for reflection: the solitude of the mentally ill is "a gift of God" and chance for spiritual growth. Not only this, but God brought about the estrangement from friends and family in order that they be alone, instead of spiritually distracted: "Then we want to ask ourselves: Did not this person perhaps stand between God and my soul?"[39]

In a service for people with disabilities at the beginning of May 1909 he preaches on the topic of healing. Some are bodily ill, but we are all sick in our souls. This sickness expresses itself in haste and "restlessness" which is a "sickness unto death". Mirroring his words for those with mental illnesses, he

[39] No. 7, 28th March 1909, *EGW* VII, 50.

says the church of the disabled "have been lifted out of the bustle of the day by [God's] powerful hand":[40]

> And when he has taken everything from us, money and possessions, health and people, everything which once gladdened us, has he also taken the access to his face? […] No, my beloved, all of that he took from us because we had joy alone in it and by it forgot the only true ground of all joy. He took that all from us that we would become sad and notice that our soul is sick. […] He took everything from you so that you only have him, receive him […] and you will be glad, your soul will be healed![41]

The words of attempted comfort which Tillich imparts – that access to God's face remains – is heavily sullied by the moral blame implicitly attributed to the mentally and physically disabled. Their sickness is God's pedagogical tool for spiritual maturity; social isolation is a special gift of God. This pastoral approach to disability and sickness reflects the outlook with which Tillich was confronted as a child.[42] The implication is that if you are now mentally ill or physically disabled, it is probably because God thought you needed to be weaned from life's goods in order to truly find him. The severity of Tillich's sermons here is reminiscent of Job's friends and symptomatic of the uncompromising demands he puts upon the piety of his listeners.[43] Tillich would later come to find this stance highly problematic, but not here in early May 1909.

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[40] No. 12, *EGW* VII, 77.
[41] No. 12, *EGW* VII, 78.
[42] The letter from his paternal grandmother on his sixth birthday suggests God heals you early when you are well-behaved: "Aunt Greta wrote to me that you were ill. How sorry we are, but, you see, since you were so kind and well-behaved, dear God made you well again soon". *EGW* V, 20. When Tillich, aged nineteen, is suffering from a serious ear infection, eventually requiring an operation, his father writes that "God loves you, that he takes you into his higher school [of testing]." *EGW* V, 27. His father had experienced a debilitating eye infection as a student. See Johannes Tillich, *Aus meinem Leben,* 27–28; *PTAM* Box 63A.
[43] In an earlier sermon, Tillich explicitly rejects attempts at theodicy; theodicy is to become even darker through the story of Christ's passion. For God "does not fight sin, but strengthens it, he does not hinder it, but accelerates its course"; No. 6, Judikawoche 1909, *EGW* VII, 46. Tillich's instrumental understanding of suffering is an ambitious theodicy, offering reasons for specific instances of suffering. The theme of theodicy plays a role in my account of the war sermons in chapter nine.

3. The abandoned sermon

Nowhere is the tension between demand (of piety and assurance) and reality (of sin and doubt) more tangible than in the sermon notebooks from 31st May 1909. Here we find two versions of the same sermon.[44] They are both written for the Monday after Pentecost, on the same text, John 3:16–21. Analysis of these two versions of the sermon has led me to conclude that the first version can only have been abandoned and never preached. It has no proper conclusion, and ends in utter despair.[45]

In Tillich's first version of the sermon, instead of focusing on the love of God in sending the Son, as one might expect from the text, Tillich writes about 'The judgement of the Spirit of God in us […] daily, inwardly upon all" with the medium of the "light which shines upon every person".[46]

The Spirit's daily inner judgement has two aspects, first "a judgement of the whole world; for the light shines on all people who come into the world" and second "a judgement of grace; for the judgement became flesh in Jesus Christ."[47] These two points correspond to a division in the sermon between the unevangelised (both heathen and in Christendom) and (in a shorter, unfinished section) "we who know Jesus".[48]

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[44] See No. 14, 31. Mai 1909 – 1st version; No. 15 31st May 1909 – 2nd version.
[45] The assumption that the sermon was abandoned and never preached also explains why a second version was written at all. I cannot countenance any situation in which the first sermon was preached in the form of the manuscript.
[46] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 85. Tillich's talk of the Spirit judging is a trope foreign to New Testament theology. The Spirit convicts about judgement (Joh 16:8–11), is grieved by sin (Eph 4:30) but does not judge. He is continually portrayed as carrying out God's salvific will.
[47] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 85.
[48] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 88.

i. Theology of religions and the *Volkskirche*

The message of the first part of the sermon talks about the Spirit's judgement throughout the history of religions. Tillich assumes a predestinarian perspective, which might also be called inclusivist. The heathen's attitude to the Spirit of God encountered in their conscience corresponds to how they will one day respond to Christ, through mission or a post-mortem encounter with Christ.[49] The cultural division among the heathen, and the eschatological perspective are for Tillich both the rationale for mission and reason to believe earthly success will be limited. Tillich's theology of religions thus aims to engender generosity toward the religious other who, while not sinless, will eventually come into the light. They will hear the king's voice

> if only the yearning not to completely lose the image of God in themselves lived in their heart. Then they come into the light because they were […] of the truth and the Spirit which judged them spoke a sentence of grace over them.[50]

Moving from the heathen to Christendom, Tillich exhibits *volkskirchliche* Neo-Pietism.[51] Tillich thus criticises separatist and perfectionist groups who behave "as if all revelation of God only happened for a few chosen ones who in distinction from all others call themselves believing [*gläubig*] or sanctified

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[49] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 86.
[50] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 86.
[51] The word *Volkskirche* and its cognates, literally means people's church and refers to the large mainstream church in contrast to smaller free churches. At the end of the 19th Century, the mainstream Protestant church in Germany had been challenged by the attraction of Methodism and Neo-Pietist groups influenced by American holiness movement (including both Pentecostal and cessationist variants). These groups shared an eschewal of ordinary mainstream church life for the sake of a higher Christian life, and a strong diaconic and evangelistic mission. Pietist and theologically conservative church leaders were energised by this threat to try and contain aspects of this theology and praxis within the mainstream church while strongly criticising excesses and separatist tendencies. I have called Tillich a *volkskirchliche* Neo-Pietist since, while he is critical of separatism, he still makes strong demands to live a serious Christian life which requires a decision and emphasises personal communion with Jesus. See Frank Lüdke, 'Neupietismus – Versuch einer Begriffsklärung', in: Frank Lüdke and Norbert Schmidt (eds) *Was ist neu am Pietismus? Tradition und Zukunftsperspektiven der Evangelischen Gemeinschaftsbewegung* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2010), 3–16.

[*geheiligt*]."[52] The attitude to unbelief in the midst of Christendom should not be to exclude. For as there are those "of the truth" among the heathen so there are millions "of the truth" in Christendom who may yet have never heard the voice of the shepherd.

However, hearing the shepherd's voice is not merely having a church association, but "being gripped by the Spirit in the deepest root of [our] being with a power which allows no avoidance, which drives to decision for or against."[53] That "many, many in Christianity" never experience this does not mean they are lost "if the Spirit has judged them and spoken the sentence of grace over them".[54]

As with his words about the heathen, his words about the millions of nominally Christian Germans suggest a post-mortem encounter with Jesus, decisive for a person's fate. Only when the light is completely revealed "can the sin against the Spirit be committed which immediately means the judgement which leads to death."[55]

ii. The blaspheming of the Spirit

The mention of the sin against the Holy Spirit or blaspheming of the Holy Spirit in the sermon is a turning point, introducing a new thematic section which spirals into despair. Up to here, Tillich has held open the eschatological possibility of heathen and cultural Christians being included in salvation. But the finality of the encounter with Christ for these unevangelised now prompts Tillich to ponder what this means for committed Christians who "know Jesus"

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[52] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 85.
[53] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 87.
[54] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 87.
[55] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 88.

and to whom light has been revealed. The sin against the Holy Spirit can be committed

> not simply in great moments of courageous decisions, but daily in the smallest things. All of us who know Jesus stand under a continual decisive judgement [...]. Now every hour is a decision, now the Spirit judges us daily.[56]

In the next passage Tillich includes himself and his listeners (with the first person plural pronoun) in an imagined drama of the Spirit's warning and judgement of one who knows Christ but is plagued by indwelling sin:

> The Spirit speaks to our spirit with powerful words: Here is the truth, take it, here is the light which enlightens all; let yourself be searched by him![57]

But the imagined believer does not heed the Spirit's warnings in the conscience and is therefore judged by the Spirit:

> the judgement proceeds, finally the judge's sentence falls, we have refused, trampled that word which addressed our conscience, and now a warning voice speaks: Do not sin against the Holy Spirit, you are now judged. Be on your guard that it goes no further than this judge's sentence; it will be difficult to change it.[58]

The Spirit's judgement makes the Christian feel burdened and condemned. The gospel message then arrives, but its effect is not faith but a further judgement of the Spirit, bringing doubt and despair:

> [A] word meets our heart and it speaks of the lost son, to whom God runs toward in Christ, and we tremble at the power with which the Spirit brings God to our heart. But because we refused that first word and God moved far away from us, the arrows of doubt were sunk into our heart. God himself vanishes out of our hands which are lifted up to him, and it has become hard and cold in our heart, and the Spirit is pushed back and the judgement is heavier than before.
>
> Then once again, perhaps in the final hours, the Spirit steps up to us and speaks to us the word of the crucified one: I thirst, also for your soul. First it was comfort, the truth was hard to bear. Then it was doubt, the truth was too high. That was the second judgement, and now it is despair. The truth has been

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[56] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 88.
[57] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 88.
[58] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 88.

> pushed away. That is the final judgement, that can already occur very early in a person's life. The Spirit is blasphemed. No person notices it in the honourable man, that he is judged because he loved the darkness more than the light.[59]

Thus ends the sermon draft. For the heathen and the unevangelised masses of Christendom, hope. For the believer who has resisted the Spirit's warnings, despair. There are theoretically several ways of reading this last section of the draft sermon, though none ultimately seems plausible except to read the passage as primarily a reflection of Tillich's own spiritual struggles. We should of course admit the rather *recherché* problems associated with claiming to know intentional states of an author based on their texts and be aware of the performative character of the sermon as a genre. A preacher can, and perhaps sometimes does, enact a crisis of assurance. However, Tillich does not simply tell the story of someone in the third-person but uses the first-person plural in his description of a pilgrim being judged by the Spirit. The 'we' is addressed to 'all of us who know Jesus'. Thus, Tillich describes an experience in which he himself has participated, and which he expects his potential listeners to find familiar.

But the drama of the experience of judgement develops a sobering inevitability: Because of the rejection of the Spirit's warning, even the story of the Prodigal Son, applied to the believer's heart by the Spirit, is not effective. Arrows of doubt which come as a judgement for sin mean "God himself vanishes out of our hands". The judgement of God against the unrepentant is doubt about God. It should not be lost on us that here doubt is treated morally as consequence of spiritual obstinacy.

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[59] No. 14, *EGW* VII, 88–89.

Yet this apparent shared experience of cycles of judgement and the Spirit's warning ends with a judgement which is final and for which there is no forgiveness: the sin against the Holy Spirit. The last words of the crucified one invite the sinner to return. But in the drama of Tillich's sermon, the externally honourable Christian has even at an early stage in their life committed the unforgiveable sin, and, being bound into a spiral of judgement, there is no chance of a response to Christ's plea.

4. The new sermon

The second version of the sermon starts with the same assertion of the Spirit's daily inner judgement and a challenge to the listeners to test the Spirit's witness whether they are under judgement or have life. The sermon then develops two main thoughts. First, God's work, which is his love of the world (taken from John 3:16–17). Second, the judgement according to what we let God do with us, which is a judgement of grace.

The first section on the love of God emphasises the work of God in contrast to human work. The Pharisee does not allow God to work everything but tries to contribute his own efforts.[60] Such a person tends to say "God loves me and a few others who call themselves believing and sanctified but he does not love the world; for the world has done nothing for the case that God loves it."[61] But, says Tillich God loves all people, which means "indeed the sinners, the heathen and the unbelievers […] those who do not want to know anything about

[60] Since E.P. Sanders' and others' work on First Century Palestinian Judaism, theologians have become less prone to the caricature of Pharisees as self-righteous. By 'Pharisee' and 'pharisaic' Tillich means however just this characteristic.
[61] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 90

him [...] who are far from him in their deeds and being."[62] The sign of the Holy Spirit is the believer who gives God the glory by not judging others and instead "loves those whom God loves – all people – and says of no-one: he is lost."[63] All this is consonant with the theology of religions expressed in the first version.

In the second section of the sermon, the situation of the Christian believers themselves is under the spotlight. The topic is judgement, but not a judgement of wrath. The daily, inner judgement of grace is a judgement based on "what we let God do to us."[64]

i. The greatest work of the Spirit

The Spirit's work is described as bringing the light (Christ) to the "darkness of the heathen, the darkness of unbelief and the twilight of weak and trembling hearts which strive from the darkness into the light."[65] And when the Spirit does this work of illumination, "we must decide and it will be shown whether we are judged or not."[66]

Tillich then describes three situations where the Spirit works to illuminate the believer, the hearing of God's word, the witness of a work of selfless love, or the conviction of sin. Each of these is an opportunity for repentance, coming into the light or an opportunity for fleeing the light and remaining in sin. If no repentance follows, "then deep darkness comes over us, then Jesus goes far away from us and that is the judgement, that we are separated from Jesus."[67]

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[62] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 90
[63] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 91.
[64] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 91.
[65] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 91.
[66] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 91.
[67] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 92.

However, now Tillich introduces a further work of the Spirit, the greatest work, which continues after the believer has been separated from Jesus:

> We stand under judgement. Jesus is far from us. God's wrath is near to us and tangible daily. The darkness has become completely dark through continual judgement. Then the Spirit collects all the punishments of God in the face of Christ and carries them with heart-rending violence into the darkness. The Crucified one speaks to us: Your sins are forgiven; I want to stay with you, even in the darkness, even in judgement, I have rent heaven to come to you, now rend your heart, that hard heart to come to me! You need do nothing, you need hold nothing to be true! You may simply believe God wants to stay with you.[68]

When the Spirit thus speaks to us and our conscience is gripped with unconquerable power, then "the decision is complete".[69] Whoever rejects this Spirit *of grace* has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. The rejection is not constituted by a lack of response (there is a double negation of human activity in the words of Christ), but only by a refusal to receive.

ii. The reversal of pharisaic thinking

The daily inward judgement of the Spirit is still a deadly serious matter, for final judgement is the result of the daily judgement of the Spirit. Every step can still be one on the way to the abyss. But the heaviest judgement is unawareness of the judgement of the Spirit, having shut oneself to the rays of the Spirit's light and thus being given over to blindness, even blindness which is superficially honourable and dutiful toward the church. Thus, listeners should test themselves, see if they are resisting the Spirit in any area. Such rigorous self-testing while maintaining eschatological hope for the unevangelised is, says Tillich, "the reversal of all pharisaic thinking".[70] Believers do not know when the

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[68] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 93.
[69] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 93.
[70] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 94.

light has come to another, and Tillich repeats the eschatological possibility of an encounter with Christ.[71]

The tropes of Tillich's attempted reversal of pharisaic thinking are the same in the first, unfinished version of the sermon: grace and hope for the unevangelised; testing and judgement for those within the fold. But when we compare the two versions in relation to their treatment of the faltering Christian, the difference in outlook is striking.

iii. God in Christ accepts the sinner and the doubter

Two innovations in the later version stand out as being particularly significant: the removal of truth as a standard to be reached, and the agency of Christ in the context of human passivity and inability.

In the first version, the imperative to take the truth proves to be too high for the sinner who also doubts. In the second version, the sinner need not do anything or hold anything to be true as a precondition for the hope that God in Christ wants to stay with him. Since Christ moves into the darkness of the doubter, truth is no longer a standard to be reached.

This difference is reflected in Tillich's reordering of his taxonomy of judgements. In the first version, the Christian who resists the Spirit becomes locked into the most awful and heavy spiral of judgement, rendering him unable to respond to any gospel message. In the second version, the heaviest judgement is lack of awareness of the Spirit's judgement, which means not even having sin consciousness. This is like the familiar pastoral comfort of Protestant

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[71] See No. 15, *EGW* VII, 95.

orthodoxy, expressed by Tillich in sermon §11 earlier that month, that fear of being lost means one need not fear one is lost.

Thus, the sense of inevitability in the Spirit's judgement is removed: In the first version, doubt is a consequence of sin which then in turn creates an obstacle to receiving the gospel of grace (with God vanishing), which in turn leads to despair and blaspheming of the Holy Spirit. In the second version of the sermon that apparently inevitable cycle of judgement is interrupted when the voice of the Crucified one removes the demand to do anything or believe anything to be true. In the second version, the Spirit's judgement drives the believer to decision, but not to despair. An effective response to the Spirit and to Christ is however not defined as a successful act of repentance, but passive reception, "simply believ[ing] God wants to stay with you".

How should we characterise the re-writing of the sermon from the end of May? Perhaps every preacher knows the experience of having to abandon a sermon and start again. But this surely amounts to much more than a general sermon-writing crisis, due to the utter despair expressed in the first version.

I suggest we recognise the crisis as an experience of the breakthrough of grace in Tillich's emerging theology. My concept of breakthrough is not carrying great ontological weight, and I am not making some crude suggestion this was a conversion experience. I am however intentionally using the Tillichian term.[72]

Based on the sources we have for understanding Tillich – the early sermons – this is a striking moment of crisis which produces a contrast. In the

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[72] Uwe Carsten Scharf's study of the term in Tillich's development from 1913 onwards could be brought into fruitful conversation with the earliest sermons. See Uwe Carsten Scharf, *The Paradoxical Breakthrough of Revelation. Interpreting the Divine-Human Interplay in Paul Tillich's Work, 1913–1964*. TBT 83, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1999).

first version, the Christian troubled by indwelling sin and doubt is condemned to judgement for the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit, unable to respond to the gospel. In the second version, that troubled Christian is visited by Christ in the darkness and told his ability or inability to do or believe is no precondition for grace.

Tillich's teacher Martin Kähler drew attention to the pitfalls of seeking any foundation for assurance in one's own piety.[73] In the second version of the sermon, Tillich therefore makes a Kählerian correction to lift himself out of despair. Yet Tillich also goes beyond Kähler in affirming not only the sinner but also the doubter by having Christ speak "you need hold nothing to be true".[74]

Looking ahead to the wider context of Tillich's work, there is a strong correspondence between this rewritten sermon and Tillich's rather famous American sermon 'You Are Accepted', from the 1940s. There, Tillich conjures a nameless voice which speaks to the despairing and a wave of light which breaks into the darkness of "our indifference, our weakness, our hostility […] when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades".[75] This is all

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[73] "Nur empfangend, nicht begründend kommt unser Selbst in Betracht […] nicht eine Wandlung unseres Seelen- oder Leibesbestandes ist das Neue, auf dem die Heilsgewißheit gründet […] einzig und allein die neue uns eingeräumte Stellung zu Gott, in die wir durch unsre Glaubensstellung einzutreten vermochten […] allein diese gewaltige Ermöglichung des Abbarufens [*sic!*] trägt unsre Heilsgewißheit"; Kähler, *Die Heilsgewißheit*, 35. See also Martin Kähler, *Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre von dem evangelischen Grundartikel aus im Abrisse dargestellt* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966 [3rd edition, 1905]), 228. However, it is just this faith which eludes the doubter.

[74] For more on the influence of Kähler on Tillich, see Gunther Wenz, 'Die reformatorische Perspektive: Der Einfluß Martin Kählers auf Tillich', in *Paul Tillich: Studien zu einer Theologie der Moderne*, ed. Hermann Fischer (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1989), 62–89. However, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, despite Tillich's claim to follow Kähler, as a student he found himself often in opposition, more interested in idealism than justification.

[75] In the sermon from the 1940s, it is and "it is as though a voice were saying: 'You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. *Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!*" 'You Are Accepted', in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (London: Penguin, 1964), 163.

prefigured in the May 1909 sermon, where the Crucified one speaks a message exhorting the sinner-doubter in Lichtenrade to rest, assured of grace.

Therefore, I claim that with the appropriate qualifications we can think of the process of failing to finish the first draft and rewriting of the sermon for 31st May as one early source of what would become the justification of the *doubter*.[76] At the same time, following such great moralism and highly-strung standards of piety, this is also the most striking early instance of such a tangible sense of grace for the *sinner*. Grace afforded to the doubter does not merely coincide with grace to the sinner. Rather, the justification of the doubter emerges out of Tillich's primary struggle with the traditional problem of assurance of salvation and out of the sense of grace which recognises first and foremost the justification of the sinner. Yet the voice of grace addresses a peculiarly modern subject, embroiled in both sin and doubt.

Having identified such a striking contrast in the rewritten sermon, there must be an attempt at description and discernment of whether this preacher's crisis is indicative of a more significant shift in Tillich's thinking. Let us now see what this apparent breakthrough meant for Tillich's last sermons in Lichtenrade, in June 1909.

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[76] As much as we would find it simpler to think so, ideas do not have singular sources. As mentioned in the introduction, the idiosyncrasies of autobiographers attend the biographer just as well. In this case, the desire to have a manageable narrative and interesting drama is strong motivation for isolating a significant turning point in this rewriting of the sermon which can be reified and exalted to the one point from which everything else flowed.

5. June sermons in Lichtenrade

The four sermons of June 1909 provide us with some evidence that the experience of breakthrough described above coincided with a more general theological change in Tillich's outlook, and bore fruit for the development of his justification of the doubter.

Admittedly, the first sermon includes a barbed comment about critics of Christianity[77] and the final sermon is rather unremarkable paraenesis about love of enemies and non-retaliation.[78] However the second and third sermons are indeed markedly different.

Preaching on the goodness of creation in the second June sermon, Tillich talks of the divine essence of all creatures through his breath in them, of God's joy in creation[79] and a corresponding freedom and affirmation of the human which should issue from divine joy. Rather than austere appearance, humans should, as the flowers, clothe themselves for the joy of others.[80] Sexual intercourse is not undignified but befitting the body:[81] natural love is, like all creation, very good:

> It is the foundation of all fellowship already in nature. Penetrate now more deeply, with a free, god-open sense, into the mysteries of his life, you will again

[77] No. 16, June 1909, *EGW* VII, 96. This sermon (about the disciples in Gethsemane) is an encouragement to pray, emphasising the weakness of the flesh. Only Christ could stay awake. However, Tillich's piqued admonition to children that they should "loathe those who laugh about the Bible, church services and confirmation classes and push every mocker far from you", while perhaps being good advice for dealing with bullies, lacks even that generosity toward the unevangelised masses propagated in earlier sermons.
[78] No. 19, 13th June 1909, *EGW* VII, 110–115.
[79] No. 17, June 1909, *EGW* VII, 99.
[80] No. 17, *EGW* VII, 99.
[81] No. 17, *EGW* VII, 100.

> and again see that is wisdom, holy wisdom and not sin. God enjoys the joy of all creatures […].[82]

Joy and enjoyment had been handled rather austerely in the earlier Lichtenrade sermons. So much time is spent decrying false forms of joy in the world, particularly sensuality. But this sermon, while by no means libertine, celebrates the enjoyment to be had in God's world, including the enjoyment of sexuality.

i. Grace in weakness

The third June sermon is about the Spirit's help in weakness, from Romans 8. Tillich divides his reflections into the weaknesses of the body and of the soul, both of which are no barrier for the Spirit's intercession. When the body is weak, whether in times of illness and feverous confusion, or in the cry for help from the dying or endangered, or in the situation of the mentally disabled: inability is overcome by the gracious work of the Spirit. Thus we cannot be separated from God. When the soul is weak, because bereaved and anxious, or in times of spiritual drought and doubt, the Spirit sighs for us.

Tillich's description of doubt is striking as it comes from a pastor:

> the poisonous arrow of doubt of the living God has hit our soul […] and allows no joyful looking up of the child to the father, and God turns away his gaze more and more. Meanwhile the burden of hidden guilt crushes the heart and stands like a wall between God and us, blocking our access. And all our prayers are as spoken into the terror and all our church services seem to us so futile, superfluous and irritating and God's wrath lies on us more and more heavily and our gifts wither. Then the times of weakness are there where we have only one consolation: The Spirit of God groans for us […].[83]

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[82] No. 17, *EGW* VII, 101. The goodness of creation involves an implicit justification of evil as a necessary price of freedom and life: hunger and fighting among animals is part of their good life in the service of new life. Sin is the creature's longing to be like God, demanding an end to its finitude. See No. 17, *EGW* VII, 102–103.

[83] No. 18, June 1909, *EGW* VII, 107.

Doubt and guilt are distinct but coincide: there is a double predicament for which the believer seeks a remedy and for whom the Spirit provides:

> Wonderful, holy consolation, this quiet and comforting work of the Spirit! Now there is really nothing more that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, for God wants to stay with us with his Spirit, also in the hour of weakness, where we notice nothing of him.[84]

Tillich repeatedly insists that weakness, inability, lack of knowledge, and even lack of conscious belief are all no disqualification for the Spirit's gracious work. This emphasis on the believer's passivity is indeed a marked contrast to the preoccupation with one's own spiritual stance exhibited in earlier Lichtenrade sermons.

ii. Disability, inability, and grace

An interesting aspect of this sermon on weakness is Tillich's consideration of the severely disabled. I mentioned earlier his severity and implicit theodicy directed toward disabled congregations in March and early May. Yet in this sermon from June, apparently addressed to the general congregation, the tone with which he mentions disability shows some sensitivity. The predicament of the severely mentally handicapped is now "one of the most terrible puzzles of the divine rule of the world".[85] He does not proclaim that disability (and the ensuing social isolation it may entail) is some fortunate divine pedagogy, but emphasises the dark tragedy of "the unhappy, who are either partly or fully robbed of their own intellectual life and spend their days in a never-ending night."[86] But in this

[84] No. 18, *EGW* VII, 109–110.
[85] No. 18, *EGW* VII, 106.
[86] No. 18, *EGW* VII, 106.

extreme situation of human passivity, the Spirit intercedes and God "takes them in his arms, even if they do not know it".[87]

Tillich's starting point was despair on account of indwelling sin and doubt, but by the end of his time in Lichtenrade, he had developed a vision of a God who, before all human effort and ability, meets humanity with grace and overcomes despair. Although Tillich does not use this terminology here, the *paradox* of God's Yes and No is present. Once Tillich had been more fully grasped by the gospel of divine grace and human passivity, the sources point to a new attitude in his ministry to the disabled. This change coincided with a changed attitude towards humanity's shared inability: the inability to be free of sin and doubt.

[87] No. 18, *EGW* VII, 107.

Chapter 5

Schelling and history (1909–11)

1. Introduction

Following the spell of such existentially demanding sermons, Tillich immersed himself in the intellectually demanding world of speculative idealist philosophy. Tillich spent the summer mornings of 1909 reading Schelling in the village of Lichtenrade, until he moved back to his father's Berlin manse in October 1909. Here, Tillich made progress towards a theological licentiate until early 1910, when he heard about a scholarship for a doctorate in philosophy. Anyone who could complete the dissertation and exams by 1st August 1910 received a fee waiver.[1]

Seizing the opportunity, Tillich used preparatory work for the theological licentiate and turned it into a philosophical doctorate, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy. Its Presuppositions and Principles*.[2] Tillich's original plan for the theological licentiate had been similar, though more squarely addressing the issue of the absoluteness of Christianity, as thematised by Troeltsch.[3] Tillich completed this *philosophical* dissertation by 11th June 1910,[4] being examined on 27th July.[5] His doctoral lecture, *Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte*, was given on 22nd August and demonstrated

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[1] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 156–157.
[2] Paul Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy. Its Presuppositions and Principles*. Translated by Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974). The original is *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positive Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien*, EGW IX, 154–272.
[3] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 155–156, referring to archival discoveries by Erdmann Sturm.
[4] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 392 = *UWA*, Sygn. F 215.
[5] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 398–399 = *UWA*, Sygn. F 215.

his broad grasp of the field of idealistic philosophy. In this period, he had also completed a long essay, *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling*.

In the seven months between August 1910 and April 1911, Tillich worked on his theological licentiate, *Mysticism and Guilt Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, handing it in mid-May 1911, just after the beginning of his curacy in Nauen.[6] Thus, although the respective publication dates were 1910 and 1912, the intensive period of Schelling research and writing was carried out between his pastoral work in Lichtenrade and the beginning of his curacy in Nauen, from the Summer of 1909 to the Spring of 1911.[7] Whilst a curate, Tillich also held his private lecture in Kassel on *Die christliche Gewissheit und der historische Jesus* (September 1911).[8] I include it in this chapter as the last expression of his academic writing 1909-1911.[9] In the following two chapters, I turn to the sermons of 1911-1913.

The Tillich who wrote two dissertations on Schelling is quite foreign to the English-language theological world.[10] Therefore, without being so foolish as to attempt an introduction to Schelling for theologians, I think it prudent to explore

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[6] He sent off the dissertation on 12th May 1911. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 401 = Universitätsarchiv Halle: Rep 27 Nr. 855.
[7] For more detail see Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 230–231.
[8] Not Whitsun, as previously believed. See *EGW* XII, 665.
[9] Tillich still had theological examinations during his Nauen curacy: for the licentiate (16th December 1911), for the licentiate (April 1912) and finally, in early May 1912, the final church exams (*Zweites Theologisches Examen*) which follow every curacy.
[10] English-language philosophy generally neglected Schelling, who was long seen as a lesser Hegel and enemy of natural science. However, since the 1990s, there has been more interest within English-language philosophy. Daniel Whistler traces this back to Andrew Bowie's pioneering work, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy. An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1992), Žižek's popularisation of Schelling as a resource for postmodern thought, and interest in Heidegger's reading of Schelling following the translation of his lectures on the *Freiheitsschrift*, culminating in the foundation of a North American Schelling Society in 2012. See Daniel Whistler, 'Schellings Rezeption: Englischsprachige Philosophie', in Paul Ziche (ed), *Schelling-Handbuch* (Weimar/Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, *forthcoming*), *page numbers forthcoming*. However, all this has been rather late for English-language theology.

some very basic questions: Why on earth did Tillich care about Schelling? What was Schelling doing for Tillich? After all, Tillich went to Halle to be imbued in the conservative, bible-focused theology of Kähler and Lütgert.

In this chapter I will show that Tillich was part of the wider trend among theologians wanting to engage with the broader legacy of German idealism after Kant. Furthermore, in Tillich's positive milieu, Schlatter and Lütgert found in Schelling a philosopher who affirmed the history of revelation as a way of explicating the divine will. These encouragements to look to Schelling were facilitated by his philosophy lecturer Medicus, who influenced his reading of Schelling. Tillich, like his positive professors, hoped to find in Schelling a way to think about the relation of the absolute to the history of religions and take the history of religions seriously as a history of revelation.

Next, I exposit relevant sections and themes of both dissertations, associated writings, and the Kassel lecture, insofar as they help us understand Tillich's development toward the justification of the doubter, and particularly the role Schelling may have played. I argue we find some elements clearly pointing toward 1919, such as the Schellingian notion that because human nature is God-positing, atheists also have indestructible identity with God. Furthermore, there is recourse to an undoubtable condition of thought, expressed in Schelling's language of 'unpreconceivable being' [*unvordenkliches Sein*] or Fichte's I (*das Ich*). In the Kassel lecture, justification is applied to thought, freeing from a "law of double faith". However, in the philosophical dissertation, God's act of revelation is *redemption* from doubt; this is not the justification of the doubter; it is a step further to say this doubt is a kind of faith.

2. The turn to Schelling

Tillich later describes himself as having emerged from Halle as part of a group who "wanted to renew classical German philosophy".[11] This group stood in contrast to conservative mediating theologians like his teacher Kähler, and the Ritschlian school. Tillich also say his "fundamental theological problem arose in applying the relation of the absolute, which is implied in the idea of God, to the relativity of human religion".[12]

In these brief comments from his autobiography of 1936, Tillich sums up a key issue driving his turn to Schelling after Halle. The theological problem could be expressed in various manners, such as the question about the absoluteness of Christianity (as formulated by Troeltsch), or the possibility and grounding of particular revelation in the context of the universal. Nowadays, devoid of the language of idealism, it is perhaps best known as the 'scandal of particularity'; why worship a first-century Nazarene Rabbi? In later sermons we will see this issue was connected to Tillich's rejection of exclusive soteriological models. Yet Tillich always also approached the issue as a philosophical problem.

Tillich told an 'autodidactic' story about stumbling over a copy of Schelling's works in a bookshop and becoming enthralled.[13] Tillich had a strong interest in philosophy which began at school and was deepened as a young student. We saw in an earlier chapter how Tillich's critical student essay on Fichte and the Gospel of John underlined Fichte's deficiencies for Christian theology, whereas the *Monismusschrift* held out hope of a convergence of Christianity and

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[11] Tillich to Thomas Mann, 23rd May 1943, *GW* XIII, 25.
[12] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 40.
[13] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 47.

idealist philosophy. In the Breslau University archives, Georg Neugebauer has uncovered Tillich's 1910 self-description of his philosophical training which points to the decisive influence of his philosophy lecturer, "Privatdozent Dr. Medicus. Through him I was pointed to German idealism, particularly to Fichte."[14]

i. Fritz Medicus

Tillich's philosophy lecturer, Fritz Medicus (1876-1956), was in the process of facilitating a Fichte-renaissance.[15] Tillich was not only familiar with Medicus' exposition of Fichte,[16] but also exhibited affinity with (not just) Medicus' philosophical programme of going beyond Kant towards Fichte.[17] Neugebauer says Tillich's turn to Schelling therefore appears surprising and Fichte would have been a more obvious choice.[18]

However, Schelling certainly belonged to the pantheon of idealist philosophers taught by Medicus, as evidenced by Tillich's student writings, and Medicus' proficiency and interest in Schelling's philosophy.[19] Neugebauer points out the affinity between Medicus' and Tillich's accounts of the significance of Schelling. Tillich, following Medicus, recognises Schelling's solution to the

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[14] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 393–394 = *UWA*, Sygn. F 215.
[15] See Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and Alf Christophersen, 'Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance. Paul Tillich und sein philosophischer Lehrer Fritz Medicus', *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte* 11 (2004): 52–78.
[16] Fritz Medicus, *J.G. Fichte. Dreizehn Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität Halle* (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1905).
[17] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 146–148. See also Marc Boss, 'Which Kant? Whose Idealism? Paul Tillich's Philosophical Training Reappraised', in Russell Re Manning and Samuel Shearn (eds), *Returning to Tillich. Theology and Legacy in Transition* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 12–30, and Marc Boss, 'Paul Tillich and the Twentieth Century Fichte Renaissance: Neo-Idealistic Features in his Early Accounts of Freedom and Existence', *BNAPTS* 36/3 (Summer 2010), 8–21.
[18] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 146–155.
[19] See for example Fritz Medicus, 'Rezension von F.W.J. Schelling, Werke, Auswahl in drei Bänden', *Kant-Studien* 13 (1908), 317–328.

problem of freedom; that freedom "is only possible through free will [*Willkür*], i.e., through the possibility of a reasonable will to enter into contradiction with itself.[20] Reading Schelling under Medicus' influence, Tillich "interprets this [Schellingian] principle of free will [*Willkür*] as prerequisite for the thought of the history of revelation."[21] In contrast to Fichte, in Schelling Tillich had found a philosopher who would help him talk about God and revelation within the history of religions.[22]

ii. Adolf Schlatter and Wilhelm Lütgert

A further clue to Tillich's turn to Schelling is found in his letter to Alfred Fritz from 1909:

> In case authorities like Schlatter and Schmuhl [W. Lütgert] mean something to you, I will tell you I have now arrived at the philosophical presuppositions of both: the second Schelling […] On every side I am discovering a new basic foundation of Schmulian [Lütgertian] thought, even in the individual psychologumena […]. The idea of "free theology"[23] becomes thereby an illusion, as far as Schlatter – Schmuhl wants to fulfil that. The concept of observation [*Beobachtung*] comes from the voluntarism and irrationalism of Schelling, in no way from natural science, where it has a completely different meaning: "God is, what he wants; his will must be researched", before it can be said what he "must" be? What do you say to this quote? And where should

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[20] Tillich, 'Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes' (1954), *GW* IV, 133–144; here: 137. This later text is referring to Medicus' view of Schelling, which Tillich shares. Neugebauer argues this is consistent with Tillich's view in 1910–1911. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 153.

[21] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 154.

[22] For more on how both Fichte's and Schelling's understanding of freedom assisted Tillich, see Christian Danz, 'Theologischer Neuidealismus. Zur Rezeption der Geschichtsphilosophie Fichtes bei Friedrich Gogarten, Paul Tillich und Emanuel Hirsch', *Fichte-Studien* 36 (2012): 199–215; Christian Danz, 'Freedom, sin and the absoluteness of Christianity: reflections on the early Tillich's Schelling-reception', *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 80 (2019): 115–126. For the fullest account of Schelling's influence on Tillich in English, see Russell Re Manning, *Theology at the End of Culture. Paul Tillich's Theology of Culture and Art* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 59–103. For an overview of recent research on Tillich's reception of Schelling, see Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 25–34.

[23] What Tillich calls "freie Theologie", is not the free theology which departs entirely from confessional standards in the style of David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874). Rather, I think he means theology in the line of such as Isaak Dorner (1809–1884), which, while remaining broadly orthodox, attempts to ground theology not simply in scripture and historical creeds as authorities, but expects theology to make use of reason, even if this allows room for grounding theology in the subjective experience of faith. This fits Tillich's statement that "free theology" is something one could imagine Schlatter and Lütgert attempting.

> it be searched for? In the history of revelation! […] Schmuhl has it from Baader, who stands in a mutual relation of dependency with Schelling.[24]

As Neugebauer has commented,[25] in 1909, Tillich discovers in the "second Schelling" themes and conceptual foundations which he has already seen affirmed in the theologies of Schlatter and Lütgert.

Tillich attended many of Lütgert's courses in Halle as an undergraduate. In his self-description submitted for the Licenciate in 1911, Tillich characterises the lectures and "expressly the personal conversation [with Lütgert] as the foundations of my theological education."[26] Grouping Lütgert with Schlatter as a unit, "Schlatter – Schmuhl", as he does in the letter quoted above, is appropriate. Schlatter was nearly fifteen years older than Lütgert and a leading figure among 'positive' theologians, important for Lütgert's own development.[27] A reviewer of Tillich's theological dissertation understands Tillich's interpretation of Schelling as having been influenced by Schlatter.[28]

After Karl Barth, many are used to associating conservative Protestant voices with a repudiation of philosophical grounding. But in the late 19th and early 20th Century, the influential 'liberal' Ritschlian school was strongly opposed to

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[24] *EGW* VI, 76–77.
[25] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 151–152.
[26] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 149 = Universitätsarchiv Halle: Rep 27 Nr. 855. Lütgert was also a friend of Tillich's father.
[27] See Peter Müller, *Alle Gotteserkenntnis entsteht auf Vernunft und Offenbarung. Wilhelm Lütgerts Beitrag zur theologischen Erkenntnistheorie*. Studien zur Systematischen Theologie und Ethik 63 (Wien: LIT, 2012), 57.60–62.
[28] August Dorner (1846–1920) says Tillich's interpretation proceeded "auf Anregung von Schlatter"; August Dorner, 'Rezension von Tillich, Lic. Theol. Dr. Paul: Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung', *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 6 (1913), 178.

metaphysics, while some conservative thinkers sought philosophical expression or grounding for their biblical faith.[29]

Studying under Lütgert, being philosophically inclined, and living within the 'positive' milieu, Tillich is very likely to have already read Schlatter's philosophical lectures for theologians *Die philosophische Arbeit seit Cartesius: Ihr ethische und religiöser Ertrag*, as a student.[30] It appeared in the conservative theological series *Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie* in 1906.[31]

In Schlatter's account, Fichte appears as villain for his ahistorical Christology and rejection of the doctrine of justification.[32] Schelling on the other hand is defended for his move towards Jacob Böhme (1575–1624), because he recognises in our will something which is before thinking and choosing, "*die Sucht*" (a primary desire),[33] which originates from the living God.[34] For Schlatter, this account of humanity emerging from nature and driven by desire is more

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[29] Perhaps this tendency is an inheritance of the German supranaturalist theologians such as Gottlob Christian Storr (1746–1805), who wanted to not only believe in the reality of supernatural revelation but, instrumentalising Kant for purposes foreign to his intention, "attempt to establish the authority of Scripture in a new way, namely […] on the ground of the generally human". Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Problemgeschichte der neueren evangelischen Theologie in Deutschland. Von Schleiermacher bis zur Barth und Tillich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 39. It is fascinating to consider that supranaturalist Storr was Schelling's *Doktorvater*. Schelling was strongly opposed to Storr's rejection of biblical criticism and misuse of Kant. However, on a deeper level they share an affinity, since both wish to find a way of talking about revelation as being necessary. See George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany. Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 42–43.

[30] He certainly read the second edition of 1910, quoting from it in the opening paragraph of his theological licentiate. See Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt Consciousness*, 21.

[31] Adolf Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit seit Cartesius: Ihr ethische und religiöser Ertrag*. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie (1906). In what follows I will quote from the fifth edition, a reprint of the 1923 3rd edition, *Die philosophische Arbeit seit Cartesius: Ihr ethische und religiöser Ertrag* (Gießen: Brunnen, 1981), which was also authorised by Schlatter. The lectures were well received, especially by Lütgert, and also Karl Holl, who had attended the original lectures in person. See Werner Neuer, *Adolf Schlatter*, 405.

[32] Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit*, 170–177.

[33] The German word *Sucht* nowadays means above all 'addiction', but the word also has the sense of desire or yearning as exhibited in the word *Sehnsucht* (which we translate 'yearning').

[34] Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit*, 180–181.

obviously scientific than a Platonic system.[35] Schlatter also praises Schelling for "coming as close to the understanding of Christ as this is possible without giving up the Kantian thesis."[36]

Franz von Baader (1765-1841) is Schlatter's favourite: a guiding star for Schelling II.[37] Unlike Kant, Baader affirms that God witnesses to himself in creation. Thus, theology is "anthropocentric [...] for God makes himself recognizable in the work of God which forms us."[38] Tillich also believes Lütgert is drawing heavily on Baader, as we saw in the letter above. And an affirmation of experience as a source for theology is also characteristic of Lütgert's theology. Lütgert affirms the "inherent religious faculty [*Anlage*] according to creation" which is given to humanity in its essence.[39] Related to this is another significant point of agreement between Schelling, Schlatter, Lütgert and Tillich: the affirmation of "the history of revelation as medium of explication of the divine will."[40] Therefore, despite Medicus' considerable influence on Tillich, it is important to remember that it is quite probable that Lütgert encouraged Tillich to study Schelling in greater depth, as a philosopher amenable to the modern-positive cause.[41]

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[35] Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit*, 182.
[36] Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit*, 190–191.
[37] Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit*, 191.
[38] Schlatter, *Die philosophische Arbeit,* 198. For more on Baader's influence on Schlatter, see Neuer, *Adolf Schlatter*, 103–107.
[39] Lütgert, *Schöpfung und Offenbarung. Eine Theologie des ersten Artikels*, Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1934), 65. Unfortunately, there has been little work done on Lütgert. I rely here on Peter Müller's recent monograph, which gives biographical overview but mostly deals with Lütgert's mature theological position. See Peter Müller, *Alle Gotteserkenntnis entsteht auf Vernunft und Offenbarung. Wilhelm Lütgerts Beitrag zur theologischen Erkenntnistheorie*. Studien zur Systematischen Theologie und Ethik 63 (Wien: LIT, 2012).
[40] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 152.
[41] Lütgert was most probably supervisor for Tillich's first attempt at a theological dissertation (i.e., working on the material for the theological dissertation which then became a philosophical doctorate). See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 152–153.

iii. Overcoming Troeltsch: preparatory theological work

Archival research by Erdmann Sturm has revealed the working title of the first planned theological licentiate was *Die Konstruktion der Religionsgeschichte und die Absolutheit des Christentums in Schellings 'positiver' Philosophie*.[42] In addition, a short introduction to the first – theological – form of the dissertation has been discovered.[43] As the title suggests, with its coincidence of 'history-of-religions' and 'the absoluteness of Christianity', the dissertation is an answer to Troeltsch:

> The task of the systematician of the history-of-religions school, to contest that the absoluteness of Christianity is verifiable on the grounds of the history of religions, stands in no other relation to the present work, other than that it influenced the formulation and specification of the theme. […] When two such exceptional students [*Kenner*] of the history of religions as Schelling and Troeltsch – and Schelling knew to speak of [quite] some history-of-religions material within revelation – come to so opposite results, then this is due to the difference of the concept of God.[44]

Tillich's plan for a theological dissertation was to use Schelling to show that Troeltsch's apparent weakening of the absoluteness of Christianity via historical method is wrong.[45] Troeltsch's contention had been that one could not arrive at dogmatic statements via historical method, since this only ever discerned historical probabilities; this renders all religious traditions, as

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[42] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 156. The archival material is in *PTAH*, box 101: 001, notebook 2 (#864).
[43] PTAH, 101/2, notebook 2, 6–7. This also was discovered by Erdmann Sturm, and is cited in part by Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 159–160.
[44] PTAH, 101/2, notebook 2, 6–7. Cited in Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 159–160.
[45] See Neugebauer, Tillichs frühe Christologie, 160.

historical sources, principally equal.[46] The implication for Troeltsch was what positive Christians perceived as a rejection of dogma.[47]

Troeltsch believed attempts to show Christianity's truth or superiority (the absoluteness of Christianity) using the history of religions underhandedly work with a dogmatic assumption of the same: "The construction of Christianity as the absolute religion is – from a historical way of thinking and with historical means – not possible."[48]

Thus, this first (theological) conception of the dissertation on Schelling's history of religions clearly connects with our impression of Tillich's turn to Schelling as motivated by a desire to think about the relation of the absolute to the history of religions, and thus take the history of religions seriously as a history of revelation.[49] However, as we will see below in the exposition of his dissertations, Schelling was also an important voice critiquing what Tillich saw as Kantian rationalism and moralism.

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[46] Ernst Troeltsch, 'Ueber historische und dogmatische Methode der Theologie (1900)', in Friedemann Voigt (ed), *Ernst Troeltsch Lesebuch. Ausgewählte Texte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 2–25.

[47] For Troeltsch himself, it meant recognition of the cultural-subjective origin of dogma, and the impossibility of a dogmatics which did not humbly admit its epistemological limitations and situatedness. See Ulrich Schmiedel, 'Performative Practice: Ernst Troeltsch's Concept(s) of Christianity', in Christopher Adair-Toteff (ed.), *The Anthem Companion to Ernst Troeltsch*, (London/New York: Anthem Press, 2018), 83–104.

[48] Ernst Troeltsch, 'Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902)', in Friedemann Voigt (ed), *Ernst Troeltsch Lesebuch. Ausgewählte Texte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 26–44; here: 26.

[49] As Neugebauer comments, the critique of Troeltsch offered in this introduction to the first theological form of the dissertation also includes the charge that Troeltsch cannot overcome relativism, which Tillich repeats in the 1920s. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 160 and 318–328. For more on Tillich's reading of Troeltsch, see Folkart Wittekind, 'Absolutheit und Christologie im modernen Protestantismus. Tillichs Rezeption von Troeltschs Absolutheitsschrift im Kontext', in Ulrich Barth et al (eds), *Aufgeklärte Religion und ihre Probleme. Schleiermacher – Troeltsch – Tillich*. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 229–270.

3. The philosophical doctorate

The final form of Tillich's doctorate is not obviously concerned with overcoming Troeltsch.[50] Rather, Tillich exposits Schelling's history of religions, understanding it as the "focal point"[51] of his positive (i.e., late) philosophy. He does this in three parts, first introducing Schelling's philosophy, especially the doctrine of the potencies, the concept of God, and his understanding of God's relation to the world and humanity. The second part presents Schelling's history of religions, using the conceptual foundations of part one. In the third part, Tillich describes Schelling's concepts of religion and history.

Certainty or doubt are not themes in the foreground. Yet doubt is thematised in various sections, first in a passage on Schelling's doctrine of God in the positive philosophy, then in a section on Schelling's anthropology, and also in connection with the concept of revelation. I will exposit each of these, and a passage referring to the 'absolute paradox'.

i. Doubt and Schelling's Doctrine of God

The focus of Schelling's critique of theism is not theoretical doubt of God's existence, but the complaint that theism is anaemic, static, without the freedom articulated in the doctrine of the potencies.[52] Yet concerns about doubt do determine the conditions of Schelling's attempt to articulate the doctrine of God.

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[50] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 190. Tillich refers to Troeltsch in the dissertation in an apparently neutral way as merely another "idealistic system of the history of religion"; Paul Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion,* 40.
[51] Paul Tillich, The Construction of the History of Religion, 41; EGW IX, 160.
[52] See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 53. For a concise and readable introduction to Schelling's doctrine of God (and humanity), see the essay by Fritz Marti, 'Schelling on God and Man', *Studies in Romanticism* 3/2 (Winter 1964), 65–76. Fritz Marti was one of Medicus' doctoral students in 1920s Bern.

Reflecting on Kant's irresistible but intolerable concept of God,[53] a God who must be thought, yet is oppressive to thought, Schelling, (according to Tillich here) is lead to a

> concept of being that is prior to all thought, "unpreconceivable being," [*das unvordenkliche Sein*] that necessity of being that precedes all thought, which is a veritable abyss for human reason. It is the reality which is before all possibility, the beginning of all thought and is therefore itself not conceivable. In the face of this being, reason can do nothing; it is devoured by it. It is that whose existence is undoubted. The being of everything that proceeds from the potency is doubtful. For the potency is potential being and potential nonbeing. Therefore, doubt about that which precedes all potency is excluded. In philosophy, doubt relates to some present existing thing [*Seiendes*], asking whether it is that which truly is. True being is therefore always presupposed. That there is such [true being] cannot be proved by thought; for the last question always remains: Why is there anything at all? Why is there not nothing? There is no answer to this except the immediate certainty that something exists. If unpreconceivable being preceeds every concept, then the concept of God also cannot be applied to it; for then it [unpreconceivable being] would be something, it would have a concept. But it is *a priori* inconceivable. It is the *prius* of divinity, that which can be God (13:160). If God were only this *prius*, then he would be the absolute in the sense of the absolutely unrelated.[54]
>
> […]
>
> That being which precedes all thought, the *prius* of divinity, proves itself to be God by its lordship over being, and at the same time gives itself a relation to the concept because it *is* that which is, [it] brings to being.[55]

We should note here the emergence of a concept of unpreconceivable being,[56] "whose existence is undoubted", since "doubt always presupposes true being." The notion of an undoubtable condition which Tillich sees in Schelling is

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[53] See Christopher J. Insole, *The Intolerable God. Kant's Theological Journey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016).

[54] Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion*, *EGW* IX, 178–179. Nuovo's translation was not fit for purpose here. See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 59–60.

[55] Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion*, *EGW* IX, 180. The German at the end of this sentence is virtually untranslatable: "[…] das *prius* der Gottheit, erweist sich als Gott durch seine Herrschaft über das Sein und gibt sich zugleich ein Verhältnis zum Begriff dadurch, daß es das Seiende *ist*, zum Sein bringt." Nuovo's attempt is not bad. See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 61.

[56] I have chosen to use Dale Snow's attempt to translate the word *unvordenklich*: unpreconceivable. See Dale Snow, *Schelling and the End of Idealism* (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), 235n8.

something we saw in 1919, where Tillich uses the language of meaning rather than being, saying:

> Doubt of absolute meaning is not possible, for doubt assumes the affirmation of the sphere of meaning and [affirms] more clearly, the more deeply [doubt] is experienced.[57]

We can see here a Schellingian source of Tillich's talk of a God above God, and indeed also his later theory of religious symbols. For if 'unpreconceivable being' is for Schelling the *prius* of divinity, which "proves to be God by its lordship over being" and "gives itself" to the concept (of God), then here we have a conceptual scheme for thinking of divinity which exceeds but also gives birth to the all-too-human concept of God.

ii. God the ironist

Expositing Schelling's account of God's relation to creation and world history, Tillich notes how Schelling speaks of "the deep irony of all divine activity".[58] This divine irony is the deeper reason for people not being monotheists, or even believers at all. Schelling is drawing on Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829). In Schlegel's romantic doctrine of irony, the poet's irony is her knowingly "draw[ing] attention to [poetry's] inherent incompleteness and infinite interpretability."[59] Schelling says that art is called to – ironically – represent an infinite content in the most perfect, ultimate form. God is like a poet, who as creative ironist represents the infinite in creation, most perfectly in humanity, and represents the infinite in the historical process of the world through "the divine folly, the

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[57] *EGW* X/1, 219. In 1924, the same structure is displayed when he says, "the truth which the doubter seeks […] is not the goal, but the presupposition of all doubt even unto despair. It is the grasping of truth as the judgement of all knowledge of truth." Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 129.
[58] SW 14:24. See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 67 = EGW IX, 186–187.
[59] Fred Rush, *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 66.

absolute paradox of the cross of Christ."[60] This impossible representation of the infinite is carried out ironically, in humanity, and the cross points most clearly to the impossibility. God's power is thus displayed in the contradiction and absurdity of concomitant affirmation and denial,[61] a protest against "the law of contradiction as it has been commonly understood".[62]

For our purposes it is important to note here that the notion of absolute paradox connects Schelling's belief that God is divine ironist, revealing and concealing himself in creation and history, with his Christology, that the cross is the ultimate irony, the absolute paradox. Put this way, divine irony would be a possible way of formulating the basis for Tillich's theory of symbols, using Schelling. It is however most important to note that Schelling's notion of the absolute paradox refers to the cross but is framed in a romantic notion of irony.

iii. Schelling's religious anthropology

Schelling's history of religions implies humans are essentially religious: "the essential nature of the ego is to be God-positing; even the substance of atheistic consciousness is religious."[63] Even in denials of God, God affirms himself:

> Because being, which has come to itself in man, is the being of God, man is absolutely bound to God. Thus, he is God-positing before all knowing and willing, and stands in a relation to him that he cannot [himself] posit, which he only destroys as soon as he passes over into act.[64]

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[60] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 67 = *EGW* IX, 187.
[61] See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion,* 68 = *EGW* IX, 187.
[62] *SW* 14:25.
[63] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 123 = EGW IX, 237. See also Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 71 = EGW IX, 191.
[64] See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 125 = *EGW* IX, 239. On this occasion I have modified Nuovo's translation.

Thus, instead of imagining consciousness as an essentially atheistic canvas upon which representations of gods emerge, religion is natural. The strangest mythology is not merely the creation of consciousness but "the result of an involuntary process that is external to [consciousness]."[65] We can see here continuity with Tillich's later understanding of mythology and doctrine of religious symbols. In 1928, resisting (Marxist, Nietzschean and Freudian) reductionist interpretations of mythology, he says critical insights into the *choice* of symbols are useful, while insisting that the soul expresses itself religiously because the relationship to the "unconscious-transcendent" is constitutive of the soul.[66]

iv. Religion, revelation, and the sublation of doubt

In his exposition, Tillich shows how Schelling's understanding of religion exhibits a dialectic structure entailing a law-gospel distinction. The dialectic of mythology/natural religion (thesis), rational religion (antithesis) and Christianity/revelation (synthesis) can also be expressed as the overcoming of law (rational religion) by the gospel (revelation).[67]

In this typology, two further differentiations are made: between true and false religion, and between real and unreal religion. Thus in pagan mythology, polytheism and even some theism, however false its conceptions of the gods, the religion is real, i.e., "founded on a real relationship to God".[68] In contrast to

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[65] See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 127–135; citation: 133 = *EGW* IX, 241–249; citation: 247.
[66] See Tillich, 'Das religiose Symbol (1928)', in *MW/HW* 4, 213–228; here: 215–217.
[67] See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 135 = *EGW* IX, 249.
[68] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 131 = *EGW* IX, 244.

mythology, rational religion, as a product of mere reason, is unreal religion, which while useful for freeing from false (though real) religion, "is only a transitional phenomenon; it leads [eventually] to freedom, but it is still law."[69] Rational religion, of which pre-Kantian supernaturalism is the modern prototype, is an "unnatural supernaturalism",[70] which produces an unnatural God and a godless nature.

In the law-gospel distinction there is an emphasis on the *passivity* of humanity in the production of mythology – "man was aware these representations were produced within himself by an irresistible power".[71] Rational religion, in contrast, is such an interminable *effort* on the part of humanity – proofs and demonstrations without end. Revelation shares this passivity again, as an act of God which frees.

However, the distinction between law and gospel is not only used to compare human activity with passivity. It is also used to contrast religion and Christianity/revelation as the difference between servile obedience and personal relationship: "God has entered into a new relationship with man, one that is personal instead of natural, evangelical instead of legalistic, spiritual instead of unfree."[72]

Revelation is gospel because it is "an act by which God enters into a new relationship with man, not instruction about something always present."[73] By

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[69] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 135 = *EGW* IX, 249.
[70] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 136 = *EGW* IX, 249.
[71] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 133 = *EGW* IX, 247.
[72] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 139 = *EGW* IX, 253.
[73] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 138 = *EGW* IX, 252.

emphasising the newness of revelation in relation to thought, this implies a destructive moment in the process of revelation:

> thinking and willing, which have come to exist outside God, are made to *sacrifice themselves* on account of the personal revelation of God. As a result, the unity of the potencies is restored, and consciousness is once more God-positing by means of a conscious decision.[74]

The trope of the sacrifice of reason and willing in the moment of revelation, paired with the talk of a conscious decision, suggest Tillich's Schelling in 1910 is different to Tillich's justification of the doubter in 1919. Does this sacrifice of thought in 1910 imply the curtailing of autonomy?

Tillich is drawing here on Schelling's lectures on the *Philosophy of Revelation*, where thought is characterised as an incessant drive and movement. Here, philosophy is accompanied by the affect of astonishment (after Plato),[75] finding no rest until reaching the "absolutely astounding" which sublates thought itself.[76] Faith is this "condition of rest for thought".[77] The following passage from 1910 helps us understand more:

> He [man] must find the courage to believe the "absolutely astounding", the divine paradox; then he will […] lose all restlessness of spirit. Doubt is necessary as long as the possibility of further progress is present. The extreme to which it could come was the overthrowing of the potencies through the Fall; but God knows also how to encounter this extreme with another extreme, through a deed which sublates all doubt, from which all transition to another is cut off. "Something has to come in the development of it all where the human essence, which has an unending drive to progress and movement in itself, has to confess it cannot progress further, where it falls silent": the absolutely astounding.[78]

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[74] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 140 = *EGW* IX, 254; emphasis not original.
[75] "Es ist ein bekanntes Wort Platons: der Affekt des Philosophen (τὸ πάθος τοῦ φιλοσόφου) ist das Erstaunen, τὸ θαυμάζειν"; *SW* 14:12.
[76] *SW* 14:13.
[77] *SW* 14:13.
[78] Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion*, *EGW* IX, 252–253. Nuovo's translation needs some correction here. For example, *aufheben*: instead of dissolve, sublate; *Überschwenglichen*: instead of boundlessness, abundance; *absolut Erstaunenswerten*: instead of absolutely wonderful, absolutely

Tillich says that act of revelation in which God enters into a new relationship with man *sublates all doubt*.[79] This moment of the absolutely astounding, is the moment of *faith* in the absolutely astounding, which Tillich, and not Schelling,[80] calls faith in the divine paradox.[81] In this moment anxiety of spirit disappears. It occurs when knowledge confesses its inability to progress, when it falls silent. This reminds me strongly of the structure of Karl Heim's apologetic (criticised by Tillich in 1919), where humanity comes to a point of deepest need.[82] Even more so when – as we saw above – we consider Schelling's absolute paradox, framed in the romantic doctrine of irony, refers to the Cross of Christ.

Yet at the same time, in the passage which Tillich is drawing on here, the point of inability is for Schelling also the discovery of an undoubtable instance, where doubt can only confess "that it [i.e., the rest for thought] *is*".[83] This connects with Schelling's notion of unpreconceivable being, "a veritable abyss for human reason".[84] And as I said above, this exhibits a similar structure to 1919, where we find the affirmation of a sphere of meaning despite despair of particular meanings.

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astounding. See Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 138–139. Tillich is citing *SW* 14:14.27.

[79] By translating the notoriously difficult *aufheben* and cognates as 'sublate', I am not erasing the various nuances. If we focus on the possible meaning of cancelling, then Nuovo's "dissolve" seems more plausible, or something like 'renders doubt irrelevant'. If the metaphor of height entailed in the word is any guide, then this phrase could be translated 'the transcending of doubt'.

[80] As Lars Heinemann helpfully points out. See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 137.

[81] This is probably Tillich's Kierkegaardian gloss on Schelling.

[82] I will attend to Tillich's critique of Heim in the chapter on the Moabit sermons and church apologetics.

[83] *SW* 14:13. In the original, the emphasis is placed on the final word using a capital letter.

[84] Tillich, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion*, *EGW* IX, 178.

Insofar as the sublation of doubt is the *end* of doubt and thought's rest, in 1910 we have – describing now in the language of 1919 – redemption from doubt, but not the justification of the doubter. This is clear in those passages talking about the sacrifice of thought, which suggest faith's opposition to and overcoming of autonomy, and the Christological specification of the paradox. Yet insofar as we understand the sublation of doubt as rendering doubt no longer a barrier to faith, we can see how Tillich's reading of Schelling is open to what we find in 1919: the justification of the doubter as doubter, where serious doubt is a kind of faith.

4. Essays on Schelling and Fichte

i. Schelling, God and the absolute

Tillich produced two essays in connection with the doctoral thesis. The first, *Gott und das Absolute bei Schelling*,[85] was found in notebooks immediately preceding drafts of the philosophical doctorate.[86] It seems likely, given the implicit critique of Troeltsch,[87] that we have a rather developed form of material prepared for the first attempt at a theological dissertation.

The first part describes phases of Schelling's thought, showing continuities of intention and those turning points which led Schelling to see knowledge of God not simply in abstract intellectual intuition but also in "speculative history of religions"; in "the process in which God is progressively personalised".[88]

As in the doctorate, thought and science strive for the goal of the "absolutely astounding" [*absolut Erstaunenswerten*]. This absolutely astounding

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[85] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 9–54.
[86] See the editorial remarks, *EGW* X/1, 9.
[87] See *EGW* X, 10.
[88] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 21.

is however, in truth, Christ. Thus theology, philosophy and faith, while distinct, eventually converge.[89] The similarity with Tillich's later notion of an absolute paradox where philosophy and faith meet, is clear. In the doctorate, as we saw above, Schelling's "absolutely astounding" is equated with the "divine paradox".[90]

In the second part, Tillich describes the centrality of the will as metaphysical category in various phases of Schelling's thought, and his synthesis of pantheism and theism whereby God becomes "the one above being [*der Überseiende*], who has freedom to accept being or not."[91]

In the third part, the religious consequences of this metaphysics are spelled out: the understanding of Christ as a historical person who is also the climax of a suprahistorical history of God;[92] the overcoming of moralism, and the development of a nature-piety.[93] In this part, two passages are relevant. First, Tillich's sympathetic citation of Schelling's nature-mysticism suggests affinity for religious epistemology which does not strive to know and believe, but knows its unity with God is a grace "which cannot be sought but only found":

> In the quietest existence and without reflection, the plant reveals eternal beauty. It would be best for you also to know God through being silent and equally not knowing. This not-knowing knowledge recognises; before you claim that prediction [*Ahnden*] and believing are the highest.[94]

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[89] See Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 23–24.
[90] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 138.
[91] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 37.
[92] See Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 45–46.
[93] See Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 48–49.
[94] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X/1, 49.

Second, Tillich "insists on the decisive part played by justification by grace in the negative no less than in the positive philosophy",[95] distinguishing justification in the ethical sphere from justification in the sphere of truth:

> When one understands justification as the exclusively divine activity for our salvation then Schelling's religion is faith-in-justification [*Rechtfertigungsglaube*] in both periods […]. Schelling would not have recognised the equation: Justification equals forgiveness of sins. For the abyss between God and humanity is in no way only in the ethical area, just as the Fall is as much lying (in the sense of error, which wants to be truth) as sin, and its success was the whole world's need for redemption.[96]

ii. Fichte and freedom

The second essay connected to his philosophical thesis, *Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte*, was a lecture held on 22nd August 1910 in Breslau.[97] It appears to do little more than demonstrate his general grasp of idealist philosophy. Tillich presents Fichte as a positive corrective to Kant, stringently removing Kant's remaining empiricist and dogmatist tendencies.[98]

There is in one respect similarity between Tillich's account of Fichte and Tillich's justification of the doubter. In both cases there is an undoubtable foundation. Consider Tillich's comments about Spinoza:

> Spinoza thought the I [*das Ich*] drowned in the unity of the all-substance, and with pathos for the universe he preached this downfall into the absolute thing [*Ding*] as highest good. But just this pathos shows he also did not escape the I, but again and again thought the I as substrate of the downfall. The I cannot overcome itself, and it is not allowed to.[99]

Here, the foundation which cannot be doubted is the I [*das Ich*]. In 1919, it is the sphere of meaning which is assumed by (and thus undoubtable for) the

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[95] Marc Boss, 'Which Kant?', 28.
[96] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X, 51. Cited in Boss, 'Which Kant?', 28–29n69.
[97] Paul Tillich, 'Die Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip bei Fichte', *EGW* X/1, 55–62.
[98] See Tillich, 'Die Freiheit', *EGW* X/1, 55–56.
[99] Tillich, 'Die Freiheit', *EGW* X/1, 61.

doubter. But certitude of the self as a structural foundation will later form the basis for an undoubtable concept of God, as the unconditional, as made clear in his 1922 essay, *Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Philosophie*:

> [C]ertitude of God is certitude of the unconditional that is included in the certitude of the self and grounds it. […] There is, therefore, no certainty at all in which certitude of God is not implicitly included; but whether it is explicitly included is the decisive religious difference.[100]

As we saw above, in the philosophical doctorate it is Schelling's "unpreconceivable being," [*das unvordenkliche Sein*] which is beyond doubt, because before thought. In Tillich's reception of idealist philosophy, rather than adherence to any one conceptual scheme (i.e., the Fichtean I, the Schellingian *Unvordenkliche*), his writings exhibit adherence to a common transcendental principle: an undoubtable foundation of thought.

This is what makes it so easy for Tillich to frame his project as Heideggerian in 1951, where *being* is that which precedes all thought. However, given what we have read about Schelling's notion of unpreconceivable being, perhaps we can view the American *Systematic Theology* as a Heideggerian repackaging of a Schellingian project.[101]

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[100] Tillich, 'Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Philosophie', in: *MW/HW* VI, 73–90; here: 82.

[101] I therefore agree with Christian Danz's interpretation of Tillich's *oeuvre* as marked by a transcendental philosophy, and the alleged turn to ontology as a change of expression but not of substance. See Christian Danz, *Religion als Freiheitsbewußtsein: eine Studie zur Theologie als Theorie der Konstitutionsbedingungen individueller Subjektivität bei Paul Tillich*. TBT 110 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000).

5. The theological licentiate

The title, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development,*[102] suggests a double theme. However, the subject is Schelling's synthesis, i.e., the relation between mysticism and guilt-consciousness, whether the principle of identity (inferring the intimate connection between the self and God's self) is compatible with the reality of sin.[103] The dissertation is organised into three main parts, concerning the philosophical background to Schelling,[104] and the two main periods of Schelling's philosophy, the second of which begins with the *Freiheitsschrift* of 1809.

As one might expect, justification plays a role in discussions of how sinful humanity is united with God. Johannes Kubik describes justification as the "mediating principle with organising function"[105] in Tillich's theological dissertation, pointing to Tillich's criticism of Kant's moralism and explicit comments on justification in the second section (on Schelling's philosophy of

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[102] Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*. Translated by Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974). The German original, *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*, can be found in *GW* I, 11–108.
[103] Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 25; *GW* I, 16.
[104] Part I, on the historical background, comments on the history of philosophy from the Ancient Greeks through Nicholas of Cusa, Leibniz and Spinoza, Descartes, Kierkegaard and Hume before dwelling on Kant's three critiques. Tillich speaks first about the principle of identity, whether understood as the identity of the universal and the particular, or the identity of subject and object, or as a synthesis of both understandings, saying it implies "the immediate identity of God and man" which is, in religious language, mysticism. (Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 30; *GW* I, 20). Yet, Tillich continues, sinful humankind cannot be united with the holy God, experiencing the gulf as wrath of God and guilt. (Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 31; *GW* I, 21). However, antinomies within both mysticism and guilt-consciousness show that identity is the presupposition of that separation; opposition to God is only possible within such identity.
[105] Johannes Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik. Religion, Korrelation, Symbol und Protestantisches Prinzip* Arbeiten zur Religionspädagogik 49 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011), 215. Kubik's section title here refers to a "theological dissertation from 1910". This must be a typographical error; he refers to the 1912 dissertation.

identity), and his implicit handling of the theme of justification in the third section (on Schelling's late philosophy).

i. Against moralism

Tillich says Schelling's "[n]ature mysticism and the doctrine of justification form an alliance against Kantian moralism."[106] Tillich broadly affirms Kant's critical project, in terms of epistemology. But he stands in stark opposition to Kant's 'theology', which he deems rationalistic and moralistic.

Kant's postulation of God's reality as a postulate of practical reason attracts condemnation. God's existence conceived as a consequence of moral autonomy is for Schelling, and thus for Tillich, an abomination [*Greuel*].[107] This corresponds with Schelling's opposition to rational religion mentioned in my account of the *philosophical* doctorate.

Schelling's criticism of Kant's moralism is for Tillich a recovery of "the innermost core of religion, communion with God through grace".[108] Tillich says this recovery of grace was partly attained by Schelling's affirmation of nature, an affirmation of underlying unity of humanity with God, by grace. Kant's main reason for rejecting justification was that he thought it weakened moral resolve. For Tillich and Schelling, it is the alleged hubris of Kant's position which attracts criticism.

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[106] Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 85; *GW* I, 73.
[107] See Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 59.84; *GW* I, 48.72. Compare with *SW* 6, 557. Tillich and Schelling, in their polemic, make Kant's postulation sound like a deduction.
[108] Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 59; *GW* I, 48.

ii. Faith is no achievement

The Schelling passage behind Tillich's text when he describes Kantian moralism as an abomination, is pertinent. In the relevant passage of his *System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere*, Schelling emphasises human action is of God, not a consequence of reflection on the moral law, and nothing to do with supposed free will.

Human action concurs with knowledge of God, which is also not a matter of deduction by reason. God cannot be "mere object [...] of a mere believing-to-be-true [*eines bloßen Fürwahrhaltens*]".[109] Instead reason (*Vernunft*) is, essentially, "absolute affirmation of the idea of God".[110] From the divine comes "religion, heroism, it is faith, faithfulness to oneself and God".[111] Such religion, such heroism, such "free beautiful courage [...] does not come from the finite nature of humanity".[112]

In this context, faith is not that doubtful enterprise of believing something to be true, construed as a kind of *achievement*, but trust and confidence in the divine:

> *Faith* has the same meaning here [as heroism]. Not in the sense that it means holding-to-be-true, where the subject *earns* something [ein *Verdienst* hat] for believing something to be true, [...] but instead faith in the first meaning, as trust, confidence in the divine which sublates all choice.[113]

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[109] *SW* 6, 558.
[110] *SW* 6, 556.
[111] *SW* 6, 558.
[112] *SW* 6, 559. It is therefore possible Tillich received his characterization of faith as courage from Schelling.
[113] *SW* 6, 559: German: "Gleicher Bedeutung hiemit ist der *Glaube*. Nicht in dem Sinn, daß es ein Fürwahrhalten bedeutet, wobei das Subjekt ein *Verdienst* hat, etwas für wahr gehalten zu haben, z.B. daß Gott sey, und wobei ihm noch für eine besondere Moralität angerechnet wird, daß er so besonders gut ist, das für wahr zu halten, was die Substanz aller Wahrheit ist; überhaupt nicht ein Fürwahrhalten, welches in irgend einer Beziehung zweifelhaft ist, eine Bedeutung, die sich diesem

Here, Schelling's Lutheran context becomes obvious. Although Schelling distanced himself from some of the more drastic consequences of Luther's monergism,[114] his rejection of Kantian notions of freedom employs the language of his Lutheran tradition. He compares the days when "[o]ur valient elders lived in this faith and through it became brave and strong" with the days of

> the newer ethical teaching according to which it is a special achievement of the individual that he is ethical, […] the general moral spirit of pride which puts good works above faith, ethical life over religion.[115]

Luther's works and the classical Lutheran confessions speak of a faith not as knowledge of facts but confidence in the grace of God, trust (*fiducia*),[116] not as a work or achievement (*Verdienst*) but itself a gift of grace.[117] In the context of Kantian moralism, Schelling opposes Kant and articulates a building block of Tillich's justification of the doubter: the rejection of faith as a kind of achievement (*Verdienst*) or intellectual work.

Having pointed to Schelling's Lutheran background, conclusions concerning the source of Tillich's rejection of faith as an intellectual work must be cautious. Despite citing parts of this passage by Schelling, Tillich does not draw attention to these reflections on the nature of faith. As Kubik points out, it seems

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Wort durch seinen Gebrauch auch für andere gemeine Dinge angehängt hat, sondern Glaube in der ersten Bedeutung, als Zutrauen, Zuversicht auf das Göttliche, welche alle Wahl aufhebt."

[114] See Christian Danz, 'Die Notwendigkeit der Freiheit. Zur Aufnahme von Luthers Freiheitsbegriff in Schellings Freiheitsschrift', in: Christian Danz/Rochus Leonhardt (eds), *Erinnerte Reformation. Studien zur Luther-Rezeption von der Aufklärung bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2008), 75–94.

[115] *SW* 6, 559.

[116] *CA* 20: Glauben sei nicht allein die Historien zu wissen, sondern Zuversicht [Latin version: *fiducia*] zu haben zu Gott, daß er uns gnädig sei, und heiße nicht allein solche Historien wissen, wie auch die Teufel wissen.

[117] *AC* 4: Derselbe Glaube bringt noch schenkt Gott dem Herrn kein Werk, kein eigen Verdienst, sondern baut bloß auf lauter Gnade und weiß sich nichts zu trösten noch zu verlassen denn allein auf Barmherzigkeit, die verheißen ist in Christo. See also *CA* 18: ohne Gnade, Hilfe und Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes kann der Mensch Gott nicht gefallen, Gott nicht von Herzen fürchten oder an ihn glauben.

possible Schelling taught Tillich to think of faith in these terms.[118] Yet Tillich could have come to such conclusions without Schelling, through reflection upon the Lutheran confessions. If Schelling helped Tillich in this case, then Schelling was helping Tillich to be more Lutheran.

iii. The identity of sin and grace

In the philosophical doctorate Tillich noted Schelling's theological anthropology: "the essential nature of the ego is to be God-positing; even the substance of atheistic consciousness is religious."[119] In the theological licenciate, this unity of the human with the divine, despite sin – the unity of mysticism and guilt-consciousness – is at the centre of Tillich's concerns.

The solution to the problem is the Cross of Christ, which for Tillich – in Kählerian, anti-Ritschlian terms – means God in Christ becoming subject to the wrath of God. At the Cross,

> [God's] No toward sin [is united] with the consciousness of standing in indissoluble identity with God, even though only a vessel of wrath. […] The highest form of the idea of truth is the identity of the contradiction, and the most profound form of guilt-consciousness is bondage to an angry God. These unite in the demand whose fulfillment in absolute measure is the Cross of Christ.[120]

Since God subjects himself to wrath, God's Yes and God's No are identical.[121] For the sinner, but *also for the unbeliever*, this is most significant:

> It takes those conditions in which man feels himself far from God, where his only feeling is one of fear – or even indifference, in the case of atheism – and

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[118] Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 218.
[119] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 123. See also ibid., 71.
[120] Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 112–113; GW I, 97.
[121] See Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 112.124; *GW* I, 97.107. Nuovo's translation in the latter reference is wrong. *Erschöpfung* means exhaustion, not creation. Neugebauer comments on the dialectic of God's Yes and No, saying it could have been influenced by Lütgert, but then again also simply by the Lutheran tradition. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 246n429.

> contends that even in these instances there is identity with God, to be sure, with him whose will is wrath.[122]

Kubik characterises Tillich's position as an "identity-philosophical reformulation of the doctrine of justification".[123] I think this describes well what is going on. It is also a reformulation of the *Versöhnungslehre*.[124]

iv. Publication politics

Tillich's theological licenciate was published in 1912 in the series *Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie*, among key senior 'positive' figures such as Schlatter, Lütgert, Kähler, Julius Kögel (1871-1928) – son of Rudolf Kögel (1829-1896), and Hermann Cremer (1834-1903).[125] A contemporary would have surely understood his dissertation as the (rather philosophical) theological debut of a rising star in the positive scene, son of Johannes and fruit of conservative Halle.[126] In light of the Kählerian tendency of the conclusions of his theological licenciate, albeit reformulated using Schelling, this conclusion might seem sure.

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[122] Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 110; GW I, 95.
[123] Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 220.222. Neugebauer summarises Tillich's efforts as the attempt to develop a theory of Christianity starting from the experience of standing both in connection with and contradiction to God. Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 250–251.
[124] Speaking in terms of Tillich's later method of correlation, question and answer are not properly distinct, for the appearance of deduction is created – as if speculative philosophy, rather than the biblical tradition, could lead one to conclude that the solution, so reminiscent of Kähler, is the Cross of Christ, where God subjects himself to wrath. What started out as a speculative philosophical essay ends at 'the old rugged cross'. This appears to me just as methodologically questionable as Schelling's own eisegesis of Trinitarian principles onto the backdrop of the absolute.
[125] These names are among the most influential positive theologians. See Lessing, *Geschichte der deutschsprachigen evangelischen Theologie*, Band 1, 116–132. Schlatter's introduction to philosophy for theologians was in the same series, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter.
[126] Against my claim one could say the contemporary reviews of Tillich's dissertation focus on the accuracy of his account of Schelling, but do not locate him anywhere on the spectrum between positive and liberal. One reviewer merely finds him too theological, commenting pejoratively "daß der Verfasser sogleich ganz ins theologische und speziell dogmatische Fahrwasser gerät"; Bruno Jordan, 'Rezension: Tillich, Lic. Theol. Dr. Paul: Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings positiver philosophischer Entwicklung', in *Archiv für die Geschichte der Philosophie* 26/2 (1913), 276. As mentioned above, August Dorner (1846–1920) sees his interpretation of Schelling as influenced by Schlatter, see August Dorner, "Rezension: Tillich, Lic. Theol. Dr. Paul: Mystik und Schuldbewußtsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung," in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 6 (1913), 178.

However, behind the scenes, Tillich's and Medicus's recently discovered correspondence with the Mohr Siebeck publishing house suggest Tillich's alienation from his father's and teachers' theological tradition. Tillich wanted to publish with Mohr Siebeck, then understood as a liberal publishing house. Medicus wrote to Mohr Siebeck, recommending Tillich and saying:

> [H]is new dissertation received the award "admodum laudabilis" from the theological faculty in Halle, the examination was awarded "magna cum laude". Since Tillich does not harmonise particularly with any professor, standing in sharp academic opposition to most of them, this result is quite remarkable.[127]

Medicus may be overstating the opposition to encourage the publishers that Tillich was not a typical Halle-production. Nevertheless, this mention of "sharp opposition" in 1911 is noteworthy. Despite these plans, Tillich published in the conservative series for a mixture of financial, pragmatic and personal reasons, not least that Tillich felt a personal sense of duty towards Lütgert.[128]

6. Certainty and the historical Jesus

The last writings in this period are the lecture and accompanying 128 theses, both entitled *Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus*.[129] The lecture was delivered September 1911 at a conference in Kassel, among friends. The subject is

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[127] Fritz Medicus to Mohr Siebeck, 24th December 1911, in: Alf Christophersen / Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (eds), "Beweise einer unsichtbaren Beziehung. Die Korrespondenz zwischen Paul Tillich und dem Tübinger Verlag J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck)", *IYTR/IJTF* 6 (2011), 237–408; here: 382.
[128] Paul Tillich to Mohr Siebeck, 3rd Januar 1912, *IYTR/IJTF* 6, 262.
[129] The lecture can be found in *EGW* VI, 50–61. The theses can be found in *EGW* VI, 31–46 and *MW/HW* 6, 22–37. Gert Hummel comments on the text in *MW/HW* 6, 21–22.

Gewissheit, certainty, and Tillich later believed it a very significant moment in his theological development.[130]

Tillich wants to demonstrate that certainty regarding the historical Jesus is impossible and irrelevant for faith. The theses divide into two main sections: an empirical demonstration of actual uncertainty and a systematic demonstration of the necessity of such uncertainty.

i. Uncertainty concerning the historical Jesus

The empirical critique shows that no schools of historical Jesus research result in certainty (theses 9-17),[131] and that principles of historiography (what Tillich calls the laws of *historische Anschauung*) exclude certainty (theses 18-28). Dogmatic proofs employing the authority of Scripture or the work of the Spirit in the church are based on the *Christusbegriff*, i.e., high Christology, and not history (theses 29-36).

Wilhelm Herrmann's notion of an evangelical image of Jesus (*Jesusbild*) with the power to create faith attempts to overcome the tension between faith and history. Herrmann claims "it is impossible to believe the evangelical *Jesusbild* is a creation of fantasy" (thesis 42). But Tillich says it is precisely fantasy in historical reconstruction that constructs ideal personalities who in turn have no small effect on us. Thus not the historical personality is effective, but the image:

> Not the human reality, but the divine truth in the intuitable [*anschauliche*] forms of a concrete human life at the height of the religious development of

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[130] See *GW* XII, 32 for Tillich's comments. Stefan Dienstbeck points out that the argument of the theses is the basis for Tillich's Christology in the Dresden lectures in dogmatics, 1925–1927. See Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 159n71.

[131] In what follows, I simply give the number of the theses when citing Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus', *MW/HW* 6, 22–37.

> humanity is that which is effective in the evangelical image of Jesus (thesis 48).

ii. Certainty, identity and autonomy

The systematic critique argues certainty is not only impossible in the case of the historical Jesus but principally as a feature of epistemology. Within Tillich's idealistic scheme, knowledge is limited to the self-certainty of the subject, the sentence "I am I" (thesis 88).[132] Thus, certainty is only possible insofar as objects and processes stand in identity with one's essence (thesis 90) which means in the study of history that certainty is not provided by historiographical details, but by the creation of historical categories realised under individual circumstances (theses 97-101). Identity (I am I) represents the complete autonomy of the subject over and against all forms of heteronomy and authority claiming to be the source of the truth. Thus, autonomy is the material principle in these epistemological considerations, and furthermore also formal principle.

In the case at hand, autonomy is disrupted when the historical Jesus is raised to the level of a law, for then "faith in God is made dependent upon faith in a historical revelation of God; a double faith is created, and autonomous [faith] becomes dependent upon heteronomic [faith]" (thesis 113).

Tillich characterises the call to believe in the historical Jesus as a kind of *law*, thus creating an analogy with the doctrine of justification by faith. The law, impossible to fulfil, is that 'thou shalt have historical certainty'. By limiting certainty to objects and processes which stand in identity with one's essence

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[132] The Fichtean background to Tillich's theses is explored further in Georg Neugebauer, 'Freiheit als philosophisches Prinzip – Die Fichte-Interpretation des frühen Tillich', *Fichte-Studien* 36 (2012): 181–198.

(thesis 90), i.e., to autonomy, faith is freed from slavery to such a law. Therefore, Tillich can say: "autonomy is justification in the area of thought" (thesis 115).

Furthermore, necessary uncertainty about the historical Jesus is "the last consequence of the doctrine of justification insofar as it frees from the law of double faith, that [faith] in the historical Jesus and that [faith] in the God intuited in Christ." (thesis 116).

Here Tillich is above all making the negative case against using historical scholarship as a basis for certainty. He has moved from the denial of religious certainty through history to the affirmation of knowledge as self-certainty, which means the autonomy of the subject against all laws. But implicit in this negative case is the possibility that divine truth can be intuited in the Gospels' image of Jesus, insofar as this image stands in identity with one's essence.

iii. Adjusting Wilhelm Herrmann

In Tillich's accompanying lecture, the positive role of history for certainty is more clearly expressed: Although historical data only give us "approximative certainty", there are indeed "intellectual values which confront us as the fruit of history", but also as the fruit of art, philosophy, ethics and religion.[133] These attain certainty, "since they can enter into my spirit and thus fulfil the law of identity".[134] Here is Tillich's answer to his search for certainty beyond Troeltsch's critique.

In his comments on Herrmann in the lecture,[135] Tillich expresses a more explicitly constructive conclusion than in the theses – framing his position as a

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[133] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit und der historische Jesus [lecture]', *EGW* VI, 50–61; here: 53.
[134] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit [lecture]', *EGW* VI, 53.
[135] The lecture is incomplete. The last section ends with a linking sentence which would introduce a section corresponding to theses 67–80, focussing on the critique of Herrmann (cf. theses 37–50).

correction of Herrmann. For Herrmann it is the "undeniably real", i.e., undeniable factual, which gives certainty. Tillich says it is not the real (in the sense of historically factual) but

> the undeniable truth of the evangelical image of Jesus [*Jesusbild*], which means its undeniable divinity, which comes through even in the most individual characteristics, [and] which holds us tight to this image and gives us the power to see God in it. […] The both holy and gracious God intuited in the evangelical Christ is the ground and object of faith at the same time.[136]

As Neugebauer has argued, Tillich's critique does not quite do justice to Herrmann's position.[137] For Herrmann, religion is not the historiographical reconstruction of the historical Jesus,[138] but "a category of personal life […] who encounters the arraigned subject in the form of an image which shows its inner life."[139] In this encounter, the subject becomes assured of her encounter with God. Thus "the experience of the redeeming power of the personality of Jesus" becomes the foundation of faith.[140] This sounds like Tillich's own claim that those "intellectual values which confront us as the fruit of history" can attain certainty "since they can enter into my spirit and thus fulfil the law of identity".[141]

Thus, Tillich's correction of Herrmann is only really of his claim that "it is impossible to believe that the evangelical *Jesusbild* is a creation of fantasy" (thesis 42). Herrmann thinks the ethical power of the *Jesusbild* "does not allow doubt of his factuality."[142] Though his later Christology resembles Herrmann's,[143] here,

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[136] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit [lecture]', *EGW* VI, 60.
[137] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 198–208. See also Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 231–234.
[138] See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 201–202.
[139] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 202.
[140] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 203.
[141] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit [lecture]', *EGW* VI, 53.
[142] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 202-203.
[143] See *ST* II, 98.107.114-115. He disagrees with Herrmann on other issues: see *ST* II, 124-125.

Tillich insists it is possible that a fantastical image could inspire us. But he does not deny the image of Jesus could create certainty.

Kähler shared Tillich's suspicion of the quest for the historical Jesus as a source of certainty for theology and instead sought the foundation of faith in that biblical Christ mediated through the authoritative Bible and preaching (and confessions) of the church. Herrmann rejects this attempt to secure a foundation for faith using instances of authority. Tillich rejects the historical Jesus as a source, and also talks disparagingly of the use of the Bible as an authority because it makes faith heteronomous. It is not clear from the lecture or theses in Kassel what criteria Tillich uses to determine the form of the evangelical *Jesusbild*.

The reaction to Tillich's theses and lecture was quite negative. His friend Friedrich Büchsel wrote a very critical response, citing Tillich's "hardness, coldness [...] emptiness and abstractness",[144] reducing faith to pure inwardness and rendering the image of Jesus no more than a poem. Büchsel speaks not only of Tillich's scepticism of the historical Jesus, but also of his scepticism of Christianity in general.[145] Tillich's response tells us he feels he was misunderstood in Kassel, but appears to own the charge of scepticism, interpreting this scepticism as a virtue rather than lack:

> Rather one certainty than a world of uncertainties and a sea of probabilities. I hate the rich and satiated and full ones who do not know the fight for every penny of truth and sit with fat bellies and hard skulls on the millions which they never earned.[146]

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[144] Friedrich Büchsel an Paul Tillich, 30.9.1911, in: *EGW* VI, 62-69; here: 65.
[145] Friedrich Büchsel an Paul Tillich, 30.9.1911, in: *EGW* VI, 62-69; here: 68-69.
[146] Paul Tillich an Friedrich Büchsel, [1911], in: *EGW* VI, 69-74; here: 71.

Probabilities and relative certainties are enough for certain practical tasks, but not, says Tillich, for religion: "when it concerns "my only comfort in life and death", then I want more than documents that have not yet been disproved."[147] The object of faith can only be God himself.

What have we seen here in relation to our theme of the justification of the doubter? First, we saw Tillich's view that study of the historical Jesus had resulted in a new authority and law, analogous to the authority of the pope or the bible, making faith heteronomous. The heteronomy occurs when "faith in God is made dependent upon faith in a historical revelation of God" (thesis 113), creating a "double faith" where autonomous faith is subordinated to heteronomous faith. If faith is set up as faith in the historical Jesus this "leads back to the pope" (thesis 117).

Second, the doctrine of justification is freed from the works of the law; now "autonomy is justification in the area of thought" (thesis 115) which "frees from the law of double faith" (thesis 116). This is what Tillich calls the rejection of an 'intellectual work' in 1919. Uncertainty about the historical Jesus, Jesus as the object of free historical enquiry, resulting in mere degrees of certainty, is not a liability but a necessity if faith is to be autonomous faith.

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[147] Paul Tillich an Friedrich Büchsel, [1911], in: *EGW* VI, 69-74; here: 71. Tillich is of course quoting the reformed Heidelberg Catechism.

7. Conclusion

Tillich's academic work 1909–1911 was a sustained engagement with Schelling, following his philosophical interest as a student of theology, encouraged by Schlatter, Lütgert and Medicus.

Tillich believed Schelling was able to help him respond to the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity expressed in Troeltsch's insistence on the difference between dogmatic and historical method. Why one should be a Christian when Christianity appears as one phenomenon of antiquity alongside others? And how could one ever attain certainty through historical events if the principles of historical method exclude dogmatic conclusions?

Schelling, as well as opposing Kantian rationalism and moralism, expressed Christian doctrine in a philosophical mode, offering an alternative model for talking about the history of revelation which some in Tillich's modern-positive tradition endorsed: searching for the will of God in the history of revelation. God's will is discernable in the history of revelation because the idealist approach to history does not find certainty in historiographical data, but through the "intellectual values which confront us as the fruit of history",[148] attaining certainty as they "enter into my spirit and thus fulfil the law of identity".[149]

In the philosophical doctorate on Schelling, the essays on Fichte and Schelling, the theological licenciate, and the Kassel theses and lecture on the

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[148] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit [lecture]', *EGW* VI, 53.
[149] Tillich, 'Die christliche Gewißheit [lecture]', *EGW* VI, 53.

historical Jesus, we find Tillich writing about several themes related to the justification of the doubter:

First, most generally, we see interpretations of non-Christian conviction which affirm the religious consciousness of all. The essential nature of humanity is to be God-positing, writes Tillich in the philosophical doctorate. Thus "even the substance of atheistic consciousness is religious."[150]

In the theological licenciate, the Cross of Christ means that in "those conditions in which man feels himself far from God, where his only feeling is one of fear – or even indifference, in the case of atheism",[151] nevertheless there is identity with God. The relation to God is then characterised by God's wrath, his No. But it the relationship of God to humanity is not destroyed by sin, doubt, or unbelief.

Second, the passage on the sublation of doubt in the philosophical dissertation shows Tillich is thinking about God's act of revelation as a *redemption* from doubt. Revelation implies the sacrifice of thinking and willing, when thought and doubt fall silent on account of the inability of thought. Doubt ends in faith, but this is not the justification of the doubter; it is a step further to say this doubt is a kind of faith.

Third, in connection with passages on the inability of thought, we see the notion that there is some undoubtable instance before all thought. In the philosophical dissertation, Schelling's concept of "unpreconceivable being" is the undoubtable condition of thought. In the essay on Fichte, this structure is

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[150] Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion*, 123. See also *ibid*., 71. *EGW* IX, 237, see also 191.
[151] Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness*, 110; *GW* I, 95.

expressed in terms of a philosophy of identity, the I (*das Ich*) is the foundation which cannot be doubted. In the Kassel lecture, certain knowledge is also limited to the self-certainty of the subject.

The translatability of this basic structure strikes me as one of the enduring features of Tillich's theology. Tillich's commitment appears not to be to any particular expression (I, meaning, being, unpreconceivable, unconditioned, being-itself), but to the structure in which it is employed, a common transcendental, undoubtable foundation of thought.[152]

Fourth, the paradoxical work of the divine ironist reaches its zenith for Schelling in the Cross of Christ as absolute paradox. The divine paradox is also formulated by Schelling as the moment where knowledge confesses its inability and anxiety of spirit disappears.

Fifth, there is mention of justification having a wider application than simply to the ethical sphere (i.e., the situation of the sinner). In his essay on Schelling, Tillich says there is grace in intellectual intuition which is "in life the inner calm of the one who believes in justification".[153] This intellectual manifestation of grace, founded in the grace of the natural unity with God which God gives to all, shows that for Schelling justification is not equated with forgiveness, for "the abyss between God and humanity is in no way only in the ethical area".[154] In the Kassel lecture, application of justification to the area of

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[152] Notwithstanding the fact Schelling refers to the unpreconceivable as the *abyss* of reason, and not its foundation, I find Tillich using such figures as a foundation, i.e., a place to stand.
[153] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X, 51.
[154] Tillich, 'Gott und das Absolute', *EGW* X, 51.

thought is made explicit as freedom from "the law of double faith" (thesis 116); here, autonomy is justification in the area of thought" (thesis 115).

Sixth, we find an emphasis on human passivity in revelation but not yet the rejection of faith as 'intellectual work', until the Kassel lecture. In the philosophical dissertation, 'rational religion' is characterised as law in contrast to revelation as gospel. In God's act of revelation, human passivity is implied. This is expressed in the Schelling essay as a religious epistemology not striving to know and believe but knowing its unity with God is grace.

In my exposition of the theological dissertation I suggested the emphasis on faith *not* being an intellectual work or achievement (*Verdienst*) is something which one might, on reflection, glean from the Lutheran tradition. If faith is a gift it cannot be an achievement. Schelling makes this connection himself, even in just those passages Tillich is citing to criticise Kant's rationalism and moralism. There, faith is not the achievement of believing-to-be-true but trust in the divine. But this is not a topic which Tillich himself raises.

In the Kassel lecture on the historical Jesus, the notion of faith as not-an-achievement is not as explicit as in Schelling. But it is present in Tillich's rejection of the 'believing-to-be-true' (*Fürwahrhalten*) of historical facts as a kind of law; 'thou shalt believe'. When Tillich rejects this heteronomous faith and says autonomy is the only place of certainty, he is rejecting faith misunderstood as an intellectual work.

Tillich could have already received the impulse for thinking about faith as non-achievement by May 1911 (the end of work on his licenciate) from his Lutheran tradition or from his extensive work on Schelling. However, it only

appears in the Kassel lecture from September 1911. This suggests that Tillich, if not overlooking the theme, did not deem it pertinent until his curacy in Nauen.

The Kassel lecture involved engagement with Wilhelm Herrmann, as we saw above. We will see in the next chapter that Herrmann's influence is also visible in Tillich's Nauen sermons, including the theme of faith as no achievement. The innovations of the Kassel lecture are therefore also the innovations of his preaching in Nauen, and could be considered as the fruit of these sermons.

Chapter 6

The Prodigal Doubter (Nauen 1911–12)

1. Introduction

Following the award of his philosophical doctorate in August 1910 and the completion of all but the finishing touches of the dissertation towards his theological licentiate, Tillich began the year-long curacy required for ordination in the Prussian church.[1] For this, he was sent to Nauen, then a small rural town to the West of Berlin, to work with Superintendent Dr. Martin Lang, with whom he lived and served from April 1911 until April 1912.[2]

During the curacy, Tillich had to revise for comprehensive theological exams in December 1911 (for the licentiate) and May 1912 (to fulfil the conditions for ordination). Despite this feat, Lang praised Tillich for his pastoral industry, emotional participation in the life of the church, and high-quality sermons.[3] From Tillich's time in Nauen we possess seventeen sermons and one fragment.[4]

In this chapter, I use these Nauen sermons as a source for understanding the development Tillich's notion of the justification of the doubter. We discover Tillich interpreting his culture as an age of doubt, putting distance between

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[1] Tillich sent the dissertation to the faculty in Halle on 12th May 1911. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 401 = Universitätsarchiv Halle: Rep 27 Nr. 855.
[2] See *EGW* VII, 4. Tillich gives the office of the superintendent as his address in letters between November 1911 and February 1912. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 416.419 = Universitätsarchiv Halle: Rep 27 Nr. 855.
[3] See Dr. Lang's report in *EGW* V, 58.
[4] *EGW* VII, 130–226. On the fragment, see *EGW* VII, 666.

himself and the hubris of positive Christians, speaking hopefully of doubters and drawing on liberal Wilhelm Herrmann to tell the story of the Prodigal Doubter.

2. Certainty and the law-gospel dialectic

Tillich's opening sermon in Nauen,[5] held at Easter, shows him concerned with questions of *Gewißheit* (certainty/assurance):

> Certainty, is there a way to certainty, is there a means through which our eyes can be opened like those [on the way] to Emmaus, eyes opened [to see] that the message of life of Eastertide is more than comforting self-deception? Is there a certainty which is stronger than death?[6]

Tillich's way to certainty is Jesus' answer to the Sadducees who had doubted the resurrection – that "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt 22:32) – an answer characterised as a powerful word awakening faith:

> Through the power of his word the source of living hope sprang up [...] the clouds of doubt and unbelief were torn apart by the breath of his Spirit, the cold fog of mocking and hopelessness was cleared. God is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Fellowship with God is the only ground and the only content of our certainty of eternal life.[7]

For Tillich, the implication of Jesus' message to the Sadducees is that only fellowship with God can give assurance of salvation.[8] Nietzsche may claim God's death but Christians know God lives and speaks to his people. His word, his speaking, is the ground for having certainty about eternal life,

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[5] No. 27, Easter, 16th April 1911, *EGW* VII, 130–135.
[6] No. 27, *EGW* VII, 130.
[7] No. 27, *EGW* VII, 131.
[8] This is unusual exegesis, for the verse does not seem related to assurance of salvation and instead confronts the Sadducees with the continued life of Israel's patriarchs in the presence of God, clearing up a first-century theological debate.

> all other supports are rotten and break when the weight of doubt presses upon them. And so also the Easter message becomes certain to us alone through that certainty of God.[9]

Tillich's description of the doubter in 1919 and 1924 is of a person for whom God is no longer a presupposition, someone who has lost 'religious immediacy'. But here in 1911 assurance is grounded in certainty of God, in the Christian's ability, through the Spirit, to speak to God as Father, as we saw in the sermons in 1909.[10] Certainty of faith is a problem whose answer is found in Christian faith.[11]

But what we also notice in this first Nauen sermon and many following it, is what I want to call Tillich's *law-gospel dialectic,* which proceeds in three steps. First, the law's demands are presented. Second, the law is shown to demonstrate the inability of the sinner to fulfil the law (*usus elenchticus*). Third, the sinner hears the gospel message that the law has been fulfilled by Christ.

This pattern of proclamation is familiar to Lutheran theology and preaching. Tillich applies the dialectic to various scenarios which are distinct, if never disconnected, from the situation of the sinner. The turning point of the dialectic from the first to the second step, from demand to inability, manifests itself in many of Tillich's Nauen sermons when a rhetorical question is asked.

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[9] No. 27, *EGW* VII, 132.
[10] See No. 9, *EGW* VII, 59.
[11] Tillich's account of assurance of salvation shows similarity to Kähler, who also grounds his account Christologically: "Who and what guarantees me the trustworthiness of the justifying declaration of God and for its validity in eternity? Singularly and alone that God is the reconciler, and how he is that [reconciler] through Jesus Christ." Martin Kähler, *Dogmatische Zeitfragen. Alte und neue Ausführungen zur Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre II. Zur Lehre von der Versöhnung* (Leipzig: Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1898), 437. Kähler puts a greater emphasis on guilt-consciousness as "preacher of assurance".

In his first sermon at Easter 1911, this dialectic works as follows: Tillich's account of assurance means fellowship with God functions as demand, as law. The basis of assurance is fellowship with God, but this fellowship (and thus the assurance) is destroyed by worry, love of money, or lust. Certainty of eternal life is only possible if that life is in us, which means doing all things with prayer and giving one's life for others.[12] But when we reflect

> our heart becomes heavy and we must say: Who then has life? Who can have certainty, one day to receive eternal life? And we must answer: None of us, except it is given to him daily.[13]

Who then has life? The desire for assurance of the truth of Easter is met by the demand or 'law' that, in order to have assurance, one must have fellowship with God. Yet the demand reveals the paucity of the fellowship attainable by the sinner, his sheer inability to fulfil do that which would give him assurance.

The third step of the dialectic, the 'gospel', is introduced in the clause "except it is given to us daily". Here is hope of a possibility of a gifted fellowship with God not dependent upon one's prayerfulness or service. Immediately after this sentence there follows a Christological specification of this hope:

> But there is one who has life, in him was life and that life was the light of men, […] [he] spoke with God as we speak to ourselves, so intimately […] loved as only God can love and gave his life for many. And therefore in one is life for all the others, for every one of us […].[14]

By participating in Christ's life, we participate in his fellowship with God, his prayer, his life for others. Doubt – here doubt about assurance of salvation, and not of God or meaning – is solved Christologically.

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[12] See No. 27, *EGW* VII, 134.
[13] No. 27, *EGW* VII, 134–135.
[14] No. 27, *EGW* VII, 135.

Having seen the dialectic at work in the first Nauen sermon, one notices similar patterns emerging in others. Various standards of imagined Christian perfection or distinctiveness are often first unfolded to some degree, only to be turned back by critical self-reflection, with the question: "Who can say that of himself?"[15] Whether it is the attempt to discern the divide between worldly and Christian joy,[16] the consideration that all our words should be edifying and truthful,[17] or being "so one with God that [one] sees and feels him all the time and in every place",[18] all dreams of what it would mean to be truly and properly Christian are shattered on the shores of sinful human reality.

True to the pattern of the first Nauen sermon, other sermons with this structure close with a Christological focus. The source of eternal joy is not in us but "in him who is eternal".[19] What makes us God's children is only Christ, for

> the only begotten Son, who lives and moves from eternity in God's heart, did not consider shame and became a servant and a child of wrath like us. He tore himself from the heart of God and tore the heaven of God and entered into a state of being far from God [*ging in die Gottesferne*] to us.[20]

The mention of Christ's being far away from God (*Gottesferne*) is something I will attend to in the next section. Here we should note the way Christ functions as the giver of all gifts and fulfilment of all standards and thus is the ultimate response to all forms of human inability, the only answer to the question 'Who?' in those rhetorical questions.

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[15] No. 28, 7th May 1911, *EGW* VII, 139.
[16] No. 28, *EGW* VII, 135–140.
[17] No. 29, May/June 1911, *EGW* VII, 141.
[18] No. 32, July/August 1911, *EGW* VII, 162.
[19] No. 28, *EGW* VII, 140.
[20] No. 32, *EGW* VII, 162.

There is sometimes ambiguity about the kind of doubt Tillich means. Some phrases suggest the stance of a sceptic: a diagnosis of self-deception, clouds of doubt and unbelief and the presence of mocking. But speaking of a certainty stronger than death or certainty of eternal life sounds much more like the doubts of a sinner seeking assurance of grace.

There is an ambiguity about what Tillich means by certainty (*Gewißheit*). We may distinguish between distinct yet related settings (or, if one prefers, Wittgensteinian language games) in which the word *Gewißheit* appears in German. Consider on the one hand scientific and historiographical uses of *Gewißheit* with an attending *Gewißheitsgrad* (degree of certainty) contingent upon painstaking and ostensibly 'neutral' research into evidence. On the other hand, there are relational, religious and affect-laden uses of *Gewißheit* as expressed in tropes such as *Heilsgewißheit* (assurance of salvation).

Tillich, like Kähler, does not address the sceptic's doubt directly, but turns the sceptic's question into the problem of assurance of salvation, answering with reference to Christ's word and work.[21] Tillich's solution is sought and found neither in ostensibly objective empirical or historical apologetics, nor directly in religious experience, but in Christology.

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[21] The distinction between the traditional problem of assurance of salvation and the modern problem of certainty that Christianity is true is a distinction which Tillich's teacher Kähler recognised. For example, he says in 1903: "Out of this confessional theology the difficult question arose – not to be confused with the old question: how can I be certain of my salvation, but – how can I as a human be certain of the knowledge of Christianity? How can I convince myself about the reality of that which is offered to me as Christian truth? This question lay upon every, every soul after Hofmann had brought it up, after Frank had formulated it as the question of Christian certainty: and the work of the last time, also of the Ritschlian school has essentially been carried out under this perspective." Martin Kähler, 'Der gegenwärtige Stand der Theologie', in *Verhandlungen der Zweiten Eisenacher Konferenz, 8., 9. u. 10. Juni 1903*, ed. J. Lepsius (Berlin: Verlag der Deutsche Orient Mission e.V., 1903), 98–115; here: 110. But Kähler's response to the modern problem, while peculiarly modern, effectively changed the subject and prescribed a traditional solution to the traditional problem: the guilty conscience as guarantor of assurance.

3. Orthodoxy and self-righteousness

In the early summer of 1911, Christ is portrayed as the one who "went into the *Gottesferne"*. The substantive is a spatial metaphor, literally "far-away-ness from/of God", implying a state (or experience) of alienation and estrangement. There is not an equivalent in English, so I have translated the clause as the rather wordy "entered into a state of being far from God".

In one sermon from June 1911, the verb *fern sein* (to be far away) and its cognates are illustrated in a retelling of the story of the Prodigal Son, with reference to James 4:8, "draw near to God and he will draw near to you."[22] The son is far off, perishing of hunger; a picture of spiritual hunger which cries:

> Far from God, far from God! Yes, far from God, so it sounds day and night in the soul of millions and millions, and they do not understand it. Far from God, they wake with it but they do not notice it.[23]

However, estrangement is not the last word, for the returning son is welcomed by the father. Importantly, the son comes back with no righteousness, "he only sees the father and the rags of his own righteousness fall off and there he stands and has nothing with which he could appear before God [...]. But just for this reason he is near to God".[24]

This is a familiar actualisation of the parable. However, Tillich does not only retell the story for early twentieth-Century Protestant sinners, but applies it to the doubter. Just as the pious of the old covenant came with hands full, says

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[22] No. 30, June/July 1911, *EGW* VII, 146–152. Erdmann Sturm leaves the dating of this sermon open between June and July. However, since the next sermon responds to the case of Jatho from 24th June, the sermon on the Prodigal Son must have been held on 4th, 11th or 18th June 1911.
[23] No. 30, *EGW* VII, 147.
[24] No. 30, *EGW* VII, 149.

Tillich, so the pious today do not want to come with empty hands. They bring "faith which, without doubting, agrees with the doctrine of the church and every word of the scriptures."[25]

But this orthodoxy (*Rechtgläubigkeit*) is not enough to come near to God. Only if Christians throw away all pious practice, "your love and your faith, your zeal and your orthodoxy"[26] as if they were dirty rags, can they come. Yet God does not only wait, but comes to us when we are far off, to the cross where he cried "why have you forsaken me" and thus became so near that nothing can make him far from us: "Into godforsakenness [*Gottverlassenheit*] God came to meet us. That is the mystery of the cross."[27] God in Christ "emptied himself and followed us into the *Gottesferne*."[28]

God enters into the experience of being far from God, including doubt. In Tillich's story, doubt is not just doubt concerning assurance of salvation but also doubt of Christian doctrine and Scripture, doubt about the truth of Christianity. The doubter is not excluded on account of her lack of orthodoxy, for that would imply some human ability which counts as a 'work'.

The thought that orthodox belief could become works-righteousness demonstrates just the structural analogy at the heart of Tillich's later understanding of the justification of the doubter. We found this in the re-written sermon of May 1909, in Christ's words, "you need hold nothing to be true".[29] Now in June 1911 we have a fuller exposition of that same thought.

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[25] No. 30, *EGW* VII, 149.
[26] No. 30, *EGW* VII, 150.
[27] No. 30, *EGW* VII, 151.
[28] No. 30, *EGW* VII, 151.
[29] No. 15, *EGW* VII, 93.

Tillich is not original. Martin Kähler warns against making a virtue out of faith.[30] In the context of a passage affirming the need to protect the church against errors in doctrine by adhering to historic confessions of faith, he qualifies his statements, saying it would be

> a misunderstanding if one wanted to make the theological form of a doctrine into an object of faith, and make this faith an achievement so that [this faith] earns blessedness as a reward.[31]

However, this is more of an aside remark than a laboured point, and was written in the context of the *Apostolikumssstreit* (1892) where positive Christians positioned themselves in defence of mandatory assent to confessions of faith for all ministers. Furthermore, it is very likely to be Kähler's response to an objection made by Wilhelm Herrmann.

As mentioned in the chapter on Tillich's student days, Tillich read Herrmann enthusiastically in 1906.[32] There is also clear evidence Herrmann influenced Tillich's theses and lecture on the historical Jesus from September 1911 (see chapter 5). Herrmann's theological bestseller *Der Verkehr des Christen*

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[30] His phrase is "Tugend der Gläubigkeit". Martin Kähler, *Zur Lehre von der Versöhnung*. Dogmatische Zeitfragen. Zweites Heft (Leipzig: Deichertsche Buchhandlung, 1898), 453.
[31] Kähler, *Zur Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 430.
[32] Tillich mentions Herrmann in 1906 in the following way: "I studied Herrmann (Marburg) more closely. His rejection of speculation became now quite attractive to me and I appreciated especially his emphasis upon the person of Jesus and God's revelation in his personal life whose effects call forth in us religious and moral dedication. He keeps aloof from the foolish irrelevancies of radical criticism and well as from orthodox intellectualism. Instead he puts the emphasis upon the positive personal relationship to the Bible and the person of Christ. I am confident I shall find all this to be of great positive value for myself and my theology as I follow his direction and also your insistence on a searching reading of the Bible." This translation of the lost letter is from Wilhelm Pauck, 'Paul Tillich: Heir of the Nineteenth Century' in Marion Pauck (ed), *From Luther to Tillich. The Reformers and their Heirs* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 160. Though I had spotted Tillich's enthusiasm for Herrmann in his letter to his father in 1906, I am very grateful for Johannes Kubik for pointing toward Herrmann as a source for the notion of intellectual works-righteousness. See Johannes Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik. Religion, Korrelation, Symbol und Protestantisches Prinzip* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011), 231–234.

mit Gott (1886), had appeared in its 4th edition in 1903, and is extremely likely to have been read by Tillich in his Herrmann-euphoria.[33]

Though Barth, Hirsch and Bonhoeffer attribute the phrase 'intellectual works-righteousness' to Herrmann, it has not yet been found in Herrmann's works in that precise form.[34] However, it is there in substance. In Herrmann's *Verkehr des Christen*, he criticises those demands to assent to the church's historical confessions of faith as turning religion into "a work of our will".[35] Instead of slavishly assenting and "vainly adorning ourselves with their confession",[36] he calls for that freedom of confession which gave rise to historic confessions of faith. Theology should teach us

> to throw off this apparent adornment [*Schmuck*] and riches and flee to the revelation which shines on us also in our poverty [*Armseligkeit*] and makes us free and rich.[37]

Herrmann would have us throw off the adornment (*Schmuck*) of orthodoxy-as-achievement, Tillich calls this adornment mere rags (*Lumpen*). The similarity in their stance is striking. By speaking out against the pious of the day who make assent to Scripture and doctrine a condition of being considered properly Christian, and suggesting orthodoxy becomes therein an intellectual work, Tillich sounds much less like Kähler, and more like a student of Herrmann.

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[33] See the similarities that I mention below.
[34] See Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 231–232.
[35] Wilhelm Herrmann, *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott im Anschluss an Luther dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1892 [1886]), 37.
[36] Herrmann, *Der Verkehr des Christen*, 30.
[37] Herrmann, *Der Verkehr des Christen*, 30.

4. Orthodoxy and heresy

Yet Tillich's admonition to throw off orthodoxy is not an abandonment of orthodox Christian doctrine, as the very next sermon shows.[38] Here, Tillich preaches from 2 Cor 4:1–6 on the office of an apostle, in response to the church-political scandal of the day, the defrocking of pastor Carl Wilhelm Jatho (1851–1913) on 24th June 1911.[39]

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the orthodoxy of pastors and professors – or, from another perspective, their right to follow their conscience – was controversial. Jatho's case was observed by liberals with concern, for they had been keen to emphasise freedom of conscience for the individual pastor.

Jatho had long been a notorious character; several volumes of his sermons published from 1903 onwards resulted in a series of local warnings from church authorities. Jatho's 1907 work on the Eucharist was academic in tone but polemic in its implications. In one sense, Jatho was offering rather standard liberal provocations of his era that the historical Jesus, who neither believed himself to be divine, nor thought of his death as an atoning sacrifice, nor even expected an early death, never instituted a sacrament but ate a meal with his friends where his words "this is my body" merely symbolise the fellowship binding the group together in love.[40]

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[38] No. 31, July 1911, *EGW* VII, 152–158.
[39] Erdmann Sturm, the editor of Tillich's sermons, recognises this allusion in a footnote. See Manfred Jacobs, 'Jatho, Carl Wilhelm (1851–1913)', *TRE* 16 (1987), 545–548 and Julia Winnebeck, *Apostolikumsstreitigkeiten. Diskussionen um Liturgie, Lehre und Kirchenverfassung in der preußischen Landeskirche 1871–1914* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 305–354.
[40] Carl Jatho, 'Welche Bedeutung hat für uns das Abendmahl', in *Praktische Fragen des modernen Christentums. Fünf religionswissenschaftliche Vorträge*, ed. Heinrich Geffcken (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1907), 22–45.

However, unlike most liberal Protestants, Jatho's writing had provocative consequences. Under Jatho, the orderly distribution of the sacrament of the Eucharist, one of the defining characteristics of the Lutheran church (*CA*, article 7), became an optional concession to the superstitious needs of the church, free of liturgical form. He even implied an excerpt from Wagner's *Parsifal* could replace the words of consecration.

However, what finally moved the *Evangelische Oberkirchenrat* to respond was his decision to remove the recitation of the apostolic confession from Confirmation services in Cologne. He replaced it with his own. Among others, Adolf von Harnack had also, in the *Apostolikumsstreit*, entertained the possibility of having an alternative confession. But saying this, while scandalous, was not yet breaking any rules. Jatho's cardinal sin was not so much theological, as liturgical, deviating from the approved order.[41]

Tillich, keenly aware of church-political debates in Prussia through his relationship to his father, comments on the case in that week's sermon. Comparing the sermons before and after Jatho's defrocking, it is tempting to imagine a parishioner quizzing Tillich following the sermon on the Prodigal Doubter, asking for clarification as to whether he supports Jatho or those who suspended him. It is, after all, the pious he admonishes for coming to God bringing faith agreeing with the church and the scriptures.

In the sermon in response to the case of Jatho, Tillich begins by asking the rhetorical question why the churches are so empty, yet the church still so powerful

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[41] See Henning Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II. Reformations- und Neuzeit', in *TRE* 3 (1978), 554–571, here: 561–562.

and influential. The answer is "we preach the clarity of God [made manifest] in the face of Jesus Christ. That is our weakness and that is our power."[42]

The light of God shines in creation, eminently in humanity, and thus throughout the history of religions, says Tillich. Thus, new religions of nature (including Jatho's worldview) also, in this general sense, "have God".[43] But the church should not acquiesce, but retain its distinctive focus:

> Which should be the source of our preaching, the clarity of God in nature and in the human spirit or in the face of Jesus Christ? Should we preach the God of this world, should we preach ourselves, or the bright light of the gospel of the clarity of Christ who is the image of God? Should [we] be allowed to hide the weakness of our preaching so we are less slandered and despised? Thanks be to God, our church chose weakness and shame [...].[44]

The church discipline of Jatho was correct, says Tillich. Jesus is the Christ who disciplines his church, bringing clarity:

> He stands there, with whip in his hand and purifies with holy wrath the house of God and with the blows of his words he shatters the righteousness of the pious and no-one can answer him. He speaks to his disciples about that which God demands of them and threatens them with eternal death on account of the angry word, the evil gaze and useless talk.[45]

Even if this kind of preaching seems weak because apparently unattractive, bringing shame for people would prefer less clarity and want to hide from God (i.e., Jatho), the church needs preaching which forces people to their knees and pricks their conscience.

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[42] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 153.
[43] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 154.
[44] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 154.
[45] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 155. Note that the discipline is not just of those such as Jatho but also the shattering of the righteousness of the pious.

However, the clarity of God in the face of Jesus Christ is expressed not just in his majesty as judge but also in his mercy towards sinners, even those who crucified him:

> Into the *Gottesferne* he stays with us who are far from God so we can commit with him our spirit into God's hands. Whoever nears the cross of Christ as an enemy of God is no longer a human.[46]

The meaning of this rather blunt and troubling previous sentence is that the grace of God which meets the one in the darkness of sin is so overwhelming that one would not be recognisably human if one did not respond to that grace.[47] The message forces people to give up their animosity toward God. People despise the church because the clarity of God is too painful; it is too much "to give one's proud spirit into God's spirit".[48]

Yet all this weakness of Christian preaching is also its power: for the religion of nature and the human spirit fears the end of our world which will one day be a "dead star",[49] such that "a stream of despair and tiredness of life, of yearning for death, goes through our peoples."[50]

In contrast, preaching the holy majesty of God in the face of Jesus Christ is powerful, leaving only words of eternity from another world. And the view of merciful grace in the face of the crucified one is where we find the highest divine

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[46] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 156.
[47] The sentence appears a little earlier in another form: "Whoever nears the one on the cross with the crown of thorns other than on their knees is no longer a human." No. 31, *EGW* VII, 155. Tillich's rhetoric, so imbued with a sense of affront to that which he calls most holy, dehumanises the "enemies of the cross", including Jatho, in a disturbing way.
[48] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 156.
[49] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 156.
[50] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 157. The mention of yearning for death shows Tillich believes there had been an increase in suicides in their post-Christian generation. He refers to this theme also in No. 41, New Year's Eve 1911, *EGW* VII, 213.

power which becomes weakness. "[E]ternal power, full clarity is alone in Jesus Christ the crucified one."[51]

The tone and force of this sermon against Jatho and his followers is startling against the backdrop of the previous sermon about the Prodigal Son who is Prodigal Doubter. Tillich draws a stark line in the sand. The opposition to Jatho is not merely formal, toward an unruly polemicist who breaks liturgical rules, but material, toward someone who no longer preaches Christ crucified.

When comparing Kähler's and Herrmann's employment of the notion of an intellectual work with Tillich's sermon on the Prodigal Son, criticism is directed toward just those positive theologians who are demanding doctrinal consequence. Yet the following sermon appears to contradict a reading of Tillich as a Herrmannian liberal, and he sounds more like his father or his former self as the leader of Halle Wingolf.

Is Tillich therefore retracting his apparently progressive line from the week before? Does he fear to be seen to support a candidate for defrocking? Was Tillich initially pushing a liberal theological line, defending those who do not agree with that very apostolic confession which Jatho (and Harnack) found so difficult to say?

My answer to these questions is ambivalent. We could attribute fear to him, but there is no evidence of this. Instead, the juxtaposition of these two sermons is a helpful illustration of the difficulty of defining Tillich's, or indeed anyone's, position. Theological positions are relative to other theological

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[51] No. 31, *EGW* VII, 158.

positions, they arise in debate, in response to events and new facts on the ground. Furthermore, our theological positions are not coordinates on a map, but constructed abstract generalisations of the plethora of statements made in various social contexts. They are always also, from the perspective of the historian of theology, interpretive constructions.

Granting that, I believe the contrast of these two sermons reveals the *boundaries* of Tillich's position. Tillich is not on the boundary here, but creating boundaries. To the right, he has separatist and dogmatist Christians, and the temptation of the orthodox to think of themselves as somehow, qua orthodoxy, acceptable to God. He has self-righteous 'positive' pastors in view, apparently brimming with pride on account of their faithfulness. To the left, he has provocatively heterodox pastors such as Jatho, who, according to Tillich, no longer preach Christ crucified. Faced with a monist naturalist claiming to be a Christian minister, Tillich expresses his opposition.

Tillich's encouragement to throw off orthodoxy is therefore not the same as Jatho's. There is an admonition directed to the positive Christians not to hold on to orthodoxy as if it were a work by which one makes oneself acceptable to God. But his concern is not only to correct the wrong stance of the pious for their own sake. He also fears a detrimental effect of over-zealous positive Christians on the sensitive intellectual conscience of doubting Christians, and the post-Christian population who feel themselves far from God.

As we will see below, one of the features of his sermons in Nauen is a concerted effort to encourage his faithful congregation to see the "millions and millions" outside the church as those for whom nothing – not sin, not doubt – is

a barrier for the gospel message. For that purpose, he needs to change their view of piety.

5. Songs of the pious in godforsakenness

From July to October 1911, Tillich held a series of sermons on selected Psalms which he called the songs of the pious: Psalm 22 on the pious in suffering, Psalm 42–43 on the pious in godforsakenness, Psalm 51 on the pious burdened by guilt, Psalm 73 on the pious in doubt and Psalm 90 on the pious in melancholy.

Tillich sees a mismatch between the triumphant songs of the contemporary church and the spiritual wrestling and fighting of the ancient Psalms, which are the basis of Christian life. The series should enable his listeners to

> sink ourselves into this fight of the pious of Israel for their faith, their victories and their defeats, in order to recognise our misery and the unspeakable gift of God.[52]

The pattern I discern in these sermons on the Psalms and which is relevant to the theme of the justification of the doubter is a *levelling* of the distinction between the believer and unbeliever. The law-gospel dialectic, expressed here as misery and gift, implies believers are not triumphant, but also suffering, godforsaken, godless, laden with guilt, doubting, melancholic. They are not in themselves good believers, but dependent upon the gift of God in Christ, who alone deserves glory.

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[52] No. 33, July/August 1911, *EGW* VII, 164.

The sermon on suffering from Psalm 22 offers little of relevance to our theme, though it should be noted that, just like the earliest sermons in Lichtenrade, Tillich offers an ambitious, instrumental, soul-making theodicy. When confronted with tragedy involving the death of children he says:

> That is God's work, a terrible puzzle which only allows one answer: And this God gives himself and he speaks: I took everything from you, and if my heart broke over your cries, I had to take it from you, in order to draw you to me out of pure goodness (Jer 31:3). So that you speak to me: My Father, you took everything from me, stay with me now and in eternity![53]

The sermon on Psalm 42/43 is an occasion for Tillich to criticise those Christians who make great distinctions between themselves and the world, where the word "faith" is misused as a weapon to judge others as believing or unbelieving, being of God or the world, or calling themselves "pious" and all the rest simply "godless".

The problem with this, says Tillich, is it gives glory to oneself and not to God, and makes one hard towards other people. His criticism is therefore both theologically and pastorally motivated. As an antidote to this tendency, Tillich suggests "a renewal and cleansing of the name of the pious" by speaking of "the pious in godforsakenness."[54] For *every* person is restless before God, there is a thirst of the soul for God among believer and unbeliever.

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[53] No. 33, EGW VII, 167. See also Tillich's more general theodicy concerning natural life in No. 43, Easter, 7th April 1912, *EGW* VII, 223.
[54] No. 33, EGW VII, 169.

In his sermon on Psalm 51,[55] Tillich is fighting against a piety which tries to bring spiritual sacrifices to God instead of simply confessing guilt;[56] the history of Christianity is a "fight for the cross of Christ against the sacrifice of humans."[57]

The sermon on Psalm 90 is an example of Tillich's dramatic creativity.[58] He calls the Psalm a "powerful song of melancholy, the unending divine melancholy of a man who has seen God face to face."[59] Tillich conjures visions from this imagined melancholic man who has seen the shortness and suffering of human and animal lives. The melancholy of Tillich's imagined Psalmist is also despair because of sin devastating human life together, finding its zenith in the crucifixion and mocking of Christ.

The melancholy man's conclusion is pessimistic: "I went to all sorts of people of every age and asked them if they would like to live their life again as they had lived it. And full of dismay they cried Never!"[60] This gesture toward *amor fati,* and indeed the very style, evoke Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, I believe intentionally. But the nod to Nietzsche is only to overcome him, for the man's vision ends with an emphatic eschewal of eternal return.[61] Nietzsche's solution is the *Übermensch* who can desire eternal return.[62] For Tillich the divine solution

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[55] No. 35, August/September 1911, *EGW* VII, 173–178.
[56] Tillich is also probably responding to a Nietzschean critique of the doctrine of sin when he characterises confession of sin as the most heroic, courageous act and says those who are weaker avoid it.
[57] No. 35, *EGW* VII, 177. Tillich also seems to respond to a separatist Sabbatarian group calling the mainstream church enemies of the cross. See No. 35, *EGW* VII, 178.
[58] No. 37, September/October 1911, *EGW* VII, 184–190.
[59] No. 37, *EGW* VII, 185.
[60] No. 37, *EGW* VII, 188.
[61] The themes of this vision are similar to the themes of Zarathustra's sickened reaction to his survey of humanity in the chapter "Der Genesende" [The recovering one], which end with humanity recognizing Zarathustra's identity as the teacher of eternal return. See Nietzsche, *KSA* 4, 270–277.
[62] See Miguel Skirl, 'Ewige Wiederkunft', in Henning Ottmann (ed), *Nietzsche-Handbuch* (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2000), 222–230; here: 226.

is Christ crucified. The cross, that deepest ground of all melancholy, is God's "unending triumph over melancholy."[63]

The message of these expositions of the Psalms is the rejection of human attempts to be pious without such admission of suffering, godforsakenness, guilt, doubt and melancholy, and of attempts to be pious wherein not everything is a gift and merit of the crucified one. As such these Tillichian readings of the Psalms have a levelling effect between believer and unbeliever.

The levelling effect is certainly a levelling down, deep insight into the sinfulness of humanity and its miserable angst and restlessness. He describes such a reality on New Year's Eve 1911:

> Whoever has once looked into the depths of his soul knows that a hidden, secret, never resting angst, is the most inward and powerful feeling in every hour and minute. You doubt this? Just ask yourself or someone else whether they can remember a moment in their life where they were totally, completely, unreservedly happy [...].[64]

In the Christmas sermon of 1911, the same levelling principle is evident, though the emphasis falls more on the gift.[65] Tillich preaches an emotional evangelistic sermon calling people to accept Christ. His appeal is to all, whether in unbelief or faith. His prayer for Christmas is that

> the darkness is revealed in its whole terribleness, so no one can hide themselves from the penetrating brightness of God, that closed hearts become transparent like glass and melt like wax in the fire of God's love.[66]

This good news is specifically directed to those who experience themselves as lost. God can be found in the manger because he wants to be found among the

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[63] No. 37, *EGW* VII, 189.
[64] See also No. 41; *EGW* VII, 210.
[65] No. 40, Christmas 1911, *EGW* VII, 201–207.
[66] No. 40; *EGW* VII, 202.

poorest and lowest, "with those who hunger and thirst, […] cry and mourn, […] who are lonely, […] who face death like himself".[67] He comes to forgive and pushes no human face away.[68] God speaks to all regardless of "unbelief or faith"[69] and bids us receive Christ:

> Take him, the child in swaddling clothes, in your arms like Mary in the stall at Bethlehem. That is the almighty, eternal God, before all the worlds of worlds are like a speck of dust. Take him in your arms, press him to your heart, receive him in your heart and never let him out! Do not fear, no abyss, no death, no darkness can separate you from him; for he is light and in him is no darkness. And if the darkness in you were so deep as hell, then this darkness would not be dark before him.[70]

Those who despair most of their sin and darkness now hear a message of the gracious love of God. This focus on the Christ child and specifically the striking invitation to take him as an infant into one's arms are both features of Tillich's Christmas preaching which we discover again in his war sermons.

But the Christmas sermon of 1911 also moves towards fellowship and application of this individual grace to life together. Hardness toward others has no place, for if God loves us so, how can we not love others with this same love? How can we reject fellowship with others for whom we feel disgust, because of their poverty, ugliness, or class difference?

> You are shy of your fellow class comrades and fear to dishonour your class when you have fellowship with one from a lower class? […] You think: I am educated and he is uneducated, how can I have fellowship with him? […] You say he is my inferior [at work], he has to obey me, how can I have fellowship with him?[71]

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[67] No. 40; *EGW* VII, 204.
[68] See No. 40; *EGW* VII, 204.
[69] No. 40; *EGW* VII, 205.
[70] No. 40; *EGW* VII, 205.
[71] No. 40; *EGW* VII, 206.

This challenging passage continues by widening the attitude of love to include explicit enemies, insisting that for the person who has understood God's love "it is impossible to push away a brother, a fellow human, for whom God became human."[72]

For all his insistence on the darkness and desperation in the world, we find Tillich far away from cultural pessimism and demonization of the world. Instead he teaches his congregation that the pious, if they are honest, share in such godforsakenness. All are dependent on the grace of God in Christ.

6. Interpreting the age of doubt

If Tillich levelled the difference between apparent piety and apparent unbelief, then he still needed to account for the great societal changes affecting the church. Pastors in Berlin had experienced scores of people leaving the church, a sense of lower church attendance and the rise of left-wing political movements which were most often extremely critical of the church.

As perhaps with any institution in decline, leading church members fell over each other to offer explanations of who was to blame: Had the church abandoned the gospel for the *Zeitgeist*, leaving its preaching weak and ineffectual? Or had the church stubbornly refused to move with the times, ossifying its doctrine and rendering its message incomprehensible? Across the theological spectrum, most said the church had for too long ignored the 'social question' and thus given space for social democratic parties to flourish. Tillich's

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[72] No. 40; *EGW* VII, 207.

approach to the sociological facts on the ground was neither of these rather bare conservative or liberal clichés of blame. Instead, in Nauen he interpreted the 'age of doubt' in theological terms.

Any theology of culture is rooted in the doctrine of creation. However, some versions of that doctrine can emphasise too strongly God's transcendence and separation from creation and forget the pan-en-theism of the Scriptures, that "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).[73] In a sermon on just this passage,[74] Tillich refers to Jacob Böhme (1575–1624) as a preacher of God's rule in the human heart, which implies God's presence in all human culture:

> every thought we think is thought in God. Without him there is no thinking [...] without him there is no conscience [...] our day's work is his doing [...] Our joy is his joy, our suffering is his suffering.[75]

Even in humanity's sin, God is present making the effects of sin plague the sinner, not least in the greater ease with which further sins can be committed. Thus, the word from Acts 17 can also be a word of judgement.[76] How one lives and moves could not be more different in many cases.[77] Yet the sharp division implied by such a judgement is relativised when Tillich invokes the law-gospel dialectic and causes the Christian to recognise she also is, from nature, a child of wrath whose only hope is the Son of God who entered into our state of being far from God, for our sake.[78]

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[73] For a helpful (and in the end critical) account of what panentheism means, see John W. Cooper, *Panentheism. The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).
[74] No. 32, July/August 1911, *EGW* VII, 158–163.
[75] No. 32, *EGW* VII, 160. Böhme was a panentheist of sorts, who Tillich often cites approvingly in various works.
[76] See No. 32, *EGW* VII, 161–162.
[77] No. 32, *EGW* VII, 158.
[78] See No. 32, *EGW* VII, 162.

Tillich interprets all human thought and all human sin as, in the last instance, a work of God. Thus, in Tillich's sermon on Psalm 73,[79] he emphasises that God's work includes human doubt. He characterises three ideal-typical eras of Protestant church history – eras of faith, unbelief, and doubt. Quite how and why Tillich demarcates these eras is unclear,[80] but it is clear he views his own time as an age of doubt.

Doubt is defined initially as dividedness (*Zwiespalt*) between opposites, which for the religious person is

> having thoughts which say yes to God and at the same time having thoughts which say no to God [...] Wanting to say yes but not being able to, having to say no but yet not wanting to, to believe and yet say: Help my unbelief.[81]

The author of Psalm 73 is pious but has gone through the depths of doubt to rise to the "shining heights of faith".[82] Tillich structures the sermon around three points: First, the Psalmist doubts because God's ways are different to what he would wish. Second, God lets him doubt so he would learn to say 'nevertheless'. But in the end, third, he only overcomes doubt by entering the holy place (*Heiligtum*).[83]

The bare structure of the sermon suggests a moralising and triumphant tone. However, in the first section, Tillich shows rather poetic sensitivity to the

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[79] No. 36, September/October 1911, *EGW* VII, 178–184.
[80] In the sermon manuscript, the age of faith was characterised first as "from Luther until Paul Gerhardt" until he crossed through these five words. See No. 36, *EGW* VII, 179n95. Presumably Tillich realised he could not demarcate eras clearly. However, it is interesting to consider this periodization, particularly his notion of an era of unbelief, which may well mean the rise of rationalism and 'the Enlightenment' after Descartes. Quite how and when the age of unbelief becomes an age of doubt is not clear.
[81] No. 36, *EGW* VII, 179.
[82] No. 36, *EGW* VII, 179.
[83] See No. 36, *EGW* VII, 179.

sources of doubt in the experience of social injustice and suffering in the world,[84] and in a natural scientific order of nature which needs no God for explanation and intervention. The believer shares in these doubts, but also knows their deeper source: the church's and one's own lack of sanctification:

> Show me the church is better than other large fellowships [and] then I will recognise God is in you – but can you show that? […] You like to speak of pious feelings which make you so blessed and give you so much peace. But how long do they last, do they not change to restlessness and unhappiness [*Unseligkeit*]?[85]

The doubter's situation is much worse than the guilt-ridden, says Tillich, for at least the guilty one knows God exists, even if God is against him. But this sorry situation of doubt is God's pedagogy: "So we would learn to say nevertheless".[86] For if the pious were free to witness without doubt and sin, finding their faith continually confirmed by miracles, then one would seek God for one's own advantage. But God does not let himself be thus degraded.[87]

Tillich's characterisation of doubt as pedagogy giving birth to mature faith, and as discipline to guard against idolatry is brought into focus by his claim that some Christians try and avoid doubt by remaining in cowardly obliviousness to the suffering of those around them. Yet doubt and despair are overcome by going to God in prayer, entering into the holy of holies through the cross: "Pray doubter, to him whom you doubt."[88]

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[84] Tillich demonstrates herein sensitivity to the situation of the impoverished working class in Berlin. For example: "Truly this [Psalmist] knew what it means to live in musty cellars where no sunlight reaches, or cooped up in high roof chambers offering hardly any protection against the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter, and then to walk through the streets of the rich and see their palaces." No. 36, *EGW* VII, 180.
[85] No. 36, *EGW* VII, 181.
[86] No. 36, *EGW* VII, 182.
[87] See No. 36, *EGW* VII, 182–183.
[88] No. 36, *EGW* VII, 183.

The entreaty to the doubter to pray is also emphasised in a sermon on Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38).[89] Here we find an early parallel with the interpretive move Tillich makes in his American writings, where cynicism about the truth is reinterpreted as an expression of a serious but disappointed search for truth. Here in 1911, Tillich characterises Pilate as someone disillusioned with the search for truth. Pilate's question therefore becomes a mocking expression of despair in his soul. Yet that despair implies that the real question about truth still lives in him.

The person who has *lost* the truth is therefore not the doubter or even the mocker of Christianity but the person who has stopped seeking the truth, the person who thinks they have found the truth in a system of doctrine.[90] If someone pushes the truth away out of a sense of despair

> and an unending yearning for truth leaves him no peace, then we may believe he is of the truth, and we may say to him in the name of Christ: You cannot lose the truth forever. Fight for it, you will hear its voice for you are of the truth![91]

Tillich's use of the Johannine predestinarian expression "of the truth" [*aus der Wahrheit*] engenders a hopeful attitude toward the sceptic and doubter. Yet Tillich also raises the spectre of someone who is not of the truth, who turns back from the truth and is thus unable to pray, or shrinks away from the cross, i.e., the seriousness of God's proximity in judgement and grace.[92]

Yet it appears that spiritual pride, and not doubt, is limiting factor in this possibility. The probing, nameless prayer for help to pray, and the truthful

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[89] No. 38, October 1911, *EGW* VII, 190–196.
[90] See No. 38, *EGW* VII, 191–193.
[91] No. 38, *EGW* VII, 195.
[92] See No. 38, *EGW* VII, 195.

willingness to face up to one's darkness are indications of (doubting) people being of the truth. They will (eventually) come to the light, come before the Cross on their knees and ask for God's love, to be able to love. For the truth is "the eternal, living, crucified God, the God who is love".[93]

7. The protest of faith

Tillich's interpretation of the age of doubt also involved a theology of political culture. One of the most significant cultural developments with which the church wrestled at the beginning of the twentieth century was the rise of social democracy. In the elections of January 1912, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had become leading party. In Berlin, they won five of six seats, one going to the left-liberal *Fortschrittliche Volkspartei* (FVP).

In a sermon from January 1912,[94] just after the parliamentary election (*Reichtagswahl*), Tillich interprets the SPD's success in theological terms.[95] Tillich's describes the lead-up to the elections in retrospect, saying the entire country had been filled with

> the battle cries of hate and bitterness, of fanaticism and deception, of pride and rhetoric [...] we had to experience how most victories were won with the

[93] No. 38, *EGW* VII, 196. In his final sermon in Nauen at Easter 1912, Tillich emphasises how despair also is overcome by dying love. See No. 43, *EGW* VII, 227.
[94] No. 42, January 1912, *EGW* VII, 214–220.
[95] Tillich scholarship has tended to believe Tillich's own first account of his political development which claims the political indifference of "most intellectuals" in Wilhelmine Germany and his own political awakening during the First World War. This account is contradicted by the most rudimentary study of intellectuals before the war, and his comment on voting on the left *before* the war. See Tillich, 'On the Boundary', 29; Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 44. As mentioned in Chapter 3, he probably voted for the *FVP*.

> war cry against all order and authority, against everything established and all dependency in state and church.[96]

This characterisation implies a conservative political viewpoint, gesturing to the SPD for their decidedly subversive position, particularly toward the connection of church and state. The Roman Catholic *Zentrumspartei*,[97] offers "the strongest bulwark against the floods of subversion breaking forth from the bosom of the Protestant church".[98] Clearly, the assumed congregant is not a social democrat.

Yet there is also recognition of the peculiarly Protestant origin of such politics, which leads Tillich to another perspective. For this, Tillich creates a new taxonomy of the life of the Spirit in human history. In the earlier sermon, eras of faith, unbelief and doubt were imagined, with Tillich identifying the present with doubt. Here, Tillich presents childhood, youth and manhood as the three stages of the life of the Spirit, identifying the rise of social democracy as a manifestation of youth.

> [T]he great law of the Spirit, [is] first to be bound, dependent and unconscious: his childhood. Then to rip oneself free from all chains and say no to everything which he has received from others: his youth. But finally the freedom, conscious and in one's own action, to return to the ground from which he grew: his manhood.[99]

Roman Catholicism is "the church in the childhood of faith [...] that is child's faith in all its power and all its weakness."[100] The aim is manhood, but

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[96] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 214.
[97] In a sermon for the commemoration of the Reformation at the end of October 1911, Tillich had criticised the worldliness of the Roman Catholic church whose flock obey the call to vote for the Catholic party. See No. 39, Reformationsfest 1911, *EGW* VII, 198.
[98] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 214.
[99] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 215.
[100] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 217. Tillich's sermon for the commemoration of the Reformation in October 1911 is singularly polemic about Roman Catholicism. See No. 39, *EGW* VII, 196–201.

"between blind and seeing faith stands a fighting and seeking faith."[101] This faith of youth involves a questioning of received faith and of authorities, involves opening oneself to the possibility of doubt which leaves one restless. In our youth, Tillich writes,

> we could no longer put up with remaining at the feet of our mother and at the table of our father. We stormed out to see and hear [for] ourselves. We closed our heart to them, we stopped asking, we gave ourselves answers and believed they were better than those of the parents and teachers and pastors […] we […] became unhappy and restless […] we ended in nothingness […] doubt became despair and freedom the desert and we erred around and wanted to perish.[102]

Tillich says only the minority rebel in this obvious way. But many more can no longer say yes with their whole heart; they know they are no longer children. Inwardly estranged, a return to childhood is impossible:

> [T]hey try to become children again, artificially awakening what is forever gone, torturing themselves to feel what they did not feel, under the Christmas tree, at the graveyard, in prayer, in the house of God, but it is anguish and untruth and fails again and again; and then they despair without having ever doubted, then they break without ever having broken [anything], then they err in the desert and want to perish without ever yearning for freedom.[103]

Tillich sees such lack of protest as unbefitting of the Protestant church,[104] which says no to Catholicism. The Protestant church is "the church in its age of youth […] the church of freedom which has torn itself away from […] bindings"[105] like Luther, Calvin and Cromwell did.[106]

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[101] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 217.
[102] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 217–218.
[103] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 218.
[104] The English adjectives Protestant and Evangelical can both be used to refer to the *evangelische Kirche* in Germany. However, to avoid the confusion with evangelicalism, I have used the word Protestant. In this sermon Tillich emphasises that the *evangelische Kirche* is part of international *Protestantismus*.
[105] No. 42, *EGW* VII, 218.
[106] In his sermon to commemorate the Reformation at the end of October 1911, Tillich preaches a strongly anti-Catholic message where he identifies opposition to authority as a peculiarly Protestant trait in contrast to Roman Catholic enslavement of conscience. See No. 39, *EGW* VII, 196–201.

Having honoured protest as peculiarly Protestant, Tillich honours the social democratic protest as intimately related to the Protestant church, or even part of it:

> If then times of drought and spiritual desert came over the church, if, in the streams of blood of that great revolution a rotten world was shattered, if in our days the third of all German men stream to the flag on which 'No' is written, and nothing but No, then we know how we have to position ourselves. They are our brothers, fellow Christians, even if they do not want to be thus, fellow Protestants who have ended up in the desert and are perishing. The age of youth of faith with its enchanting power and the whole depth of its abysses in the peoples as in the individual.[107]

Tillich's characterisation of the SPD here as, one might say, 'anonymous Protestants'[108] is a concretisation of Tillich's wider interpretation of the 'age of doubt'. These protesting 'youths' are in the desert, but thus of the same family as Tillich's congregation of faithful churchgoers. They are, before God, on the same plane; they too were found by Jesus in the desert "when we were nearly perishing and had abandoned all hope".[109]

Protestant Christians have found Jesus as the source in this desert, have drunk from him and "followed his path […] [to the] land which we had left, the land of our childhood", yet without the naivety of mere submission to authorities.[110]

> Unexpected riches are now open to us. We now hear the sermon but with free judgement as befits a Christian. Now we read the bible again but not like a new law book whose letter enslaves us but as befits a person of the spirit […].[111]

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[107] No. 42; *EGW* VII, 219

[108] My choice of a Rahnerian inflection here is relevant because Tillich and Rahner both want to encourage fellow Christians in the context of the church's cultural decline that God is at work in the lives of people outside the church.

[109] No. 42; *EGW* VII, 219.

[110] No. 42; *EGW* VII, 219. The way Tillich talks about returning reminds me of Chesterton's imagined journey in his book *Orthodoxy*, but the change in the stance which occurs via the journey is more akin to Ricoeur's second naivety, it is a return, a way back, but not all is the same.

[111] No. 42; *EGW* VII, 219.

Free judgement implies the freedom to question (and learn from) biblical and ecclesial authorities. 'Manhood' is not compatible with a faith which has known no doubt.

His interpretation of the turn to social democracy as expression of faith's protest against enslavement is comparable to his interpretation of doubt as God's pedagogy. The shared horizon is an interpretation of critical thought and doubt as co-constitutive of true, mature faith.

This is not a full endorsement of unbridled autonomy, for freedom can enslave and lead to despair. But widespread cultural protest in an age of doubt is not an occasion for the church to declare spiritual war upon the culture or attempt to make political gains. Rather, moved by the love of Jesus, the most effective remedy is to live out a "strong manly [i.e., mature] Christianity which in word and deed gives witness to the life within it."[112]

8. Concluding comments

The sermons in Nauen exhibit several features which help us to understand the development of themes pertaining to the notion of the justification of the doubter. We saw the pattern of a law-gospel dialectic in many of Tillich's sermons which reveals something of the deep structure of his pastoral theology. Whether rendered in the rhetorical question, asking who could fulfil the demands of a truly pious life, or expressed as the insight into our misery and God's gift in his sermons

[112] No. 42; *EGW* VII, 220.

on the Psalms, Tillich emphasises human inability and its remedy in the grace of God in Christ.

Tillich first reduced the sceptic's doubt to the doubt of the Christian seeking assurance. Yet Tillich also talks about doubt of Scriptures and doctrines. In his striking adaptation of Luke 15, rendered as the story of a Prodigal Doubter, Tillich characterises the pious of the day coming to God not with empty hands but with rags of love, faith, zeal and orthodoxy. In characterising orthodox confession of the pious as a self-righteous 'work', Tillich is mirroring Wilhelm Herrmann's defence against 'positive' detractors in the wake of the *Apostolikumsstreit*.

However, as we see in the following sermon commenting on the defrocking of Jatho, Tillich is not declaring himself to be a proponent of liberal or free Christianity but to distance himself from more conservative Christians. Tillich is positioning himself between positions, in a sense being "on the boundary" between liberal and conservative theology, as he would characterise himself in 1936. However, the picture of boundary-sitting is too passive, for Tillich is very much an active agent, exploring a space where he can dwell theologically by defining some boundaries to the left and the right.

Calling out the self-righteousness of the pious involves a reimagination of piety which levels the distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, reminding his congregation that *all* share in the restless godforsaken misery from which God's love in Christ would save. The experience of this grace softens hard hearts and enables recognition of the enemies of Christianity as kin for whom God became human.

The recognition of the love of God for the world is accompanied by recognition of God's continued work in the world, leading Tillich to offer an

interpretation of his culture as an age of doubt in which God is bringing about maturity and guarding against idolatrous faith. Thus, the Protestant church can encounter the disillusioned sceptic as a seeker after truth, and the angry critic of the church as a fellow Protestant on the way to manhood. Indeed, the Christian who thinks they have already arrived at the truth through a system of doctrine and unquestioning submission to (doctrinal) authorities is like a Roman Catholic, in the childhood of faith. Faith and orthodoxy are nothing to be proud of.

Within a Lutheran setting such as Tillich's, this attitude to faith (and the confessional polemic) is unspectacular. Comparing all this with Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, we might even wonder why there is no explicit reference to the bound will and no noticeable emphasis on faith itself being a gift, even when Tillich speaks in predestinarian terms. The answer is, I think, that talk of faith as a gift would be of no comfort to the doubter until work has been done on the concept of faith. A predestinarian approach combined with a narrow definition of what amounts to proper faith would lead the doubter and the 'masses' reeling in despair. For on these terms, if I cannot believe properly, then I may have evidence I am reprobate. This is of course not unlike the dark despair we saw in the abandoned sermon of May 1909 in Lichtenrade. Instead, in Nauen 1911 we see predestinarian passages employed in a hopeful interpretation of his culture's truth-seeking, even if it expresses itself now as cynicism and protest: their scepticism and protest are, under God, forms of faith: they are of the truth and will come to the truth. When Tillich moved from Nauen to his next posts in industrialised and overcrowded Treptow and Moabit, he would need this hope again.

Chapter 7

Convincing the Doubter (Moabit 1912–13)

1. Introduction

Following the year in Nauen, in April 1912 Tillich moved back to his father's manse for several weeks[1] and took his second set of comprehensive theological exams (a prerequisite for ordination) on 4th May 1912.[2] There followed a period of almost a year's pastoral ministry in largely working-class parishes in Berlin.

The first spell of ministry was just six weeks (15th June – 31st July 1912), employed as auxiliary preacher in Berlin-Treptow under Pfarrer Johann Ahlenstiehl at the *Kirche Zum Vaterhaus*.[3] Church services had been held in a school building since the end of the nineteenth century to cope with the growing population. The new church building was consecrated in November 1911.[4] Life in the village of Lichtenrade, in rural Nauen, and the manse of his father in Berlin had been very bourgeois. Now Tillich was placed in a densely populated area which had experienced significant industrial growth, housing large factories with thousands of workers. From his time in Treptow we have just two

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[1] Tillich's letter from 15th April 1912 is addressed from the manse at Neuenburgerstr. 3. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 422 = Universitätsarchiv Halle: Rep 27 Nr. 855. Georg Neugebauer gives the address as Naumburgerstr. 3 here. However, I suspect his transcription of Tillich's notoriously difficult handwriting was wrong on this occasion, for Tillich's father lived at Neuenbergerstr. 3 from 1900 until his death. Shortly before his death in 1937 we have evidence he was still living there: see 'Brief von Fritz Otto Hermann Schulz an Johannes Oskar Tillich, 05.02.1935', ed. Erdmann Sturm, in Folker Siegert (ed), *Grenzgänge. Menschen und Schicksale zwischen jüdischer, christlicher und deutscher Identität*. FS Diethard Aschoff. Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 11 (Münster: LIT, 2002), 264–269.

[2] *EGW* IX, 435. Contra Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* [1989 edition], 35. On the debate about dating see Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 252n442.

[3] See *EGW* IX, 435. The name of the minister is mentioned by Erdmann Sturm, 'Historische Einleitung', *EGW* VII, 1–15; here: 4.

[4] See Bastian Müller, *Kirche zum Vaterhaus – Evangelische Kirche in Berlin-Baumschulenweg* (Berlin: Benedict Müller Verlag, 2009).

extant sermons,[5] and an intriguing diary fragment written retrospectively in 1914.[6]

After the time in Treptow, he was ordained on 18th August 1912 at the St Matthäuskirche, and then again employed as auxiliary preacher, covering a vacancy for nine months in Berlin-Moabit (August 1912 – May 1913). From his time in Moabit we have twenty-one sermons and three sketches or fragments. Just as in Treptow, the *Erlöserkirche* in Moabit was almost brand new when Tillich arrived, having been built as a response to the growing urban population from 1909–1911.[7] Only in May 1911 was the building consecrated, becoming an independent parish church with 14,000 members in August 1912.[8] Together with the first pastor Carl F. A. Schmidt (1864–1930),[9] Tillich was involved in the start of what one would today call a church-plant among the working-class of North Berlin.

As is well known in Tillich scholarship, Tillich's time in Moabit helped him to deepen his understanding of the plight of the working class, embracing these placements in densely populated working-class parishes as an opportunity to get to know 'real life'.[10] The population of Moabit (where there were several

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[5] Erdmann Sturm, who draws on newspaper announcements of sermons for his account, says Tillich only held sermons for three Sunday services. *EGW* VII, 4.

[6] It is fascinating that in the latter Tillich remembers this time as characterised by a feeling of power. See *EGW* V, 72.

[7] Carl Schmidt, *Evangelische Kirchen und kirchliches Gemeindeleben*. Moabiter Heimatbücher (Berlin: L. Oehmigke's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1925), 35–39.

[8] See *Festschrift 100 Jahre Erlöserkirche, Berlin-Moabit*, ed. Gemeindekirchenrat der Erlöser-Kirchengemeinde (Berlin, 2011).

[9] Schmidt was earlier pastor of the *Heilandsgemeinde* to which the *Erlösergemeinde* belonged for a short period before becoming a parish in its own right. Birth and death year are from the EZA records. Schmidt's forename is spelt both Carl or Karl. See Carl Schmidt, *Evangelische Kirchen und kirchliches Gemeindeleben*. Moabiter Heimatbücher (Berlin: L. Oehmigke's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1925); Karl Schmidt, *Der evangelische Männer- und Jünglingsverein der Heilandsgemeinde (früher Moabit). Sein Werk und seine Geschichte. Zur 25jährigen Jubelfeier 1908* (Berlin, 1908).

[10] See *EGW* V, 59–61.

churches) was about 46,000 at that time. Günther Dehn worked in one of the churches there and remembers:

> The rents were high. They normally demanded 25% of income. […] In the year 1908, 200 children died in the parish below the age of one year. […] Child labour was still generally normal, even if it was forbidden for children under twelve.[11]

However, the time in Moabit was also the occasion for him to gather and address intellectuals (including Jews and monists) in private homes in quite different areas of Berlin. In various accounts of Tillich's life, much is made of these *Vernunftabende*, reason-evenings, which he ran with his friend Richard Wegener and others. They demonstrate an early interest in apologetics, a correlative theology. This is entirely appropriate, and I will devote the first main section of this chapter to Tillich's memorandum *Kirchliche Apologetik*. However, a fuller picture of Tillich's apologetic stance can be made when we also read the ordinary Sunday sermons in Moabit. From the *Vernunftabende* themselves we only possess two manuscripts.[12]

Tillich's inner-city setting also facilitated the exploration of Berlin's nightlife. At least according to a fellow pastor and Wingolf brother, this was principally undertaken by the pastors as a cultural study, and was not a sign of dissipation or a double life. I think this is highly probably accurate.[13] However,

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[11] *EGW* V, 60.

[12] Paul Tillich, 'Die Grundlage des gegenwärtigen Denkens', *EGW* X, 75–84; 'Das Problem der Geschichte', *EGW* X, 85–100.

[13] See the comments of Theodor Burckhardt, who joined Tillich on two or three such trips at Tillich's instigation, in *EGW* V, 61–62. For those overly eager to sensationalise Tillich's later sexual misdemeanours, one might raise the suspicion Tillich's visitation of night cafés is evidence of some sort of double life in 1912, even if he speaks against heavy drinking and lust on several occasions in his Moabit sermons. This is possible. However, in his own unbridled correspondence in later, more libertine years (when he would have no reason to deny his past), he writes he did not have sexual relations until he married, and was faithful to his wife during the war. See *EGW* V, 137. What seems fair (and unspectacular) is to conclude from the diary fragments of 1914 (*EGW* V, 70–73) that

(despite many cryptic references) it is clear enough in the diary fragment from 1914 that Tillich was also occupied by romantic interests and sexual tension.[14] This expresses itself in his brief account of the time in Moabit as a Dionysian rush,

> causing my soul to continually resonate, which the sobrieties of miraculous power had turned off for one year. It was the Dionysian reality to which the Apollonian idea of my life had metamorphosed. Since it always remained in the ideal, there was no disappointment and the riches of the impressions were so great that there was not once time to become sober. For three years of my life I would not give this one in return [...].[15]

The best sense I can make of these comments in the context of the whole fragment is that Tillich is reporting the heady experience of falling in love with various young women. Tillich refers much to the pair 'ideal' and 'real' in the diary fragment, and describes his time from Lichtenrade until the war as his life "falling out of its system" or a series of "fallings of the idea into the real."[16] Tillich describes feeling for the first time what "life" really means, referring first to the familial warmth in Lichtenrade, then to falling in love with a young woman while they discussed Kierkegaard, and then of attraction and romance in general, leading to his eventual engagement with Grethi Wever in August 1913. Talk of discovering 'life' here therefore probably refers to a late acceptance and

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Tillich experienced considerable romantic-sexual tension in the period 1910–1914, on which more below.

[14] In the diary fragment he appears first to talk about an intelligent and attractive woman – a "little siren" who "seduced" him while he "was reading Kierkegaard to her" – who he first met in Autumn 1910 in Heringsdorf and who apparently lived in Lichterfelde, where his friend Wegener was curate: "The Autumn twilight hours in Lichterfelde with Dox around her house had romance." *EGW* V, 72. Though the diary is rather cryptic, I think we can glean from it that this relationship appears to have continued to some degree while he was in Nauen, but then he had no romantic friendships until he met Grethi.

[15] *EGW* V, 71.

[16] *EGW* V, 72.

affirmation of his sexual emotions after the Wingolf years spent trying largely to avoid anything which would encourage such feelings.[17]

An important aspect of Tillich's personal life in this period was his concern for his professional future. Tillich was well-qualified to pursue an academic career, and his decision to only take a temporary post after ordination is probably an indication this is what he was hoping for. The Pauck biography therefore claims his decision to pursue a professorship was already clear, saying "it was to this goal he bent his energies while working as an assistant minister in the Moabit."[18]

However, his energies outside of his normal pastoral duties were in fact devoted to apologetics until 1913. By the end of 1912, Tillich had applied for the permanent minister's job in Moabit. However, this was probably a fallback plan, for he focussed his efforts on becoming a full-time apologist. In December 1912, Tillich met President Steinhausen of the church consistory to convince the church to create a new job for him and his friend Wegener as church apologists.[19] When this attempt failed, Tillich was persuaded by friends like Wegener (and, curiously, by Adolf von Harnack), to give up the apologetic evenings to concentrate on academic work.[20] Rescinding his application for the permanent minister's job in Moabit, he then began in January 1913 to make arrangements pursue a habilitation, aiming for an academic career.[21] Yet this

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[17] There was a serious moral stance at Wingolf from 1905–1908, where close contact with women such as dancing was avoided.
[18] Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* [1989 edition], 36.
[19] Richard Wegener's notes record Tillich going to present "the apologetics" in December 1912. *GW* XIII, 544.
[20] See *GW* XIII, 545.
[21] See Erdmann Sturm, 'An der engen Pforte der historischen Methode vorbei. Paul Tillichs Habilitation in Halle (1916) und seine Umhabilitierungen nach Berlin (1919) und Marburg (1924)', *IJTF* 10 (2015): 273–331; here: 274–275.

decision did not make his concern for apologetics disappear. According to Wegener's diary, Tillich was still toying with the idea of beginning a new round of apologetic evenings the following Winter, having to be dissuaded by Wegener as late as August 1913.[22] His work on the *Systematische Theologie* appears to have mainly taken place only after this, in the Winter of 1913.[23]

Tillich's future was therefore far from clear in the Moabit period, and a clear academic trajectory, despite the two dissertations, was not discernable until early 1913. Tillich's principle task from April 1911 to May 1913 was to be an ordinary pastor, preaching sermons from those bible passages he saw fit to communicate his evangelical message. Yet as a pastor, he developed a strong concern for apologetics. This background information to Tillich's time in Moabit guides my decision to treat the memorandum and the Moabit sermons together, and work on the systematic draft in the following chapter.

In this present chapter, as well as giving an account of the sources and their general relevance to the theme of the justification of the doubter, I want to make one particular inquiry central to my argument. In chapter two, on his 1919 draft of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, I noted Tillich's blistering critique of all apologetics, including Karl Heim's writings, as an embarrassment and intellectual 'work'. But in the memorandum from 1913 we see an enthusiastic endorsement of apologetics, including detailed practical suggestions for apologetic ministry in various settings. I will argue that the critique of 1919 is a contradiction of Tillich's desire in Moabit to be a church apologist.

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[22] See *GW* XIII, 545.
[23] See *EGW* V, 72.

The nature of the continuity and discontinuity between 1913 and 1919 has been a matter of debate in recent Tillich scholarship, in particular in Benôit Mathot's work on Tillich's apologetics, where he argues for considerable continuity.[24] In this chapter, I argue for strong discontinuity; Tillich in 1919 is indeed criticising his position from the Moabit period, 1912–1913, whether he was later conscious of this or not. This is highly relevant for our understanding of Tillich's development of the justification of the doubter, for apologetics is all about how the Christian understands and encounters the doubter.

The chapter is structured in three main sections. First, I exposit the memorandum *Kirchliche Apologetik*. Second, I probe Mathot's arguments for playing down the discontinuity between 1919 and 1913. Having established Tillich's memorandum is not greatly distinct from the position he critiques in 1919, I then go on to show that Tillich's Moabit sermons – left in peace by nearly all Tillich scholars – also exhibit those traits which he criticises in 1919, and a structural similarity with the Heimian approach he will come to disparage.

2. Church apologetics

In late 1912, Tillich, Wegener and friends began their series of eight thematic *Vernunftabende* (each theme being presented in four households) We have a reliable list of the themes before Christmas 1912, which would have started in October or November 1912.[25] Tillich held four of the themes, yet only one is

[24] See Benoît Mathot, *L'apologétique dans la pensée de Paul Tillich*. Tillich Research 6 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2015).
[25] For this list and the dating, see the report (*GW* XIII, 60), the first invitation from 1912 (*GW* XIII, 63), and the program from 1913 (*EGW* V, 62–63).

preserved, *Die Grundlage des gegenwärtigen Denkens* [The foundations of contemporary thought], which corresponds thematically to the first evening which began in the Autumn of 1912.[26]

Here, there are elements relevant for the justification of the doubter. Luther is portrayed as someone fighting against instances of authority and standing for free thought. Tillich then describes doubt as a perennial problem since free thought offers a restless critique of systems of authority. This leads to despair of truth, a totally negative result preparing us for the positive:

> [S]cepticism, despair of truth, is the end of this line of free thought, and it is no wonder when the sceptical mood is by far the dominant one. Only one way out appears to be left: A return to authority; but this has fallen down upon itself. That is the present situation of thought. It appears despairing; but just this totally negative result is the prerequisite for something positive.[27]

For our purposes, Tillich's memorandum, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, is very revealing since he explains the theological convictions and rationale for his apologetic practice.[28] As Wegener notes in his diary, in December 1912, Tillich went to President Steinhausen of the Church Consistory "to present the

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[26] Lax is wrong to suggest the first theme, 'Die Grundlage des gegenwärtigen Denkens' (*EGW* X, 75–84) was held in January 1913, for the fifth theme started then. In Erdmann Sturm's edition *EGW* X, a second *Vernunftabend* is printed (Paul Tillich, 'Das Problem der Geschichte', *EGW* X, 85–100). Though external features suggest it was part of the same series, nothing bearing this sort of title appears in the lists from Winter 1912/13, and so it was perhaps held in another context. There is in any case nothing remarkable here concerning our theme of justification and doubt.

[27] Paul Tillich, 'Die Grundlage des gegenwärtigen Denkens', *EGW* X, 75–84; here: 84.

[28] Tillich's *Kirchliche Apologetik* is accessible in *GW* XIII, 34–63, where a report on the apologetic evenings and a copy of the first invitation is included, and in *MW/HW* 6, 39–61. It is important for understanding Tillich's development as a whole and specifically the development of the justification of the doubter. For in his theory of apologetics we see his convictions concerning doubt and doubters, his interpretation of their situation and his solutions for it. Doris Lax's dissertation offered a first close commentary on the text; see Doris Lax, *Rechtfertigung des Denkens* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2006), 91–115. In contrast, her essay from 2007 describes the content of the *Kirchliche Apologetik* and attempts to argue for its continuing relevance in today's world: Doris Lax, 'Paul Tillich's Kirchliche Apologetik (1913): A Different Approach to Practical Theology', in Marc Dumas, Mireille Hébert, Douglas Nelson (eds) *Paul Tillich, prédicateur et théologien pratique*. Actes du XVIe Colloque International Paul Tillich, Montpellier 2005. Tillich-Studien 18 (Münster/Wien: LIT, 2007), 107–119.

apologetics *again*."[29] Therefore, although the edition of Tillich's *Kirchliche Apologetik* we possess was finished after the last of the apologetic evenings in early March 1913, conceptual work began after Tillich's ordination, and an earlier version of the memorandum was completed by December 1912.[30]

i. The concept of apologetics

Tillich begins by defining the concept of apologetics, distinguishing between scientific and practical apologetics:

> Scientific apologetics has the task of classifying the theological system, methodologically and in terms of content, in the system of the sciences and to therefore ground the scientific justification of theology. […] Practical apologetics has the task of leading, on the path of thought, from the [already] present possession of truth to the Christian truth.[31]

Scientific apologetics is part of writing systematic theology, the first of the tripartite structure of Kähler's system in 1883 and Tillich's system in 1913 and 1925. Tillich is not concerned with this kind of apologetics in the memorandum, but with practical apologetics which he says has always been present in the life of the church. In the context of the church's hegemony in culture, this only had an "occasional, coincidental, individual"[32] character and organised apologetics was never felt necessary because those who deviated from orthodoxy were simply deemed an object of either persecution or Christian pastoral care [*Seelsorge*], as just every other "sinner".

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[29] *GW* XIII, 544. The emphasis is not original. Wegener's wording does not suggest Tillich went merely to discuss apologetics in general, but to present a specific document.
[30] Tillich and Wegener appear to have come up with the idea of the evenings in August 1912 (*GW* XIII, 544). Preparations were made in Autumn 1912 (*GW* XIII, 59) and invitations were sent for the first four talks that began before Christmas. Tillich and Wegener planned more of the detail of the last four talks on 29th December 1912 (*GW* XIII, 544), and these resumed January to March 1913 (*EGW* V, 62–63). The *Vernunftabende* programme from Winter 1913, in *EGW* V (62–63), is not the beginning of the talks, but the second cycle of talks after Christmas.
[31] Tillich, Kirchliche Apologetik, 40.
[32] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 40.

In contrast, Tillich says church-organised practical apologetics should not see the doubter "as an unbeliever to be converted, but first of all as someone mistaken [*als Irrender*], who is not without possession of the truth".[33] In this concept of apologetics, the apologist is characterised in a pedagogical role, leading along a path and correcting error.[34] The doubter is characterised thereby not as someone blind, self-deceived or morally bankrupt, but as someone who possesses the truth to some degree but needs guidance to move from error towards Christian truth.

ii. Reaching the educated

Tillich understands his cultural situation in which he is placed as a unified synthesis of the natural-scientific worldview with a romantic criticism of rationalism, founded in autonomy. Tillich believes autonomous critique of authorities and traditions owes its genesis to Christian elements but was, tragically, formed in conflict with Christendom. Thus, science and cultural life now dominate, and the church cannot reach the educated masses with its preaching.[35]

Therefore, just as the Inner Mission attempted to reach the unchurched working-class through engagement with social and material needs, the church now needs to recognise the additional prerogative of reaching the educated through church-organised apologetics.[36]

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[33] Tillich, Kirchliche Apologetik, 40.
[34] Joel Rasmussen suggested this bears resemblance to the Socratic *maieusis*. I agree, though Tillich makes no explicit reference.
[35] See Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 41–42.
[36] Tillich emphasises church organisation in contrast to independent clubs or societies. I suspect this comment is designed to encourage the church authorities to take the concerns more seriously, for the church was always wary of being depleted through the activities of free churches such as the Methodists, and organizations like the *DCSV*.

Tillich believes there is an opportunity to do this in his day because materialism is waning, and scepticism is halting the self-assuredness of the idealistic-romantic period. Thus, conflicts and contradictions in culture rise to the surface. Religion, and thus the church, has therefore a calling to unite the contradictions and stop culture from being torn asunder, creating a new synthesis and taking on the leading role in cultural life.[37]

Tillich then presents steps for fostering positive relationships between the church and the educated. This description of a process of developing feeling[38] and understanding[39] for intellectuals, and then convincing them of the truth of Christianity, gives us insight into his understanding of the doubters he seeks to reach, and the nature of barriers to faith.

He understands educated doubters as put off by the idiosyncrasies, narrow-mindedness and placative remarks of the church and its ministers. [40] They can therefore be convinced to give the truth a hearing if encouraged by the personal and intellectual authority of the apologist. However, it is in the end not the apologist but the truth itself which must do the work of convincing.

Convincing occurs negatively, dialectically and positively. Negatively, by shattering presuppositions of scepticism and subjectivism, whereby in this

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[37] See Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 42–43.

[38] Ministers should be less socially removed, appear less strange, and contradict the image of a narrow-minded, fanatical Christian. Instead, among the educated an impression should emerge of the variety of Christian forms and – I think intentionally echoing Schleiermacher's *Speeches* here – it should become a sign of lack of education when one dismisses "a whole function of culture", like religion, wholesale. See Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 43

[39] Tillich demands a differentiated and complex knowledge of intellectual life from the apologist, beyond dismissively employed labels. He describes "subjectivism" as such a label. In his student days, he had had no problem with such broadsides.

[40] Tillich blames the church and not the doubters for their lack of faith. Tillich does say some are not open to listening because they are absorbed by work, social life, the arts, or are "individualists who avoid all discussion of deeper problems". Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 47. However it is their superficiality, and not doubt, to which Tillich implicitly attaches moral blame.

shattering a new position emerges.[41] Dialectically, by showing "how all intellectual streams finally find their goal in Christianity".[42] Positively, by expounding the Christian system or principles of the apologist.

The impression of the apologist's apparent mastery of the truth is tempered by Tillich's remarks that the system presented can only ever be the apologist's individual understanding of Christianity and is as such limited and only in fellowship with the truth by the grace of God. The apologist's work stands therefore, as the theologian's,

> under the No and Yes of the faith of justification [*Rechtfertigungsglaubens*] – the highest conviction to which he can lead [someone]. […] Only on the basis of the faith of justification, also with regard to thought, is apologetics possible.[43]

Out of the dependency of apologetics on justification, Tillich is convinced these efforts will bear impressive fruit, creating connections between institutions of intellectual life and the church, even such that "the church again becomes the focus of intellectual life of the era."[44] In this connection Tillich calls apologetics the "teaching of attack"[45] since the church aggressively encounters all learning, demanding an engaged response, overcoming indifference.

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[41] An intellectual position emerges from the negation, "since all negation is only possible on the basis of a position". Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 45.
[42] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 45.
[43] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 46.
[44] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 46.
[45] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 46. This theology of attack (*Theologie des Angriffs*) is how Tillich starts his 1925 Dogmatics lectures. It is a theme already found in Martin Kähler's work, who, when talking about apologetics says: "But you know that the best defence is attack – apologetics is polemics, it has to be a dispute of that which we possess of Christianity with the thought imposed on us through our predispositions, through the development of humanity, through our historical position." Martin Kähler, 'Der gegenwärtige Stand der Theologie', in *Verhandlungen der Zweiten Eisenacher Konferenz, 8., 9. U. 10. Juni 1903*, ed. J. Lepsius (Berlin: Verlag der Deutsche Orient Mission e.V., 1903), 98–115; here: 103.

iii. The limits of apologetics

The account of apologetics given so far entails a great tension between the confidence of the apologist – for example that she can lead an erring monist, by shattering the presuppositions of materialism, to the truth of Christianity – and the admission that thought also requires justification if it is to have fellowship with the truth.

Therefore, it is not surprising Tillich thinks through the limits of apologetics. He says apologetics does not aim to convert but remove barriers to belief and influence people's thinking. It is neither preaching nor counselling. As a theoretical enterprise, it is "service to thought", and pure thought: abstract, dialectic and systematic. Can one think one's way to Christianity? In a long response to this question, Tillich says the answer is both No and Yes:

> A No, for the essence of Christianity lies in the absolute paradox, a Yes because thought in its depth rests upon the same paradox; a No because there is no means to shape the processes of thought which lead to Christianity in a generally binding way, a Yes because radical thought plunges into its own abyss if it does not find its foundation in Christianity; a No because the living grasping [of truth?] need not follow the trails of thought, a Yes because true thinking is living, active, seeing thought. No, because logic is the law and Christianity is freedom. Yes, because truth is only found through the deed of inner freedom. With other words: Apologetics can lead someone who has made the decision to think stringently and without consideration [for what others think] to the insight that the paradox of Christianity is identical with the paradox of thought; but it cannot force them to grasp this insight as free deed, to place oneself within the living paradox of fellowship with him who is the truth.[46]

In this passage, we see the conviction of Tillich about the conjunction of philosophy and Christianity. Think hard enough and well enough, he suggests, and you will see the connection between the two: dependency upon the absolute

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[46] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.

paradox.[47] The lazy tendency not to think carefully is a barrier. Yet the apologist can only lead people toward the paradox. Mere logic is "the law"; but what is needed is more than recognition of the truth as abstract logical truth. What is needed is to grasp the truth as living truth. Thus, where thought ends, God's deed begins.[48]

The limit of apologetics is that it cannot convert. Otherwise, leading people to Christian truth through careful deliberation would amount to a reduction of faith to logical thought, and to something which the believer achieves. Since apologetics cannot convert, it does not attempt to influence the will but should be about pure thought, merely removing intellectual obstacles to faith.

iv. Apologetics in practice

Tillich now turns to practical aspects of apologetic ministry, some of which help us to understand his view of apologetics. Since God is the truth, apologetics takes all reality as its material. However, focussing on natural science or defending the verbal inspiration of the bible is superficial,[49] and not relevant or convincing for intellectuals now. Rather, the key approach to apologetics is history.

However, the apologist must not only master the historical material, but also literature, theatre, academic philosophy and theology, sociology, pedagogy and

[47] In the next chapter on the 1913 systematics I will comment more on the background to Tillich's notion of the absolute paradox, especially with regard to Kierkegaard.
[48] See Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 50.
[49] In 1903, Tillich's father, responding to a talk by Martin Kähler, believed one of the roles of conservative theology professors was to "to show us we can have trust in the bible, not just because it is known to us, but while it is historically true." See Johannes Tillich's comments: Martin Kähler, 'Der gegenwärtige Stand der Theologie', 118.

> popular philosophy, aphoristics and social ethics. Johannes Müller, Carlyle, Kierkegaard, Tolstoi, Naumann, Ellen Key, Maeterlink, Chamberlain, Nietzsche, Bölsche and others besides.[50]

I have included this list of authors, some of whom are meanwhile little-known even in Germany, to give a sense of the breadth of Tillich's ambition: he is to be reading novelists, playwrights, philosophers, Darwinist naturalists, feminist theorists of education, politicians, and historians.[51] The apologist must not only keep abreast of popular and intellectual trends, but also offer normative positions and answers on issues in society, government and the church: "the apologist must become a culture-, church- and social-politician and above all help those who want to be lead into the practical work of the church."[52]

Thus, Tillich argues, the office of Church Apologist should be created. An ordinary minister may employ elements of apologetics, he cannot be an apologist in the demanding sense described.[53] The apologist is set apart to serve the church by speaking in and outside of churches and offering training to ordinary ministers and laity.[54]

Tillich's memorandum is a manifesto for activism, and in parts reads like a manual. The apologist conceived by Tillich becomes a public figure, giving speeches, occasionally training educated Christians. They might even attend

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[50] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 52.
[51] Among the list are some lesser-known figures. Johannes Müller (1864–1949) was an intellectual speaker and author who promoted a modern form of Christianity. Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919) was a German pastor turned liberal politician, Ellen Key (1849–1926) was a Swedish feminist theorist of education. Belgian author and dramatist Maurice Maeterlink (1862–1949) received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1911. Houston S. Chamberlain (1855–1927) was a popular British-German author of biographies and histories. Wilhelm Börsche (1861–1939) was an author and populariser of naturalism and Darwinism among other things. As a sign of the times, several strongly anti-Semitic authors appear, among which one should certainly count Müller, Chamberlain and Bölsche. In none of his writings did Tillich feel the need to comment on this anti-Semitism.
[52] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 53.
[53] See Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 59–60.
[54] See Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 53–54.

meetings of anti-Christian organisations to participate in the discussion and deconstruct what has been said. Tillich certainly did this, for example at an event organised by social democrats to encourage people to leave the church, he "fought […] for hours passionately against leading social democrats, among them Karl Liebknecht."[55]

v. Apologetics in trend

Tillich is himself keen to play down the novelty of his views and embed them in a growing trend. He points to two venerable elder statesmen of the church, August Wilhelm Hunzinger (1871–1920) and Ernst Dryander (1843–1922), as representatives of a comparable position to his own.[56] No doubt this was a prudent choice of names when addressing the Church Consistory. Noticing this affinity between Tillich and the likes of Hunzinger and Dryander helps us understand that Tillich's stance in 1912–13 was part of a wider trend in the years preceding the First World War. We can therefore appreciate that Tillich's call to the church to create a new office of church apologist is the sort of thing that any number of theological 'post-docs' in his day might have wanted to say to the church authorities, and something the church may have principally been increasingly keen to support.

3. Tillich's critique of Heim

As I said in the introduction to this chapter, I maintain there is strong discontinuity between Tillich's position in 1919 and the Moabit period on the

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[55] *GW* XIII, 20. This was after the Moabit period, in December 1913.
[56] See *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 60.

issue of apologetics. If I am correct, what follows from this is that when Tillich is offering his critique of Karl Heim's apologetics in Heim's *Glaubensgewißheit* (1916), calling it an intellectual 'work', Tillich has changed his mind and is now offering a critique of his own earlier programme of church apologetics, and the wider trend to which it belonged.

Tillich did not mention Karl Heim in the memorandum, though he could have done. Tillich was certainly aware of the young lecturer Heim, from his time in Halle, and it is likely they were acquainted.[57] Tillich mentions, approvingly, Heim's *Not* (need/distress) of thought in a letter in 1907.[58]

In 1906 Heim had already called for *Eine Neue Apologetik* [a new apologetics] which should be an attack [*Angriff*].[59] Here, Heim warned against fighting with natural science and recommended philosophical critique of materialism and skepticism, since materialism is in the process of dissolving itself. The atheist's position, once thoroughly thought through, would take them beyond atheism.

Tillich's memorandum is similar, with an assumption of a philosophical pedagogy directed towards those in error. However, in view of the general trend toward apologetics I mentioned, broad similarities need not suggest any direct dependency on Heim. For instance, it might be tempting to see Tillich's notion

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[57] Tillich was in Halle 1905–1907. Heim became the *Inspektor* at the *Schlesischen Studentenkonvikt* in Halle in 1905, under the leadership of Martin Kähler. Here, Heim led theological exercise classes and attended to the spiritual formation of the 12 theological students and completed his Habilitation in 1907. Therefore, Tillich and Heim were both under the influence of Martin Kähler in Halle, at the same time: Heim through his job at the Stift, and Tillich through lectures and Wingolf meetings.

[58] See *EGW* V, 43.

[59] See Karl Heim, 'Eine neue Apologetik', *Die Reformation* 5 (1906), 386–389. For a fuller discussion of Heim's apologetic stance, see Ulrich Beuttler, *Gottesgewissheit in der relativen Welt: Karl Heims naturphilosophische und erkenntnistheoretische Reflexion des Glaubens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 36–51.

of a theology of attack (*Theologie des Angriffs*) in the memorandum, and indeed later at the start of his 1925 Dogmatics lectures, as a nod to Heim. But this trope is probably as old as apologetics itself.[60] And it is certainly a theme already espoused by Martin Kähler in 1903, who says of apologetics that

> the best defence is attack [*Angriff*], – apologetics is polemics, it has to be an altercation of that which we possess in Christianity with the thought brought upon us through our dispositions, the development of humanity, and our historical position.[61]

Therefore, vague semantic similarities between Heim's approach and the memorandum in 1913 are not enough to make the case for continuity in Tillich's position between the Moabit period and 1919. The issue at hand is in any case not describing the relationship between Tillich's and Heim's theologies, though that would be a worthy pursuit. Instead, I focus on how Tillich's reading of Heim (as characterised in 1919) compares with Tillich in Moabit.

Tillich's main criticisms of Heim in 1919 are first the arbitrariness of Christ appearing as "absolute concretum" following Heim's apologetic deconstruction of the categories of reason. A historical person cannot appear for reason when the categories of reason have been destroyed. But more importantly: Jesus appears as redeemer from doubt, but why should *he* be that redeemer, and not any other figure? Heim is not willing to give an account of this claim, which is necessarily subject to doubt. Heim's claim only makes sense to Christians, and so cannot really help the doubter.

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[60] For instance, Heinrich Gottlieb Tzschirner says in his 1805 history of apologetics talks about polemic apologetics, recommending "attacking [*angreifen*] the opponent in their own bulwarks, showing the nullity of the religion they confess and the unsatisfactory [nature] of the philosophy they support". Heinrich Gottlieb Tzschirner, *Geschichte der Apologetik oder historische Darstellung der Art und Weise, wie das Christenthum in jedem Zeitalter bewiesen, angegriffen und vertheidigt ward. Theil 1* (Leipzig, 1805), 6.

[61] Kähler, 'Der gegenwärtige Stand der Theologie', 103.

The second main criticism is that Heim's project appears as a redemption from doubt rather than justification of the doubter. For Heim, thinking is reborn through Christ, who gives that which culture cannot. This leads to a great agonism between faith and knowledge, which Heim tries to sidestep by "driving the unbelieving process of knowledge to its self-dissolution and thus to a turn to faith."[62] The removal of doubt's burden is offered by this "absolute concretum" who pops up from out of nowhere in preaching, promising "relief through feelings and moral postulates, through apparent evidences and apparent paradoxes".[63] The sharpness of Tillich's critique here is remarkable, likening his fellow Protestant Heim and other apologists to priests selling indulgences. In spite of such spurious offers of relief, the doubter should stand firm with a clear intellectual conscience, only responding to the call for a kind of faith "that in this condition of doubt he occupies the only possible position regarding the unconditioned."[64]

Is the memorandum of 1913 something Tillich would have, upon re-reading it, heavily criticised in 1919? Benôit Mathot's 2013 dissertation, *L'apologétique dans la pensée théologique de Paul Tillich*, deals with this issue, devoting early chapters to the *Kirchliche Apologetik*, the *Systematische Theologie* of 1913, and *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel* 1919 before turning to later writings and a comparison of Tillich and Barth. Mathot characterises Tillich's

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[62] *EGW* X/1, 215.
[63] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[64] *EGW* X/1, 218. It is possible Heim provided Tillich with the notion of an intellectual conscience, see Karl Heim, 'Bilden ungelöste Fragen ein Hindernis für den Glauben? Vortrag auf der 15. Allgemeinen Deutschen Christlichen Studentenkonferenz, Wernigerode 1905', in: *Glaube und Leben: gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1926), 515–536; here: 521. Also later, in 1916, see Heim, *Glaubensgewißheit*, iii.

development as a move from an apologetics of attack to an apologetics of response, whereby the latter refers to his American period.

Mathot writes of "the global unity of the apologetic theme over the period from 1913 to 1919"[65] – the real change is, he says, between the German and American periods, and so in the earlier period things are "fairly homogenous [...] the nature of the apologetic gesture is identical over the period 1913–1919" in its aim to justify theology in the context of modern culture.[66]

He still characterises 1919 as a new departure for Tillich's thought in the post-war context of doubt and mistrust and sees an original contribution of 1919 in the combination of practical concerns with theoretical issues.[67] Mathot therefore recognises Tillich's move away from church apologetics which expects to be able to lead intellectuals back into the life of the church, and understanding Tillich's new emphasis on the recognition of autonomy in 1919 as the main change which takes place.[68]

This all appears to me to be broadly correct, but too weak. I disagree with Mathot's strong characterization of the continuities in this period, finding them unhelpfully vague. Mathot is right to emphasise the difference between the German and American periods. There is indeed a great difference between Tillich trying to persuade German monists that materialism is intellectually dissatisfying in 1912, and Tillich trying to persuade American existentialists that their questions can be correlated to themes in Christian theology in the 1950s.

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[65] Mathot, *L'apologétique*, 105.
[66] Mathot, *L'apologétique*, 105.
[67] Mathot, *L'apologétique*, 102.
[68] Mathot believes this is the main change which takes place between 1913 and 1919, where theology is "no longer partitioning religion and culture in a sterile face-to-face, but ensuring the two look at each other and listen to each other. This supposes for theology a respect for the sphere of culture, and the recognition of its autonomy." Mathot, *L'apologétique*, 103.

But in dealing with the difference between 1913 and 1919 Mathot only reports Tillich's critique of Heim in his exposition, not consulting it in any detail when deciding whether Tillich's position has changed. Mathot's characterisations of continuity in this early Germany period unfortunately obscure the upheavals and contradictions going on in Tillich's theological writings. For example, Mathot sees parallels between the rejection of traditional apologetics in 1919 and the *Kirchliche Apologetik*, that is, in Tillich's affirmation of the doubter's relation to the truth, and the eschewal of the category of "heretic". In Mathot's words:

> one should not consider the doubter as a heretic, but on the contrary as already being in contact with a fragment of truth, and that by the very fact of his doubt.[69]

But Tillich does not put it this way in the memorandum. Tillich recommends seeing the doubter

> [not] as an unbeliever to be converted, but first of all as someone mistaken [*als Irrender*], who is not without possession of the truth.[70]

Mathot misses Tillich's emphasis on the *error* of the doubter in 1912/13, and the corresponding pedagogical stance of the apologist. Yes, the doubter is for Tillich not devoid of truth. But as we saw above in the exposition of the memorandum, Tillich's expectation is that arguments, while not creating faith, will be able to lead the doubter toward Christian truth, that is in the end away from a position of scepticism and unending doubt. Furthermore, Mathot's gloss of Tillich's position in the memorandum as representing connection with the

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[69] Mathot, *L'apologétique*, 104: "qu'il ne fallait pas considérer le douteur comme un hérétique, mais au contraire comme étant déjà en contact avec un fragment de vérité, et cela du fait même de son doute."
[70] Tillich, Kirchliche Apologetik, 40.

truth *through* doubt ("du fait même de son doute") is not something I have found in the text of the *Kirchliche Apologetik*. There are themes like this in earlier sermons (in the tropes about doubters being 'of the truth' when they yearn for truth as they despair of truth). But this position is not present in the memorandum.

In his article from 2016,[71] Mathot again recognises Tillich's departure from ecclesial (i.e. church-based) apologetics in 1919. But he continues to see one of the constant aspects of Tillich's definition of apologetics in the whole early German period in Tillich's notion of apologetics *as attack*.[72] But as we saw above, this characterisation is too blunt and vague to be of use for our purposes, being a widespread trope which Heim himself used.

Stefan Dienstbeck's dissertation, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie. Stadien der Systembildung Paul Tillichs*, also considers the change between 1913 and 1919 in the context of a wider comparison of the German and American periods.[73] Like Mathot, he has far more interest in the *Systematische Theologie* than the memorandum, and none in the sermons. He agrees that question of Tillich's criticism of Heim is of great interest for understanding the development of Tillich's thought, concluding that the *Systematische Theologie*

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[71] Benoît Mathot, 'L'apologétique tillichienne et la crise du religieux (1913–1951)', *Etudes Theologiques et Religieuses* 91/3 (2016), 371–390. This is a French translation of an original article in Spanish which itself summarises Mathot's dissertation.

[72] Mathot, 'L'apologétique tillichienne', 374: "considérer l'apologétique sous l'angle de l'attaque est une autre constante de la définition tillichienne de l'apologétique, et cela pour toute la période de son enseignement allemand (1919–1933)."

[73] See Stefan Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie. Stadien der Systembildung Paul Tillichs.* Forschungen zur systematischen und ökumenischen Theologie 132 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

of 1913 is not in contradiction with Tillich's critique of Heim in 1919: "Tillich proceeds in 1919 not in the least differently to [how] he did already in 1913."[74]

In the next chapter I will outline why I am not entirely convinced with Dienstbeck's and Mathot's conclusion about the systematics. In any case, their focus on Tillich's academic texts does not let us see the affinity between Tillich and Heim in Tillich's Moabit period itself, *before* he wrote the systematic draft, and before his vocational trajectory changed. It is "church and pietist apologetics" which Tillich later attacked, yet church apologetics was precisely that which he was actively pursuing. This affinity with Heim becomes clear when we read Tillich's Moabit sermons.

4. Moabit sermons

In what follows, I first point to the various occasions where Tillich preached on broadly apologetic themes, even correlative sermons. In the 1919 draft of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, Tillich attacks apologetics, and especially Heim for introducing Christ in the aftermath of destroyed reason. What kind of apologetics is taking place in these correlative sermons? Then I show the soteriological moves Tillich makes in order interpret the reality of doubt expressed in church decline. After this, I discern the way Tillich deals with doubt and describe his Christological solutions to doubt, asking how this compares with his post-war stance.

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[74] Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 274.

i. Correlative sermons

Tillich sets up the American *Systematic Theology* as an application of his method of correlation. Several of Tillich's sermons in Moabit attempt the same. Tillich announces his intention to match human questions to divine answers:

> Questions of the time and answers of eternity, questions of our spirit and answers of the Spirit of God, questions with the words of our language and answers with the language of the living word of God. [75]

On this occasion, he takes as his 'question' people demanding "my right to life", a right which is denied by laws, ethical norms, prejudices, and class barriers.[76] Tillich describes this slogan initially negatively as the "fiery words of the prophets of our time", a flame which "engulfs the old building of our culture."[77] Tillich then unfolds a sermon with three points, on "the individual and his right [*Recht*] before God, the individual and his unrighteousness [*Unrecht*] before God, the individual and his justification [*Rechtfertigung*] before God."[78]

Tillich's approach is therefore not merely negative, but dialectical.[79] He finds himself encouraged by such social democratic prophets to speak of the right to life and he affirms the yearning for good air, light, food, joy, beauty, and love, and the desire to break all that binds our lives. These desires need to be deepened through God.[80] But talk of human rights does not replace God's right.

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[75] No. 47, September/October 1912, *EGW* VII, 246.
[76] I have not been able to identify such slogans, but I suspect this turn of phrase expressed dissatisfaction with existing negative rights, demanding positive rights. For a possible contemporary reference, see the work of the philosopher Heinrich Spitta, *Mein Recht auf Leben* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900).
[77] No. 47, *EGW* VII, 247.
[78] No. 47, *EGW* VII, 247.
[79] It is also rather playful, by utilizing the wide semantic field of the German word *Recht*, which can mean law, justice, righteousness, right(s), being right (*Recht haben*) and vindication (*jmd. Recht geben*).
[80] See No. 47, *EGW* VII, 248–249.

The individual is unrighteousness before God. The modern prophets need to understand the only right we have before God is the right to suffer and to die.

However, Christ, who said yes to life, joy, beauty and love, and was full of power, also said no to life, joy, beauty and love, becoming full of weakness and poverty in spirit. God vindicated him (*gab ihm Recht*). Thus "the right of the individual triumphed over its unrighteousness [...] Christ is the justification of the individual."[81]

From the perspective of the social democrats, whose concerns Tillich was employing as a question of his time, Tillich's correlation was like an attack, since initial affirmation of strivings for autonomy are funnelled into a confrontation with God the judge. This being the springboard for a presentation of Christ as justification of the individual and example of becoming weak and poor in spirit – a message to the social democrats: do not become too uppity.[82] It is a cheap and opportunistic correlation which only serves to beat back the 'questions of our time'. Although there are also more sympathetic remarks, Tillich's rhetoric suggests he does not believe that a social democrat, let alone anyone from the working class, is listening to his sermons.[83]

However, other sermons interpret and affirm human experience in a way more congruent with the questions at hand. For example, in Advent, experience of the absence of God (waiting for God) is indicative of God's presence: "You only seek knowledge of God because you already know him."[84] In January 1913, experience of rejoicing and suffering points to the God who rejoices and suffers

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[81] No. 47, *EGW* VII, 252.
[82] No. 47, *EGW* VII, 252.
[83] See for example the assumptions made in No. 48, *EGW* VII, 253–260.
[84] No. 52, 2nd or 3rd Sunday in Advent 1912, *EGW* VII, 279.

with us. In this context, Tillich implicitly affirms the social democratic concerns, speaking of the awakening of social conscience.[85]

In February 1913, the experience of loneliness is interpreted as a kind of greatness, but also deep suffering which points to Christ,

> who became lonely for their sake, [and] is with them. […] in the despair of godforsaken loneliness, he is with them, [he] whom God left in loneliness on the cross. Whether they know it or not, he is with them.[86]

In his Moabit sermons, we see Tillich's correlation of the gospel to general human experience, which means leading the congregation from their experiences toward God in Christ.

ii. Saving the masses

Another aspect of the Moabit sermons, connecting with the discoveries in Nauen, is Tillich's innovations in soteriology with respect to the unbelieving masses, i.e., his interpretation of those great numbers who doubt. Two sermons stand out in this regard. This is important because Tillich's justification of the doubter in 1919 entails the eschewal of an exclusive soteriology. The first sermon, from Autumn 1912, is about "the puzzle of the masses".[87] Tillich's term *Masse* means the rather faceless mass of workers in distinction to the educated personalities of the bourgeois. It is the dissatisfied crowd, increasingly voting for the *SPD*, estranged from the church.

These sheep without a shepherd move Christ. Thus, Tillich's congregation should be moved by "the dark puzzle and the deep misery of the masses",[88] not

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[85] See No. 57, 19th January 1913, *EGW* VII, 304.
[86] No. 58, *EGW* VII, 312.
[87] No. 48 September/October 1912, *EGW* VII, 253–260.
[88] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 253.

becoming aloof, even if the masses hate the wealthy.[89] Millions of working-class people are born and die: "For what are the many? Are they not really, as a prophet of our time said, the far too many? And yet they are our brothers."[90]

Tillich's reference to eugenics stands out, and he appears critical. Tillich draws attention to the humanity and burdens of the masses, even if the *rule* of the masses would be dangerous.[91] Being estranged from the church, they do not look to the cross. Thus, as well as a desperate earthly fate, they are "the mass of those who will be lost".[92] The puzzle of the masses is therefore a soteriological puzzle.

In the Nauen sermons, Tillich interpreted scepticism and protest in his 'age of doubt' as forms of faith. Those who earnestly contradict the church are indeed of the truth and will come to the truth. In Moabit, surrounded by the masses, protest is not noble, and there is no interpretation of their thought as faith. The masses are collectively guilty; Tillich defers to the mercy of God. Yet his bourgeois congregation also participate and contribute to this guilt, are effectively part of the crowd. God does not solve the puzzle with political ideas, says Tillich, but redeems the many.[93]

Speaking of the many rather than all suggests a limit to Christ's work. Tillich rejects the Calvinist soteriological model as hard-hearted,[94] pointing to Paul's reflection on Israel in Romans 11 as a clue to a solution:

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[89] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 254.
[90] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 254.
[91] See No. 48, *EGW* VII, 255.
[92] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 258.
[93] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 258.
[94] See No. 48, *EGW* VII, 259.

> through our [the bourgeois congregants'] redemption the masses will be co-redeemed […] our fight and our suffering for God is co-suffered for our brothers for their redemption. And how can it be otherwise? If we cooperated in the guilt of the masses, if it has become bigger through our guilt, then should it not be overcome by our redemption?[95]

Here is a vision of vicarious redemptive suffering of bourgeois Christians for the unchurched working class. God's forgiveness for our (bourgeois) sins which lead to a brother being lost must include the salvation of the brother who was lost through our guilt:

> It is not possible that evil triumphs over God in eternity, and guilt over grace. Rather it is certainly true that the individual is not the last [goal], and also not the few, and not the many, and not the masses; rather, God will be all in all.[96]

The other sermon which exhibits soteriological innovation is from April 1913, on the "puzzle of variety".[97] The question is now about humanity over the vast stretches of time in various cultures.[98] For what do these millions live? Are they lost?

Yet these kinds of questions become most pressing for Tillich not as abstract worry about the fate of foreigners but within the network of closer relationships in which Tillich lives, among them the irreligious Grethi Wever, to whom he would get engaged in August 1913, and those educated non-Christians attending the *Vernunftabende*.[99] Thinking about friends, family and colleagues the question has "double power":

> We know they […] have no living fellowship with him who is the way. And yet we love and value them, the most precious and holy bands connect us with them, parental and children's love, a brother's or friend's love, and yet we must

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[95] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 259.
[96] No. 48, *EGW* VII, 260.
[97] No. 60, 5th April 1913, *EGW* VII, 318–323. I suspect a typing error occurred in *EGW* VII, for the Sunday fell on 6th April 1913.
[98] See No. 60, *EGW* VII, 319.
[99] Theological development is not merely a matter of the influence of great philosophers. It is just as much the fruit of experience of a social group, as any anthropologist of religion might tell us.

> say, they shame us through their love, through their fine character, we feel small opposite them, they are to us like someone we look up to, from whom we learn, for whom we would sacrifice ourselves out of love. And they should live in vain?[100]

Harsh Christians exclude others and call the lives of non-Christians worthless, says Tillich, but Jesus' word about there being many rooms in John 14 rescues the glory of God and our love toward humanity, encouraging us to ask what blessedness God has in store for every individual,[101] gladly believing

> for this one also a place is prepared, though we do not know where and how; for God is greater than every human heart, and the life which was born at Easter is stronger than death.[102]

However, for those who know grace, another word is valid, the exclusive word to the disciples, for God "wants us completely, which means: He wants to have us through Jesus. For he had Jesus completely".[103] Therefore we apply the sentence of judgement to ourselves and do not condemn those outside the faith:

> We preach to all people the one way and say nevertheless: For all there is a room in the father's house. Is the contradiction not now complete? Yes, dear church, a deep puzzle, a truly divine mystery appears to us here [...].[104]

In the Lichtenrade sermons we already encountered the distinction between a message for "those who know Jesus" and a message for non-Christians. He had called this "the reversal of all pharisaic thinking".[105] In Lichtenrade, the focus is the Christian's own struggle with the exacting standards of piety, eventually leading to despair. In Moabit in 1912 and 1913 the main concern is the attempt to find a way of speaking hopefully about those who are far from the life of the church.

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[100] No. 60, *EGW* VII, 320.
[101] No. 60, *EGW* VII, 320–321.
[102] No. 60, *EGW* VII, 321.
[103] No. 60, *EGW* VII, 322.
[104] No. 60, *EGW* VII, 322.
[105] See No. 15, *EGW* VII, 94.

We have now seen that the appeal to God's mercy functions as a consolation to Tillich and his congregants about the incompetence of the church to reach the masses. But Tillich still wants to communicate with the doubter, as we saw in the correlative sermons.

The Christological focus we observed there is something Tillich shares with Heim. Christ is the solution for the doubter, and Christ is presented to the doubter. On the other hand, while Heim (according to Tillich in 1919) works with our deepest need (*tiefster Not*), and destroys all human thought, Tillich works not only with negative experiences like guilt, loneliness, suffering and fear of death, but also positive experiences like rejoicing and giving oneself to beauty, seeking truth, for all experience relates to our eternal unity with God, our nearness to him.

In order to explore these connections in more detail, I will devote two sections below to the way Tillich deals with doubt and reason, and the role of Christ for the doubter.

iii. Reason, doubt, and assurance

Tillich's justification of the doubter implies a certain theological epistemology: convictions concerning the role of reason, critical thinking, and doubt, and how this relates to knowledge of God. In his 1919 draft Tillich labours the point that the doubter should keep his "intellectual conscience [...] as sharp and unconditioned as Luther's ethical [conscience]."[106] Heim's apologetic project involves a transgression of that conscience, inducing a "rebirth of thinking" by

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[106] *EGW* X/1, 217. Tillich is implying Heim and other apologists effectively belong in the same category as priests selling indulgences.

first driving human knowledge into an abyss of self-destruction.[107] Tillich's affirmation of the intellectual conscience in 1919 means therefore that the doubter's critical questions and testing of arguments are not problems to be redeemed, but part of the conscience which speaks truthfully about the situation of the doubter. The doubter is justified in his doubt, and not redeemed from it.

In the sermons, the sacrifice of reason which God requires does not entail opposition to science, culture or thinking. Rather, it is the admission that reason cannot reach the peace of God.[108] Tillich does insist humanity is a "creation of the truth, and cannot silence the voice of truth in the inner being."[109]

However, the emphasis in these sermons is on the *inability* of reason. The human search for truth ends in sadness,[110] being lost,[111] or silent confusion.[112] The fight between truth and lies can only be won through the truth in person, the incarnate Son.[113] Divine wisdom triumphs through the cross, a love is born in us enabling us to find truth, find eternity in all things, and discern a voice of the Spirit in us, yearning for a "world-spanning love".[114]

The pattern of these sermons resembles the position Tillich is criticizing in 1919. Despite the claim to not be anti-intellectual, this is nothing like the affirmation of autonomy in 1919, and much like the attempt to drive reason to an abyss which he later abhors.

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[107] See *EGW* X/1, 215.
[108] See No. 45, Juli 1912, *EGW* VII, 235–239.
[109] No. 46, September/October 1912, *EGW* VII, 241. See also No. 61, 13th April 1913), *EGW* VII, 326; No. 59, Easter Monday, 24th March 1913, *EGW* VII, 313.
[110] See No. 59, *EGW* VII, 315.
[111] See No. 64, 4th May 1913, *EGW* VII, 339.
[112] No. 55, January 1913, *EGW* VII, 292.
[113] See No. 46, September/October 1912, *EGW* VII, 241.
[114] No. 59, *EGW* VII, 317.

Furthermore, the answer to humanity's inability is always Christ, meeting us at the cross. Tillich's problem with Heim's apologetic in 1919 is that it will not convince non-Christians, or those doubting whether Christ is the answer. In these sermons, Tillich is talking about doubt. Yet the answer is only accessible to the faithful.

In Tillich's preaching in Moabit we can observe ambivalence in the use of the concept of *Gewißheit*. As I mentioned in the last chapter, in Nauen, Tillich turns the sceptic's question into the Christian's problem of assurance of salvation, like his teacher Kähler, answering with reference to Christ's word and work. Similarly, in the Moabit it is unclear whether he addresses doubt of Christianity's veracity, or doubt of salvation from within a Christian framework.

Much is said concerning the latter. For instance, in a polemic sermon for the celebration of the Reformation, fearful and uncertain Roman Catholicism is foil for the claim that evangelical freedom from priestly mediators guarantees assurance.[115] Yet this assurance is, on the other hand, not constant. The Christian should test themselves in case the Lord comes to judge by exposing lies, self-interest and fear of God, "strengthening the certainty you stand under his wrath"[116] Tillich talks about changing winds of assurance and despair in the Christian, of changing moods.

Tillich describes such a mood of doubt as the experience of Christian faith seeming to be all *Schein*, i.e. apparent, only illusory. We are sad "our own view so often cannot penetrate through the *Schein* and fog in us, that our life in God

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[115] See No. 49, September/October 1912, *EGW* VII, 265.
[116] No. 53, 4th Sunday in Advent 1912, *EGW* VII, 286.

is hidden for our own knowledge."[117] Changing moods from day to day make the Christian wonder: which is my true life?

> Today I have the truth and look at it and am blessed in this looking and all shadows disappear and it becomes light all around me, and tomorrow maybe it is gone and gnawing doubt afflicts my soul [...].[118]

The answer to such changeable spiritual life is not to make salvation dependent upon any interior or exterior demand which ties down the Spirit's work to anything other than Christ. Saying *the Lord* is the Spirit, and not our own soul, makes us free from our souls when they "become dark and walk in the deep [...]. But we know [...] nothing can separate us from the Lord".[119]

The Christian is thus free from others' opinions, her own error, guilt, or weakness, from the scriptures or the church as instances of authority, and from her own experiences. Some Protestants, mirroring the Roman Catholic error, put

> faith in place of works [...] as if faith were a new work. But whoever attempts to meet the demand [of God's perfection] with believing in the truth of doctrine and level of faith, avoids [the demand].[120]

The Christian's life is secured by God's work and not her impressive life, lively faith, or correct doctrine. Yet in these examples, doubt appears chiefly as lack of assurance of salvation, and not doubt of the truth of Christianity.

One place where this is not the case is Tillich's Christmas sermon in Moabit. He responds to doubt about the locus of God's revelation and even the reality of God, rather than doubt about one's salvation from within a Christian

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[117] No. 63, Ascension Day, 1st May 1913, *EGW* VII, 334.
[118] No. 63, *EGW* VII, 334.
[119] No. 65 Whitsun Monday, 11th May 1913, *EGW* VII, 343–344.
[120] No. 61, 13th April 1913, *EGW* VII, 324.

framework. Tillich's answer is to speak of how God appeared in various images in the history of religions and in many guises to various people, but that at Christmas we find God in the manger. Children, doubters, the suffering and all others are pointed to the Christ child,[121] who makes "bitterness and anger, restlessness and doubt [...] [disappear]."[122]

Here we have, without the word itself mentioned, Tillich's emphasis of the paradox of Christian faith, of which the justification of the doubter is later one example. But in these sermons, the despairing and doubting person is not given a new interpretation of their doubt as faith. Instead, here at Christmas, the image of the Christ child is set before the doubter as sign of God's paradoxical presence.

iv. Christ and the doubter

Having noted already the Christological solutions, not only to lack of assurance, but also to doubt of God's presence and providence, it is clear Tillich's preaching is indeed a likely candidate for the criticism of 1919. Of course these are Christian sermons, and not *Vernunftabende*. But we might imagine Tillich in 1919 responding to these sermons with the questions of the restless doubter: How can I know God is indeed to be found in the manger? How does a child in a manger quiet my doubts that the world is the work of a wise God? Is this not just Heim's pop-up 'absolute concretum', arbitrarily assigned to solve the problem of unending doubt by ignoring its questions?

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[121] See No. 54, *EGW* VII, 290.
[122] No. 54, *EGW* VII, 291. See also No. 55; *EGW* VII, 292.

Indeed, Tillich's sermons assume and demand orthodox Christology, even of the doubters in his congregation. He changes the subject from doubt about Christianity and simply preaches the paradox of the incarnation. The doubter is welcome: Christ is undoubtedly *for* the doubter, and *with* the doubter. He is the friend of doubters, he enters into the experience of the godforsaken on the cross.[123] But doubt about Christianity *per se* is not discussed.

a. Christ the image of God in the soul

The Christological assumptions are clear in one of his advent sermons: "The image of God which is hidden in every human's soul from the beginning to the end of the world, has a name. His name is Christ."[124] Here is an implicit Logos-Christology, by which I mean an emphasis on Christ as the universal source and agent of creation and providence, present in every human life, as one finds in the Gospel of John, but also, in related ways, in Pauline letters. What Calvin called the *sensus divinitatis* is effectively rendered by Tillich as a universal *sensus Christi*:

> wait [...] for the revelation of that God who lives in your inner being. Suddenly he will show himself to you [...] as once to humanity in the light of the holy night. [...] Christ is the name of the image which you carried in you, the God who was near to you in all your searching. Christ, the foundation and Christ the goal of all waiting of the human soul.[125]

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[123] See for example No. 47, *EGW* VII, 252.
[124] No. 52, *EGW* VII, 280.
[125] No. 52, *EGW* VII, 281.

On this basis Tillich is confident when presenting the paradox of God in the manger that this God already lives in the doubter's inner being, as the foundation and goal of her waiting for God.[126]

Seeing the Christology at work in the early sermons reveals the implicit Christology of the American sermons. For example, in his famous sermon 'You are Accepted', Tillich does not mention the name of Christ to the doubter but insists the experience of acceptance is possible, as if a voice can be heard in the depths of despair. The experience of acceptance is paramount, and the objective historical figure of Jesus becomes almost irrelevant or a distraction for the doubter. Yet reading the American sermon in light of the Logos-Christology of the early sermons, we understand the voice of acceptance is the voice of the image of Christ in the soul, who is never far from the struggles of humanity. What I am calling a universal *sensus Christi* is confirmed by another American sermon, 'Has the Messiah come', where Tillich talks about people in the history of religions feeling redemption had to come through a child.[127]

b. Christ provident and intimate

Tillich does not often make these Christological assumptions explicit, though they are the only framework in which his upbuilding sermons make sense. In a sermon from May 1913, the miserable soul suddenly sees the crucified one, whose sufferings are the sign he is with the soul in its alienation and struggles. As with Heim, the tired soul has been led into a kind of 'deepest need'. Yet this situation has not come about by means of the intellectual dismantling of reason by a Christian philosopher. Instead, Christ is the providential agent of human

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[126] Another example is No. 64, *EGW* VII, 339–340.
[127] Paul Tillich, *The New Being*, (Lincoln, NE/London: University of Nebraska Press: 2005 [1955]), 92–96; here: 95.

estrangement, emancipation and autonomy, and of the resulting sadness of the soul. Christ is at work in the search for truth, beauty, religious experience and justice, in the human's intellectual, emotional and moral life, and in the failure of this search. [128]

The provident God is not aloof to the human condition but participates in it: our life is grounded in the suffering-with and rejoicing-with (*Mitleiden und Mitfreuen*) of the God who is not far off.[129] Tillich's emphasis on the agency of Christ in providence is combined with a vision of God as a suffering God who reigns in weakness. For instance, in a Christmas sermon on Isaiah 9:6, in startling language anticipating Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, or Jürgen Moltmann in *The Crucified God*,[130] Tillich even says: "God's weakness, that is the meaning of the course of the world!"[131] The mystery of the incarnation reveals God's intimate connection with the world and demands we imagine God's work in a different way:

> It is human to seek the eternal beyond time [...] to demand God come down from the throne of his majesty and halt the stream of time and stop the perishing and dying. But it is divine to see the eternal in the middle of time, it is divine to be near to the world, very near, it is divine to give oneself into the stream of time, in mortality and death and in the middle of time and mortality to establish the eternal.[132]

The winds of the Spirit can be seen all over the world but there is a difference and concentration of this work in Christ. It is the Lord "who judges

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[128] See No. 64, *EGW* VII, 339–340.
[129] See No. 57, 19th January 1913, *EGW* VII, 307. We saw the same in Nauen, in connection with Böhme. See No. 32, *EGW* VII, 160.
[130] See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God. The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2015), 139–146; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, in *DBWE* 8, 479.
[131] No. 55, *EGW* VII, 293.
[132] No. 55, *EGW* VII, 295.

himself in order to forgive the others, the holy majesty of the king of kings, [expressed in] the unending humility of the most despised and lowest".[133]

In the Moabit sermons we can see more clearly what Tillich would have meant by the paradox of Christianity in the memorandum, even though the word paradox is not present in the sermons. It is the incongruence of the incarnation: the strength in weakness, victory in suffering, grace in judgement at the cross. And as incarnate Word, this paradox, this Yes and No, is expression of God's nature: "In the fight, peace, in division, unity, in wrestling, rest, in the No, the Yes, in the child, God! That is God's way!"[134]

5. Conclusion: Paradoxes of Christianity and thought

We saw above in the *Kirchliche Apologetik*, while characterising the apologist as one who corrects error, Tillich limited the apologist's role to leading people toward the insight that the paradox of thought is the paradox of Christianity:

> Apologetics can lead someone who has made the decision to think stringently and without consideration [for what others think] to the insight that the paradox of Christianity is identical with the paradox of thought; but it cannot force them to grasp this insight as free deed, to place oneself within the living paradox of fellowship with him who is the truth.[135]

The paradox of thought in the memorandum was that thought on its own comes to its end: thought also requires justification if it is to have fellowship with the truth; "radical thought plunges into its own abyss if it does not find its

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[133] No. 65, *EGW* VII, 343.
[134] No. 55, *EGW* VII, 297. See also No. 55, *EGW* VII, 291, which prefigures the expression of courage as taking up anxiety into oneself that we find in *The Courage to Be*.
[135] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.

foundation in Christianity".[136] This is what the church apologist should skilfully demonstrate to, say, the materialist monist. Despite the emphasis in the memorandum on the need for justification in the realm of thought, it is Christian philosophical acuity (understood as fruit of justification) that shatters the presuppositions of scepticism and subjectivism, and – unlike 1919 – not the doubt and restless critique itself which is justified. The doubter is to be convinced, and not justified.

In Tillich's first *Vernunftabend*, despite the advocacy of Luther for 'free thought', doubt and restless critique lead to a dead-end where only the positive, i.e. revelation, can help. We have seen this structure confirmed in the Moabit sermons. Tillich's emphasis on the inability of reason, the sorry end of human searches for truth, is not far from Heim's attempt to demonstrate humanity's intellectual failure, ending in 'deepest need'. The conjunction of the paradox of thought and the paradox of Christianity in the Moabit period the shared need for redemption in the intellectual and moral spheres because the human's moral and intellectual efforts both end in abject failure.

In 1919 there is also a conjunction of the paradox of Christianity and the paradox of thought. However, there are important differences. First, although the doubter of 1919 can become a Christian when in Christ she intuits "the concrete fulfilment of the absolute paradox",[137] Christ is not simply presented to the doubter as solution for or redemption from doubt. Instead "he stands as [something] relative, an object under doubt."[138] The unconditioned can only be

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[136] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.
[137] *EGW* X/1, 227.
[138] *EGW* X/1, 227.

grasped through the concrete (Christ), but that concrete thing must be both affirmed *and negated* by the unconditioned.

Second, the paradox of thought in 1919 is not merely the bankruptcy and abyss of thought which the clever apologist could show to be a wrong foundation, for which the solution is the Christian God. Rather, the 'rock-bottom' experience of unending doubt is a *restless* resting place for thought. The absolute paradox is "to affirm, in faith, that doubt does not dissolve standing in the truth."[139] The faith of the doubter is faith "that in this condition of doubt he occupies the only possible position regarding the unconditioned."[140]

Tillich's ambitious dream in the memorandum was of a leading role for the church in culture, after the church's apologists show culture the abyss of its own autonomy. In 1919 the dream is the overcoming of the opposition of religion and culture when both stand *together* "on the shared ground of believing affirmation of the absolute paradox"[141] from which can grow (conditioned, not contentless) conviction.

In 1919, the doubter stands justified in their doubt – not because Christ meets them suddenly, but because that kind of doubt is indeed standing in the truth. This was prefigured somewhat in the Nauen sermons when Tillich speaks of those in his 'age of doubt' being 'of the truth'. But in Moabit, the solution to doubt is always explicitly Christological.

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[139] *EGW* X/1, 218.
[140] *EGW* X/1, 218.
[141] *EGW* X/1, 228.

Chapter 8

Doubt and System (1913–14)

1. Introduction

When Tillich finished his ministry in Moabit in May 1913, he may have moved back to his father's house in Berlin. He certainly stayed for extended periods with his sister Johanna and her husband (his friend) Alfred Fritz at the village manse in Butterfelde:

> In August 1913 was the engagement, in Winter the time together [with Greti] in Berlin, the time working in Butterfelde, the dogmatics and habilitation, the rejection of the inspectorate in Bonn.[1]

This short excerpt from the 1914 diary fragment summarises Tillich's personal and professional life. Tillich met his first wife, Grethi Wever, in Butterfelde.[2] She was not at all religious and Tillich's relatives and friends found the match most unfitting.[3] Now engaged, his career goals became more pressing.[4] Despite various applications, Tillich appears to have had no independent means between May 1913 and his joining the German Army in 1914, except for a short spell as pastor in Berlin-Lankwitz (August–September 1914).

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[1] *EGW* V, 72.
[2] See Erdmann Sturm, 'Historische Einleitung', *EGW* VII, 7. For more on Wever and Tillich, see Sabine Böttcher, 'Weltenbummlerin an der Grenze. Margarethe Wever-Tillich, 1888–1968', in: Illona Nord and Yorick Spiegel (eds), *Spurensuche. Lebens- und Denkwege Paul Tillichs.* Tillich-Studien 5 (Münster: Lit, 2001), 25–36.
[3] See *EGW* V, 68–69.126.
[4] Married women in Wilhelmine Germany were mostly unemployed, and in some cases excluded from employment. For example, the *Lehrerinnenzölibat* was first abolished in 1919.

Tillich worked on his systematics between the early Summer and early Winter of 1913,[5] not starting proper work on the habilitation until 19th December 1913.[6] Perhaps he was still unsure about the topic and location (Berlin and Halle were both in view). Clearly, the systematics was an important project. He may have continued work on it after handing in his habilitation on 30th May 1914,[7] even if most work was done in 1913. Tillich never published the systematics, nor did he mention it again publicly. The full manuscript was first published in 1998.[8]

Tillich's habilitation on the concept of the supernatural and the principle of identity was partly published in 1916. The full version appeared only in 1998.[9] He did not work on the main text during the war; it had already been evaluated by two professors in September 1914. In Summer 1915, the script from May 1914 was returned, Tillich being asked only to change the title and write an additional foreword to reframe the work.[10]

For the purposes of this chapter, the habilitation is not considered in any detail. It consists of many large citations from various supranaturalist theologians

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[5] See *EGW* V, 72; and Sturm's textual history in *EGW* IX, 276.
[6] See Erdmann Sturm, 'An der enge Pforte der historischen Methode vorbei. Paul Tillichs Habilitation in Halle (1916) und seine Umhabilitierungen nach Berlin (1919) und Marburg (1924)', *IYTF* 10 (2015), 273–331; here: 276. Sturm calls the decision to write the systematics puzzling.
[7] See Sturm, 'An der enge Pforte', 276.
[8] *EGW* IX, 278–425. The text does not meet the standards of a critical edition. See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 112n11. Following the work on the habilitation, Tillich developed an abbreviated sketch in 1914, now in *EGW* IX, 426–429. His friend Wegener used this, together with the full manuscript of the system, to develop summary theses of the system. The theses were published in 1992 as 'Systematische Theologie (1913/14)', in *MW/HW* 6, 63–81. See the textual history in *EGW* IX, 273–277. A translation into English was published as an appendix in Uwe Carsten Scharf's dissertation *The Paradoxical Breakthrough of Revelation. Interpreting the Divine-Human Interplay in Paul Tillich's Work 1913–1964*. TBT 83 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1999), 333–478. In what follows I cite my own translation (unless stated otherwise) but name the section reference (e.g. A§1 = Apologetik, §1) to orient those without German.
[9] Tillich, 'Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen, sein dialektischer Charakter und das Prinzip der Identität – dargestellt an der supranaturalistischen Theologie vor Schleiermacher (1915)', in *EGW* IX, 435–592.
[10] On all this, see Sturm, 'An der enge Pforte', 276–281.

from the early nineteenth century, accompanied by Tillich's commentary. The systematics are a better guide to Tillich's own position the year before the war, being his independent constructive design.[11] In this chapter, the central question of my thesis is applied to the *Systematische Theologie*.

The systematics is divided into three parts: Apologetics, Dogmatics and Ethics. I first present the overall shape of the systematics, including some comments about the relationship of passages in the Dogmatics and Ethics for Tillich's justification of the doubter.

My commentary on the Apologetics, which is most relevant for our theme, is divided into two sections. The first considers Tillich's truth-theoretical framing of the apologetics and his description of the conflict between intuition and reflection. The second focusses on the third part of the Apologetics, Tillich's notion of the absolute paradox. During this presentation of the Apologetics, I draw attention to the influence of Kierkegaard and Heim, drawing on recent work by Lars Christian Heinemann.

In a final main section, I offer an analysis of the systematics, dealing specifically with similarities and differences with Heim, and with the 1919 draft. In *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, around a quarter of the text is focussed on the repudiation of apologetics as an intellectual work, and Tillich focusses on criticism of Karl Heim. In the last chapter about the Moabit period I discerned a difference between the *Kirchliche Apologetik* (and Moabit sermons) and Tillich's

[11] Not expositing the whole of the habilitation is frankly also a concession to the formal limitations of my dissertation; I will occasionally refer to relevant passages in footnotes below.

position in 1919. I will continue this line of enquiry, asking whether the systematics should be considered an 'intellectual work' in the pejorative sense.

My conclusion is cautious, seeing evidence against such a charge in some details: the passage on justification, Tillich's insistence upon the never-ending tension between intuition and reflection, and the presence of several ingredients of Tillich's justification of the doubter. Yet at the level of structure Tillich does exhibit elements of Heim's attempt to redeem doubt.

Thus, even if Tillich felt embarrassment about the 1913 project in 1919, particularly due to his insistence upon God as the absolute in the systematics, it is not clear if Tillich's critique of Heim in 1919 finds a relevant target when we consider the *Systematische Theologie* in its own right.

2. The shape of the systematics

The work shares the tripartite structure of Kähler's *Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre*: Apologetics – Dogmatics – Ethics. Each part is of similar length, structured by a set of numbered and headed paragraphs (based on Tillich's sketch of the contents from 1914).[12]

i. Apologetics

In the manuscript from 1913, the first part is called Apologetics. In the sketch from 1914, it is titled "The grounding of the theological principle in the general scientific principle (fundamental theology)."[13] Here is the structure:

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[12] See Tillich's sketch (*EGW* IX, 426–430). The manuscript is Wegener's copy, with Tillich's headings.
[13] *EGW* IX, 426.

First Part: The grounding of the theological principle in the general scientific principle (fundamental theology).
- I. The absolute standpoint: intuition (§1–15)
  - a) The systematic beginning of thought
  - b) The systematic development of thought
  - c) The complete system
- II. The relative standpoint: reflection (§16–21)
- III. The theological standpoint: the paradox (§22–28)
  - a) The abstract moment of the theological principle: Justification
  - b) The concrete moment of the theological principle: Jesus Christ
  - c) The absolute moment of the theological principle[14]

Tillich grounds theology in science (*Wissenschaft*). This reminds us of Tillich's 1923 *System der Wissenschaften*, and there are similarities. But instead of the 1923 grounding of thought in the concept of knowledge (*Wissen*), in 1913 we have a grounding of thought in a general concept of truth.[15]

That thought is grounded in truth is an ontological understanding of our epistemological situation. Tillich calls it the absolute standpoint, or "intuition" (*Intuition*) contrasting it with the relative standpoint of "reflection", the place from which we ordinarily think, where we use and absolutise the Kantian pure forms of intuition (*Anschauung*).[16]

Tillich then underlines the conflict between intuition and reflection, using dramatic language. The absolute standpoint "prevails over the standpoint of

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[14] This is an adaptation of Tillich's sketch (*EGW* IX, 426–430). I have excluded more detailed paragraph headings. The headings of the sketch offers us more clarity than the text of the systematics itself, where themes of paragraphs sometimes stand next to each other without any mediation.

[15] However, there is an underlying structural continuity despite the difference in terms; in both cases human thought participates in transcendental givenness.

[16] See Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 237–238. There is a difference between the two German words *Intuition* and *Anschauung*, although both are confusingly translated as intuition. Yet at the same time, the terms *Intuition* and *Anschauung* can be used synonymously. It depends on the author. Intuition should not be misunderstood as mystical immediacy or psychological intuitionism. Tillich borrows the pair of terms *Intuition* and *Reflexion* from Fichte to distinguish between different capacities of the thinking subject which correspond to the Kantian pair *Vernunft* and *Verstand*. Contra Kubik, I do not find it surprising Tillich equates *Intuition* with *Vernunft* and *Reflexion* with *Verstand*, for the latter is concerned with forming concepts from experience, whereas *Vernunft* is concerned with the *a priori*. See Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 239–240.

reflection […] reflection finds itself [thus] in distress [*Not*]" and is threatened to be destroyed.[17] The solution to this destructive conflict is the "absolute paradox" which occurs when "the absolute standpoint "takes up" the relative standpoint

> in itself, without robbing it of its dialectic independence. The absolute standpoint has to – notwithstanding its absoluteness – condescend to the relative [standpoint] and lift it to itself. Intuition has to enter into the sphere of reflection of individuality, of the contradiction, in order to lead reflection beyond itself through itself. This relation is however the paradox.[18]

Here Tillich portrays philosophical terms such as intuition as actors in a mythical drama, using language of the incarnation of Christ (condescension, entering into). Like Schelling's painting of Trinitarian doctrine onto the canvas of the absolute with his doctrine of the potencies, Tillich now renders his philosophy amenable to Christian doctrine by setting up the whole system of philosophy in ways amenable to Christology. In the language of Tillich's later method of correlation, we could say Tillich derives the questions from the answers.

ii. Dogmatics

The second part, Dogmatics, deals with traditional loci of theology. As the overview below demonstrates, Tillich sets up his Dogmatics in Trinitarian terms – quite different to the minor role the Trinity will play in his American systematics – albeit again in speculative philosophical manner, where God is the absolute, but with "the moment of personality".[19]

> Second Part: The development of the theological principle to a system of religious knowledge (dogmatics)

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[17] See Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 238–239.
[18] Tillich, *EGW* IX, A§22, 314–315.
[19] See *EGW* IX, D§1, 329. See Jean-Paul Gabus, 'The Tillichian Doctrine of Trinity in the 1913 Systematic Theology', in Gert Hummel and Doris Lax (eds), *Trinität und/oder Quaternität - Tillichs Neuerschließung der trinitarischen Problematik. Beiträge des IX. Internationalen Paul-Tillich-Symposiums Frankfurt/Main 2002*. Tillich-Studien 10 (Münster: Lit, 2004), 57–69.

I. The procession of the world from God until the complete contradiction (God the Father) (§1–8)
    a) God and the world (omnipotence and love)
    b) God and sin (holiness and wrath)
    c) God and history (justice and grace)
II. The entrance of God in the world of contradiction (God the Son) (§9–13)
    a) The glory of Jesus Christ (revelation)
    b) The lowliness of Jesus Christ (reconciliation)
    c) The raising of Jesus Christ (new birth)
III. The return of the world to God until the complete unity (God the Spirit) (§14–19)
    a) The return of humanity to God (soteriology)
    b) The return of nature to God (eschatology)[20]

The centre of his dogmatics is Christology and the cross of Christ as revelation of the absolute grace of God.[21] In the Dogmatics there is a *lack* of reference to themes pertaining to the justification of the doubter. However, several observations are of interest.

First, there is a striking contrast to his 1919 affirmation of Kähler's motto that the absolute is an idol. Tillich is very clear in the Apologetics of 1912/13 that one needs the absolute for the concept of God (on which more below). So also in the Dogmatics:

> Dogmatics presupposes the concept of God of the philosophy of religions: God is the absolute personality, or the Absolute, for the religious consciousness. That it is impossible to reach the concept of God, however one would like to define it, without starting from the absolute; that it is similarly impossible to posit God as God without presupposing the moment of personality: these are insights that are grounded in fundamental theology and that have not been shattered by the critique of reflection.[22]

[20] Adaptation of Tillich's sketch (*EGW* IX, 426–430), using the paragraph numbers of the 1913 manuscript.
[21] See *EGW* IX, D§9–12.
[22] *EGW* IX, D§1, 329.

Second, Jesus of Nazareth is "the concrete paradox".[23] Considering together his glory and lowliness, the theological paradox has been realised in him, has become concrete.

Third, Tillich mentions doubt of the resurrection of Christ. However, rather than talking about the doubter's justification, he carries through a proto-Bultmannian demythologisation, rendering doubt of a bodily resurrection essentially irrelevant:

> Doubt of the raising of Christ is [...] identical with doubt in the effective power of his work or doubt of the rescuing love of God; it means doubt of the theological standpoint in general (1 Cor 15). Therefore, it does not matter in which form this raising is imagined. If the disciples, through their experiences of resurrection, which they necessarily interpreted with their Jewish realism, were led to a fully realistic, sensual notion of resurrection, then this does not mean the same forms of representation are necessary for a different worldview.[24]

Fourth, in his discussion of new birth, he emphasises faith as a work of God, even using language familiar to us from 1919 and the lecture on the historical Jesus 1911: "Faith is no intellectual work, but the work of God".[25] However, this is not used in a context of assent to dogma, as with Herrmann, but simply in a classical Lutheran sense to affirm faith is a gift, when discussing Roman Catholic doctrine.

Fifth, in his eschatological paragraph, like his sermons from Nauen and Moabit, Tillich expresses what one might nowadays call an inclusivist soteriology. At the final judgement one's standing with Christ is dependent upon him but

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[23] *EGW* IX, D§9, 352.
[24] *EGW* IX, D§13, 362.
[25] *EGW* IX, D§13, 364.

independent of one's explicit faith in him. Furthermore, he points to the restoration of all creatures by the love of God.[26]

iii. Ethics

The third part of the systematics, Ethics, reflects on ecclesiological themes, Christian piety, and culture. In all ethical spheres, Tillich applies the principle of justification to the issue at hand, resulting in an critical affirmation of culture:

> Third Part: The application of the theological principle to the intellectual/spiritual life [*Geistesleben*] of humanity.
>
> I. The application of the theological principle to religious life (§1–7)
>
> a) The objective-religious life: the churches
>
> b) The subjective-religious life: piety
>
> c) The subjective-objective form of religious life
>
> II. The application of the theological principle to ethical life (§8–18)
>
> a) The raising of the ethical personality over the immediate (the abstract ethical)
>
> b) The return of the ethical personality into the immediate (the concrete ethical)
>
> III. The application of the theological principle to cultural life (§19–23)[27]

Relevant to our theme, Tillich handles the question of Christian confessions of faith and their critique. Tillich attempts to find a third way between positive and liberal Christianity, saying the confessions have "absolute significance, divine authority"[28] for the church but that the individual can also recognise their relativity. The solution is therefore neither rigid adherence nor complete freedom of confession, but that

> every church [should] stand under the notion of justification, also with its doctrine, and therefore allow the principled, secure, absolute element to be effective in it alongside a synthetic, living, relative element.[29]

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[26] See *EGW* IX, D§18, 374–375.
[27] Adaptation of Tillich's sketch (*EGW* IX, 426–430), using the paragraph numbers of the 1913 manuscript.
[28] See *EGW* IX, E§1, 378.
[29] *EGW* IX, E§1, 378.

Since every aspect of ethical life falls under justification, under the Yes and No of the paradox, so the theological system as a whole, as the system of the sciences in general, is subject to dialectical distress (*Not*) and stands in need of redemption and justification through the theological principle.[30]

Another aspect of the Ethics relevant to understanding the background to Tillich's justification of the doubter is his centring of the Ethics around the Christian love of neighbour,[31] implying the "recognition of the absolute ethical dignity [*Würde*] of every personality, without sublation of the relativity of the societal relation."[32] In the previous chapter, we noted an April 1913 sermon which gives us insight into Tillich's soteriological convictions regarding those outside the bounds of Christian faith:

> We know they [...] have no living fellowship with him who is the way. And yet we love and value them, the most precious and holy bands connect us with them, parental and children's love, a brother's or friend's love, and yet we must say, they shame us through their love, through their fine character, we feel small opposite them, they are to us like someone we look up to, from whom we learn, for whom we would sacrifice ourselves out of love. And they should live in vain?[33]

Tillich's 1913 Ethics implies the view of his fellow humans expressed in the 1913 sermon, and vice versa. According to his Ethics, his atheist friends should principally be understood as justified quite independently of faith or lack of faith. Through the paradox, "absolute categories [should be] applied to every member of society [...] every human should be viewed and treated as *justified* in principle

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[30] See *EGW* IX, E§23, 424–425.
[31] See Matthias Neugebauer, 'Die Ethik-Konzeption Paul Tillichs. Eine Annäherung mit Rücksicht auf das Gesamtwerk', *IJTF* 10, 103–142; here: 110. See *EGW* IX, E§14, 398–400.
[32] *EGW* IX, E§14, 404–405.
[33] No. 60, *EGW* VII, 320.

sense."[34] Although social (class) differences remain, Tillich believes neighbour-love implies breaking conventions such that:

> There is no human for whom another is indifferent in a principle sense. In every relationship an absolute content can be placed through tone of speech and meeting [*Blick*] of the eyes.

Having surveyed the systematics, in the next two sections of this chapter I will offer a more detailed exposition of the Apologetics. With its focus on truth, epistemology, and the theological principle of the absolute paradox, it is most relevant for our theme.

3. Truth, the absolute, and the distress of reflection

i. Inescapable truth

The very beginning of the Apologetics gives us important insight into Tillich's development of the justification of the doubter:

> All thought, also doubting [thought], aims to know truth and its prerequisite is that thought can know truth. […] every thinking denial of the truth wants itself to be truth. Even doubt assumes the notion of truth; principled doubt in all its forms sublates itself.[35]

Here we find one theoretical grounding of Tillich's later reinterpretation of doubt as a kind of faith: doubt living in truth. Doubt can only be a kind of faith precisely because it is a striving for truth. But Tillich's aim here in 1913 is not to advance a theory of doubt, but to develop a theory of thought as grounded in the concept of truth.

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[34] *EGW* IX, E§14, 406. Emphasis added.
[35] *EGW* IX, A§1, 278.

Tillich's insistence on having just one principle is present here just as in 1919. The crisis of scriptural authority has now led Protestantism contemplate its true principle.[36] Tillich's system presents the absolute notion of truth as the principle of thought. And here, since there is only one principle, the absolute notion of truth [*absolute Wahrheitsgedanke*] must contain all the possible contradictions and opposites within thought. This "*The absolute notion of truth contains within itself a principle of contradiction against itself*."[37]

Tillich refers to this principle in shorthand as the "identity of the contradiction".[38] Contradictory statements and errors are, as thoughts, embedded in an absolute notion of truth.[39] An illustration of this might be to imagine contradictory thoughts as various speech acts, and truth as the air we breathe, the condition of the possibility of thought.

Tillich wants to disavow himself from static understandings of the principle. In the absolute notion of truth, the differences between abstract and concrete and ideal and real are sublated. Thus, the system and the concept emerging from the principle are not an intellectual abstraction of an individual thinker but "living, creative thinking, the living system and the living concept."[40]

Tillich's notion of truth carries implication for language. Every concept (*Begriff*) is not fixed, for in every concept there is a transition to another; "the being of concepts is their becoming, their emerging-out-of-each-other and transitioning-to-another."[41] The scepticism of nominalism is therefore only

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[36] See *EGW* IX, A§2, 280–281.
[37] *EGW* IX, A§3, 281. Emphasis original.
[38] *EGW* IX, A§4, 282.
[39] See Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 237–238.
[40] See *EGW* IX, A§4, 282–283.
[41] *EGW* IX, A§5, 284.

answerable through the argument that nominalism sublates itself (thus taking its truthful status).[42] Thus the concept which is the assumption and boundary of the system is "the ungraspable [*das Unbegreifliche*]".[43] The ungraspable is not outside thought in a separate sphere but "in the midst of thought itself, in the essence of thought".[44]

Tillich also attempts to ground a system of the sciences in his truth-theoretical account, dividing the sciences into sciences of 'nature' and 'spirit', understood as two basic relations of thought to the truth.[45] He reflects on the nature of freedom,[46] and the structure of humanities disciplines (philosophy of the spirit), as either philosophy of culture, ethics, or philosophy of religion.[47]

ii. Intuition and God the absolute

In the paragraphs on philosophy of religion (§10–11), Tillich defines philosophy of religion as that part of the humanities where thought determines the absolute truth as God. The relation of human freedom to the absolute truth is a double relation which means for the concept of God there is a moment of dependence and a moment of consciousness of freedom.[48] Either of these alone is one-sided; the concept of a personal God unites these two moments.[49]

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[42] See *EGW* IX, A§5, 284.
[43] *EGW* IX, A§6, 286.
[44] *EGW* IX, A§6, 286.
[45] See *EGW* IX, A§7, 286–287.
[46] See *EGW* IX, A§8, 288.
[47] See *EGW* IX, A§9, 288–289.
[48] *EGW* IX, A§10, 291.
[49] *EGW* IX, A§10, 292.

With the same contradiction of Kähler we saw in the 1908 *Monismusschrift*, Tillich says: "The basis of the concept of God is necessarily the concept of the absolute; every doctrine of God which leaves that out at the beginning [...] has to repeat it later."[50] Beginning with absoluteness means all thinking stands in necessary relation to God. Religion is indeed the creation of the absolute as it determines itself as freedom and spirit.[51]

Tillich starts his discussion of proofs of God with the claim that "scientific grounding of the notion of God is identical with the deduction of the principle of philosophy of religion from the scientific principle in general."[52] That is, it has to do with the absolute. Starting with the absolute means not starting with religion. However, the absolute becomes 'God' only for religious consciousness.[53] It is wrongheaded to prove God's existence rationally, for such proofs do not create religious conviction. Only the ontological argument in a purified form is of any use, since it aims to "ground the absolute notion of truth and determine the relation of thought and truth."[54] In its deepest meaning it is "the self-contemplation of thought on its absolute prerequisites."[55]

Once the ontological problem has been thus "solved", further consideration will "show [...] the various positions of consciousness to the absolute up to the position in which the absolute becomes God; with this the grounding of the notion of God is reached."[56] The order of grounding is: starting

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[50] *EGW* IX, A§10, 292.
[51] See *EGW* IX, A§10, 293. Tillich says personality is rightly attributed to God if truth stands in unity with thought, for it belongs to the essence of the human spirit to determine the absolute as freedom and spirit.
[52] *EGW* IX, A§11, 294.
[53] See *EGW* IX, A§11, 294–295.
[54] *EGW* IX, A§11, 295.
[55] *EGW* IX, A§11, 295.
[56] *EGW* IX, A§11, 295–296.

with the absolute, deduce a concept of religion. Then with such a concept of religion, the ground is laid for the concept of God.[57]

Tillich now describes the relation of the spirit, which is freedom, to nature and itself in culture and ethical life. Religion is always present, and

> [i]n its perfection, all culture is religious, all art is cult, all science dogma, state and church are one and the ethical position toward reality has entered completely into the religious, is absolute piety. But the way to this absolute state goes through the history of religions.[58]

Concrete religions are manifest as the self-determination of freedom in culture and ethical life. The concept of the holy comes from the connection between the religious principle with elements of culture.[59] Faith is then "the affirmation of the holy in a particular form [...] the religious function applied to a concrete religion."[60]

Towards the end of the section on the standpoint of intuition, Tillich writes about the speculative completeness of the process of nature in humanity, and of history in the notion of an "ideal kingdom" where absolute freedom of the spirit reigns and "the history of religions has come to its goal [in] absolute religion".[61] Only from such a standpoint can an absolute system be constructed, and to such a system belongs absolute religion and absolute mysticism.[62] Such an absolute system is "the consciousness of thought in all determination and above all determination [that it is] one with the absolute truth."[63]

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[57] See *EGW* IX, A§11, 296.
[58] *EGW* IX, A§12, 300.
[59] See *EGW* IX, A§13, 301.
[60] *EGW* IX, A§13, 302.
[61] *EGW* IX, A§14, 303.
[62] See *EGW* IX, A§14–15, 303–306.
[63] *EGW* IX, A§15, 306.

iii. Reflection and its distress

In the second section of the Apologetics, Tillich turns to the relative standpoint, reflection, and determines its relation to the absolute system as analogous to the dialectical relation between thought and truth:

> It is the dialectic irony of the reflection-standpoint that it cannot be without in that moment assuming the system which it fights, and that in this way it becomes a moment in this system. None of its concepts, none of its antitheses are possible without the absolute concept in the background, the absolute synthesis it wants to escape from; it is itself, as a whole, only possible as a moment of this synthesis and yet its whole essence is to oppose this synthesis.[64]

Just as thought must assume truth but is continually contradicting itself, so also the standpoint of reflection lives in but contradicts the absolute standpoint, intuition [*Intuition*]. In contrast to Hegel's absolute system, Tillich believes any system setting itself up as absolute is destroyed by the dialectic of reflection.[65] No method is absolute; the methods of induction and deduction battle against each other, resulting in doubt and despair of the truth:[66]

> the spirit despairs of the truth and principle doubt or scepticism becomes powerful. But again, in this last consequence of the standpoint of reflection, it shows its dialectic, that it cannot be, without the absolute truth. The principle sceptic posits doubt as truth [...].[67]

Just as reflection battles against intuition and the absolute system, so the absolute standpoint negates every individual, relative standpoint. This leads to the "*dissolution of the unity of the spirit*".[68] Tillich believes this agonism of intuition and reflection is manifest in manifold cultural forms, such as the battle between economic individualism and socialism, absolutism and democracy,

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[64] *EGW* IX, A§16, 308.
[65] *EGW* IX, A§17, 309.
[66] See *EGW* IX, A§17, 308.
[67] *EGW* IX, A§17, 309.
[68] *EGW* IX, A§18, 309.

competing scientific methods, and idealism and realism in art.[69] Ethical life is also destroyed in this battle, and with it religion "is eroded between the opposites which reflection has set loose".[70] Atheism is thus necessary for consciousness which does not posit the absolute at the beginning; for one cannot reach the absolute by way of reflection. Thus no proof of God or "feeling of God" is safe before scepticism.[71]

At this point a comparison with 1919 is significant. In 1913 the beginning of the Apologetics interprets doubt within a truth-theoretical framework: doubt is always also a relation to truth. In his comments on the standpoint of reflection, Tillich insists on the inability of reflection to reach the absolute, meaning that doubt and scepticism are necessary for the standpoint of reflection. In 1919, Tillich posits a sphere of meaning which the sceptic cannot escape in the affirmation of doubt; doubt is always also a relation to the sphere of meaning. Furthermore, in 1919, the absolute paradox is that doubt is always already standing in the truth.

The difference is subtle. In both cases, doubt stands in relation to the truth. But whereas the standpoint of reflection in 1913 is understood as a dead-end, in 1919 the necessity of doubt appears as a normative statement concerning (religious) epistemology, and an innovation with pastoral application: the only true relation to truth involves restless doubt: "God is, before every determination

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[69] See *EGW* IX, A§19, 311–312.
[70] *EGW* IX, A§20, 314.
[71] See *EGW* IX, A§20, 314.

and objectification […] the truth to which we can only truly and thus "justly" relate through unending doubt."[72]

In 1924 we also have the truth-theoretical formulation alongside the meaning-theoretical formulation:

> The justification of the doubter […] is the breakthrough of certainty that the truth which the doubter seeks, the meaning of life with which the despairing one wrestles, is not the goal, but the presupposition of all doubt [even] unto despair.[73]

4. The absolute paradox

Having walked through the truth-theoretical grounding of Tillich's Apologetics and underlined the conflict between intuition and reflection, I will now focus on the third and final part of the Apologetics and Tillich's notion of the absolute paradox. Before the 1913 systematics, Tillich does not use the term paradox very often.[74] In chapter 5, we saw Tillich takes note of Schelling's absolute paradox, the Cross of Christ, as the pinnacle of the divine ironist's work in creation and history. And how he calls Schelling's faith in the absolutely astounding – faith brought about by God's revelation where human knowledge confesses its inability and anxiety of spirit disappears – faith in the divine paradox, although Schelling does not make this move himself.[75] Despite the brief mention of irony in his work on Schelling, Tillich does not draw on Kierkegaard's concept of irony, and the word plays only a singular, unrelated role in the systematics.[76] In the case of his

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[72] *EGW* X/1, 203–204.
[73] Paul Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1924]', 129.
[74] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 136–138.
[75] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 137.
[76] See *EGW* IX, A§16, 308). Although Schelling, like Kierkegaard, criticises the romantic irony of Schlegel, Kierkegaard's concept is distinct from Schelling's. See Peter Fenves, 'The Irony of Revelation: The Young Kierkegaard Listens to the Old Schelling', in Robert L. Perkins (ed),

mention of faith in the divine paradox, this is probably Tillich's Kierkegaardian gloss on Schelling.

In chapter 7 we saw that in Moabit, late 1912, Tillich thinks the answer to the relation between Christianity and thought is dialectical. Can one think one's way to Christianity? Tillich's answer is: "A No, for the essence of Christianity lies in the absolute paradox, a Yes because thought in its depth rests upon the same paradox".[77] Tillich imagines apologetics as a process leading one to see the paradox of thought is precisely the paradox of Christianity.[78] Furthermore, in the Moabit sermons and 1912 *Kirchliche Apologetik* Tillich tends to view Christianity as a foundation without which thought implodes.[79] The solution to doubt is therefore always Christ.

Comparing the Moabit material with the 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, we concluded there is a significant difference. In 1919, Christ is not simply presented to the doubter as the solution for or redemption from doubt. Instead "[Christ] stands as [something] relative, an object under doubt."[80] The doubter stands justified in their doubt – not because Christ meets them suddenly, but because that kind of doubt is indeed standing in the truth. The absolute paradox is "to affirm, in faith, that doubt does not dissolve standing in the truth."[81] This is in line with the truth-theoretical understanding of doubt in 1913, but in 1913 this does not amount to faith. As we attempt to understand what he

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International Kierkegaard Commentary, Bd. 2: The Concept of Irony (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), 391–416.

[77] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.

[78] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.

[79] "[R]adical thought plunges into its own abyss if it does not find its foundation in Christianity". Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.

[80] *EGW* X/1, 227.

[81] *EGW* X/1, 218.

means in 1913, the mere employment of the language of 'paradox' in various writings is no guarantee Tillich is saying the same thing in all these writings. For in 1919, he chides Heim for offering "apparent paradoxes".[82]

In 1913 the paradox plays a key role. Tillich starts his exposition with an etymological remark: the paradox is that which contradicts general opinion.[83] Specifically, however, the paradox means "God becoming human" which he equates with "the identity of the absolute with a defined [*bestimmte*] relative".[84] Georg Neugebauer comments: "From the standpoint of the theological doctrine of principles, the paradox represents the conceptually condensed version of the Christological figure of the incarnation of God."[85]

This equation of the religious language of incarnation with an abstract speculative expression is characteristic of Tillich's 1913 systematics, and a further expression of the conviction we saw in Moabit that the paradox if Christianity and the paradox of thought rest are in their depth the same paradox. But in 1913, this paradox is elevated to the status of a theological principle.

i. The paradox as principle, synthesis, and redemption

As theological principle of Tillich's system, the paradox is the sublating synthesis of the absolute standpoint and the standpoint of reflection. Or, in dramatic-incarnational language, the relation of the absolute to the relative characterised

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[82] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[83] Tillich does the same in his American systematics. *ST* II, 90–92.
[84] *EGW* IX, A§22, 315.
[85] Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie,* 287. Neugebauer aptly summarises that since the paradox is the theological principle, Christology provides continuity between the three sections of the systematics, and the term paradox is where Christological aspects enter the system. See Neugebauer, *Tillichs frühe Christologie*, 287.

by the condescension of the absolute into the relative, and lifting of the relative into itself.[86]

Tillich's prose is remarkably difficult, adding many differentiations to what he believes must be a singular theological principle. As we are used to from his American *Systematic Theology*, Tillich presents his readers with complicated, interlocking taxonomies. In 1913, the paradox, as principle, is already *itself a synthesis* (of the absolute and relative standpoints). Yet now the principle also receives *in itself* three "moments": the abstract, the concrete and the absolute moment. And – how could it be otherwise – the latter is the sublation, a synthesis of the first two moments. By using the word moment, Tillich means something like 'characteristic',[87] but the temporal connotation lends itself to the Hegelian dialectical way of thinking, with one moment (thesis) standing in tension with the second (antithesis) and being sublated by the third (synthesis).[88]

The abstract moment is the synthesis understood from the standpoint of knowledge and pertains to justification. The concrete moment is the synthesis understood from the standpoint of faith and pertains to Christology.[89] Tillich can also refer to these first two moments as the two "forms" of the paradox, which is

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[86] See *EGW* IX, A§22, 315.
[87] For a better analysis of Tillich's word 'moment', see Stefan Dienstbeck, 'Von der Sinntheorie zur Ontologie. Zum Verständnis des Spätwerks Paul Tillichs', *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 57/1 (2015): 32–59. 48-49.
[88] By referring to Tillich's triadic form in this way, I do not mean to claim that Hegel always used a triadic form. Rather, Hegel's dialectics is "a general description of the life of each concept or form", a process wherein "the one-sidedness of the moment of understanding" of a concept or form receives an attempt at correction from "a new concept or form". Julie E. Maybee, 'Hegel's Dialectics', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/hegel-dialectics/>.
[89] See *EGW* IX, A§23, 317.

in essence is the same: "the unity of the absolute with a determined [*bestimmten*] relative."[90]

Heinemann has noted it may be no coincidence the two first moments of the theological principle, characterised by justification and Christology, correspond to Kierkegaard's emphasis on the paradoxes of justification (forgiveness of sins), and of Christ himself in his incarnation,[91] even if the former, in the case of Tillich, is turned into an abstract, universalised principle. The centrality of the paradox for Tillich's system and most significantly the equation of Christ's incarnation with the paradox, suggest considerable inspiration from Kierkegaard, in particular *The Sickness unto Death*.[92] For Kierkegaard, God in time is the absolute paradox. As Heinemann comments,

> Tillich will have recognised the specific appropriateness of the term [paradox] to characterise Christianity's own basic tension and to express [the tension's] close connection with the notion of incarnation. From here, the revaluation of the notion of paradox to a principle determining the whole of theology seemed obvious to such a systematic brain as the young Tillich. [93]

Despite the subtleties of Tillich's account, we can understand the basic function the theological principle of the paradox plays in Tillich's system. As Heinemann comments, in terms of Tillich's system as a whole, the notion of paradox

> marks the intersection of epistemological-scientific-theoretical and theological reflection of principles: […] achieves the coordination of general thinking

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[90] *EGW* IX, A§23, 317.
[91] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 159.
[92] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 154–161. Heinemann's account of possible influences on Tillich's use of the notion of paradox for his system is very helpful. I concur with his analysis that Tillich's teacher Kähler and Cremer (a key figure in the positive scene) were here of little influence, Medicus and Lütgert of possible influence, and Kierkegaard as a likely source for (the fact of, but not the precise shape of) Tillich's use of the notion of paradox. See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 153–170.
[93] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 169. See also Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 247–251.

> [cognition] on the one hand and specific theological cognition on the other hand.[94]

In Moabit in 1912, "the essence of Christianity lies in the absolute paradox" but "thought in its depth rests upon the same paradox".[95] In the 1913 systematics, both forms of the paradox – whether seen from the standpoint of knowledge or the standpoint of faith – are the same in essence.

I see here a further parallel between Tillich's use of the notion of paradox as a theoretical move to connect philosophy and theology, and Kierkegaard's approach. This might sound strange, since Kierkegaard was a thinker resolutely opposed to any philosophical theology where one vainly believes one can grasp God with human thought.[96] His notion of the paradox serves to remind his readers to abandon such hubris. But in his *Philosophical Crumbs*, Kierkegaard (Climacus) admits a similar intersection. In the chapter titled "the absolute paradox", he speaks of faith as the "happy passion" which "happens when the understanding and the paradox meet happily in the moment; when the understanding sets itself aside and the paradox gives itself".[97]

How could the understanding meet the paradox, God in time? Because the understanding discovers its boundary and impossibility: "the highest paradox of thought [is] to want to discover something it cannot think. This passion of

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[94] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 141. Or, as Kubik puts it: "The theological principle is not only the foundation of theology but at the same time the exemplary version of that aporia which indwells *all* human consciousness." Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 241.
[95] Tillich, *Kirchliche Apologetik*, 49.
[96] See Joel D.S. Rasmussen, 'Kierkegaard, Hegelianism and the Theology of the Paradox', in: Nicholas Adams (ed), *The Impact of Idealism: The Legacy of Post-Kantian German Thought, Volume 4: Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 91-113.
[97] Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Crumbs*, trans. M.G. Piety (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 128.

thought is fundamentally *present everywhere in thought*".[98] The "paradoxical passion" of the understanding wills an obstacle which annihilates the understanding, and that obstacle is "the unknown".[99] In the story of Christianity, the unknown, God, becomes human. Such a paradox cannot be thought by the understanding; understanding "senses only that it must be its ruin."[100] Thus, on encountering the paradox, the understanding sets itself aside. For Kierkegaard the paradox of thought is its discovery of that "unknown" which it cannot think, and which annihilates the understanding.

This resembles paragraph §6 of Tillich's 1913 Apologetics, where "the ungraspable [*das Unbegreifliche*]"[101] is the boundary and presupposition of thought, "*in the midst of thought itself, in the essence of thought*".[102] For both Kierkegaard and Tillich, the highest paradox of thought is that which thought presupposes but which it cannot think, and which is present in thought.

One final point is important before we turn to the three moments of Tillich's absolute paradox. We should recognise the *salvific language* associated with the paradox (corresponding to its Christological "form"): When thought is in its deepest need [*Not*], when intuition and reflection battle and lead to despair of truth, dissolution of the unity of the spirit, loss of orientation and self, the paradox comes to the rescue. For the paradox is indeed "*redemption* from the distress [*Not*] of the standpoint of reflection".[103]

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[98] Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Crumbs*, 111. Emphasis added.
[99] Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Crumbs*, 113.
[100] Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Crumbs*, 120.
[101] *EGW* IX, A§6, 286.
[102] *EGW* IX, A§6, 286. Emphasis added.
[103] *EGW* IX, A§22, 315. Emphasis added.

ii. The abstract moment: justification

Paragraph §24 of the Apologetics is especially concerned with justification, the abstract moment of the paradox. When Tillich speaks of justification, he carries out what Heinemann calls an "unlimiting" (*Entschränkung*) of the notion of justification, expanding it beyond the forgiveness of sins into its "universal, principle and theoretical form".[104] We saw this to some extent already in Tillich's work on Schelling.

> The relation between the alleged distress [*Not*] of the standpoint of reflection and the doctrine of justification is not immediately clear. Tillich says the distress of reflection – threatened with destruction by the absolute – demands the justification of the standpoint of reflection, or "the individual standpoint".[105] Justification is negation and affirmation of the individual standpoint. Not a recognition of relative truth or error, just as the justification of the sinner is not a recognition of the relative good or evil of the individual. Thus, Tillich can express the Pauline-Lutheran doctrine in philosophical terms: "Paul and Luther's fight for justification was a fight against the relativities of the standpoint of reflection, which spoiled religion and hindered redemption."[106]

Tillich sees a shared structure between the Pauline opposition to 'works of the law', Lutheran opposition to the sacrament of penance and his own opposition

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[104] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 145. Ulrich Barth comments that Tillich's continual reference to the notion of justification [*Rechtfertigungsgedanken*] rather than the doctrine [*Rechtfertigungslehre*] is indicative of the "speculative upgrading" of the doctrine in Tillich's system. See Ulrich Barth, 'Protestantismus und Kultur. Systematische und werkbiographische Erwägungen zum Denken Paul Tillichs', in: Christian Danz/Werner Schüßler (eds), *Paul Tillichs Theologie der Kultur. Aspekte – Probleme – Perspektiven*. Tillich Research 1 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 13–37; here: 19.

[105] *EGW* IX, A§24, 318.

[106] *EGW* IX, A§24, 319.

to the relativities of reflection, i.e., intellectual achievements. The shared horizon is the un-achievability of the absolute – the impossibility of reaching moral perfection by works, and the impossibility of reaching the absolute through the relativities of thought. Justification occurs for Tillich now also in this theoretical sense, when "a defined individual standpoint is both absolutely negated and absolutely affirmed."[107] In 1919 we read Tillich's insistence the doubter should keep a clean intellectual conscience. In 1913, similarly no relativities of reflection can achieve the absolute, unless the standpoint of reflection is justified. Tillich's theological principle in 1913 speaks about that justification: the standpoint of reflection – fallible, doubting human understanding – is both negated and affirmed absolutely and unconditionally.

iii. The concrete moment: Christ

In §25–27, in the section on the concrete moment of the paradox, Tillich revisits his conclusion from the 1911 lecture on the certainty and the historical Jesus that there can be no certainty on the basis of historical reflection. Furthermore, making a particular historical judgement into a dogmatic necessity is like administering an "anaesthetic for the historical conscience".[108]

Here Tillich offers a critique of Heim's theology as the "most genial attempt" to overcome the antithesis of historical and dogmatic method by showing it is impossible to make a historical judgement without presuming a judgement of faith.[109] This is, says Tillich, tantamount to making every historical judgement the result of a judgement of faith. However, Tillich criticises, this

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[107] *EGW* IX, A§24, 318.
[108] *EGW* IX, A§25, 321.
[109] See *EGW* IX, A§25, 321.

"turns the distress (*Not*) of the standpoint of reflection into a virtue and takes an arbitrary position within history as the principle of judgement."[110]

This criticism of Heim in 1913 is like the critique of 1919 that Heim offers Christ as an arbitrary solution, presenting the 'concrete absolute' once thought has been destroyed by negativity. The question of arbitrariness is already implicit in Tillich's comments on the manifestation of the paradox in §22. The place where the paradox occurs is "religion", he says, or "the sphere of the holy or sacramental".[111] Yet it seems impossible to expect redemption from a particular, concrete religion, since "the dialectic of the standpoint of reflection has shown its negative power to the highest degree towards just the concrete religion."[112]

Thus, one could conclude that no concrete religion could be the place of the paradox, but only an "absolute religion which is at the same time a particular one".[113] However, claims Tillich, the place of the paradox is indeed a concrete religion, but one in which "the dialectic of reflection has not been relinquished [...] [a religion] which has in itself a principle of self-overcoming."[114] Of course here, Tillich is gesturing toward Christianity as the concrete religion where the paradox occurs.

This rather convenient landing from the heights of speculation onto the plain of Christian faith raises the suspicion that Tillich's 'correlation' in 1913 is a deriving of questions from predetermined answers. 'Why Christianity?', one

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[110] *EGW* IX, A§25, 321. The German idiom which Heim uses here, „aus einer Not eine Tugend machen", is not quite the same as the English idiom "to make a virtue of necessity"; *Not* is distinct from *Notwendigkeit*. I have therefore chosen this non-idiomatic translation.
[111] *EGW* IX, A§22, 315.
[112] *EGW* IX, A§22, 316.
[113] *EGW* IX, A§22, 316.
[114] *EGW* IX, A§22, 316.

might ask. Is this location of the paradox not also arbitrary? In the American systematics, Tillich defers the answer indefinitely to faith (ultimate concern) as the entrance to the theological circle.

In §25, Tillich demonstrates that the question of arbitrariness is on his radar. Heim takes an arbitrary position within history (Jesus of Nazareth). Heim's problem, says Tillich, is that he "wants to solve the problem of the concrete paradox without consideration of the abstract paradox, starting with the standpoint of reflection instead of with the absolute [standpoint]."[115] Without such a method, the concrete moment becomes arbitrary. For this reason, Tillich thinks "the Christological judgement stands under the notion of justification."[116]

Tillich explains more by suggesting that

> it belongs to the essence of a religion of redemption that it also frees from the absolutizing of its own cultural sphere. This is the meaning of the sentence that the Christological judgement stands under the notion of justification.[117]

He continues with a reflection on the meaning of the cross:

> The cross means the sublation of the standpoint of reflection, also for the Christ. […] Christ goes beyond himself and his individuality, his definiteness and his cultural sphere, by agreeing to the cross. Through just this he carries out in the concrete that which is the essence of the theological principle, the beyond-self-exposition [*Selbsthinauslegung*] of the concrete to the absolute. On the cross everything concrete dies which wants to absolutise itself, even the concreteness of the redeemer.[118]

Tillich is somewhat opaque here. What he writes is reminiscent of the Christology in the American *Systematic Theology*, where Jesus sacrifices himself (i.e., in his cultural sphere) to become the Christ. However, it is clear enough

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[115] *EGW* IX, A§25, 321.
[116] *EGW* IX, A§25, 321.
[117] *EGW* IX, A§25, 322.
[118] *EGW* IX, A§25, 322. The word *Selbsthinauslegung* is Tillich's untranslatable invention.

Tillich is keenly aware that everything concrete, every historical manifestation, is liable to the critique from the standpoint of reflection. It is at this point the continuity between Tillich in 1913 and 1919 is clear. Christ remains under doubt, Christ cannot appear as "epistemological apriori",[119] as with Heim, if he is subject to doubt himself.

What he presents here as the meaning of the cross is the theological pendant to his reflections in the 1911 Kassel lecture. There, certainty has nothing to do with historical detail, and indeed necessary uncertainty about the historical Jesus is "the last consequence of the doctrine of justification" (thesis 116). Here, Christ sacrifices his cultural sphere, i.e., his historical recognizability, such that faith in him must entail historical uncertainty.

However, it remains an open question how Tillich can avoid criticism for being arbitrary if the theological paradox is realised in Jesus of Nazareth as "the concrete paradox".[120] As Erdmann Sturm comments:

> For Tillich [in 1919], faith is the affirmation of the absolute, and not the concrete paradox. The affirmation of the concrete paradox remains on the level of the objects toward which doubt is aimed; the affirmation of the absolute paradox lifts itself "beyond the whole sphere of doubt" to the unconditioned; here, the contrast between the doubter and the doubted is sublated.[121]

Perhaps just this criticism is part of the motivation for developing the justification of the doubter, since one cannot expect acceptance of Christ as the concrete paradox before doubt is addressed. However, in Tillich's system,

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[119] See Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 274–275.
[120] *EGW* IX, D§9, 352.
[121] Erdmann Sturm, 'Das absolute Paradox als Prinzip der Theologie und Kultur in Paul Tillichs „Rechtfertigung und Zweifel" von 1919', in: Gert Hummel (ed), *The theological paradox: interdisciplinary reflections on the centre of Paul Tillich's thought: proceedings of the V. International Paul Tillich Symposium held in Franfurt/Main 1994*. TBT 74 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), 32–45; here: 41.

analogous to the stipulation of Tillich's American systematics that Christian theology works with the assumption of Christ as the final valid criterion of theology, historical theology *assumes* that history is "the concrete realisation of the theological principle."[122] Dogmatics is thus "the development of the theological principle to a system of religious knowledge"[123] and only the principle has authority for that knowledge.[124]

iv. The absolute moment

The third moment of the paradox, the absolute moment of the theological principle, is its eschatological "moment". Here Tillich says the theological standpoint always stands against the backdrop of the absolute, and thus it can never be considered fully realised, but only "in the process of being realised".[125]

The absolute moment of the theological principle means the theological principle is "concretised", the verdict of justification is carried through universally and cosmically. This is, says Tillich, the same as the Second Coming of Christ, "the uniting of the cosmos to a concrete living unity, the absolute system, whose centre he is."[126] Both, the Second Coming, and the universalization of justification, are "the same and mean the taking up of the paradox in the absolute."[127]

If we put aside our possible bemusement at Tillich's allegorical exposition of doctrine, we can recognise two important points here: First, in saying the

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[122] *EGW* IX, A§26, 324.
[123] *EGW* IX, A§27, 325.
[124] See *EGW* IX, A§28, 326.
[125] *EGW* IX, A§29, 327.
[126] *EGW* IX, A§29, 328.
[127] *EGW* IX, A§29, 328.

theological standpoint is only eschatologically realised, Tillich is putting space between himself and Hegel. There is no absolute system.[128] And, second, the goal of the theological principle in Tillich's system is a universal application of the verdict of justification. Instead of trying to create an absolute system, justification should be freely related to various forms of intellectual life.[129]

Despite the salvific language employed to describe the paradox, the eschatological character of the theological principle means there is no full redemption of thought. Tension remains between the familiar 'now' and 'not yet' of Christian hope. The contradiction between intuition and reflection is maintained, the synthesis of both in the paradox is a process and not (yet) complete.[130] As Johannes Kubik comments:

> The fundamentally dynamic character of the execution of the systematics is herewith established: The "synthesis" of intuition and reflection is not to be understood as a third standpoint standing over the others, but as an expression of their dynamic incomplete mutual relation.[131]

5. Is the systematics an 'intellectual work'?

We have travelled a long way through the terrain of Tillich's 1913 systematics. Along the way I made some reference to Kierkegaard and Heim. However here at the end of the survey (and only here) I can properly evaluate the relationship between 1913 and 1919, particularly Tillich's critique of Heim's project as an 'intellectual work'.

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[128] See also *EGW* IX, A§17, 309 and A§26, 325.
[129] See *EGW* IX, A§26, 325.
[130] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 144.
[131] Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religonspädagogik*, 240.

Tillich had already employed the substance (if not always the trope) of the rejection of any 'intellectual work' in the Kassel lecture and Nauen sermon on the Prodigal Doubter, in the context of demands for doctrinal orthodoxy. When he applied it to the intellectual search for certainty which characterises apologetics in 1919, he characterised Heim's approach as an 'intellectual work' and therefore even an embarrassment. This is a pointed critique to make of a fellow Protestant theologian. In comparison to 1913, Tillich in 1919 sharpens his criticism of Heim, characterizing Heim as "*driving* the unbelieving process of knowledge to its self-dissolution and thus to a turn to faith."[132] What is required is a system which can take up doubt into its certainty of the truth,[133] which does not try to overcome doubt, for doubt cannot be overcome; the doubter can only be justified. If that very sharp and specific critique of 1919 finds a suitable target in 1913, then Tillich is strongly criticizing his earlier position, whatever continuities are undoubtedly present. The question at hand is whether 1913 represents such a target.

i. The uncanny similarity of structure

In the previous chapter we noted Tillich's connection to *Privatdozent* Heim in Kähler's circle in Halle, and familiarity with his work. As Heinemann has helpfully demonstrated with reference to Heim's writings, the theological proximity of Tillich to Heim in 1913 is remarkable.[134]

We indeed see an unmistakable similarity in the structure of their approaches around 1911–13. When we consider Heim's 1911 historical study *Das*

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[132] *EGW* X/1, 215.
[133] See *EGW* X/1, 217.
[134] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 163–170.

Gewißheitsproblem in der systematischen Theologie bis zu Schleiermacher[135] and 1912 *Leitfaden der Dogmatik*,[136] we see Tillich and Heim are both interested in discussing the status of theology as a science in conversation with epistemological considerations,[137] desiring to "place every theological sentence on a new foundation".[138] However, it is specifically their shared intention to point out the *distress* of thought which makes them most similar: Both are interested in demonstrating that a stringent application of thought leads to afflicted thought, in Heim, even thought's "destruction" and "capitulation", in Tillich, thought's "self-sublation."[139]

Tillich and Heim both present two "opposing standpoints [...] with the terms of 'intuition' or 'mysticism' and 'reflection'".[140] These standpoints are thesis and antithesis, awaiting a synthesis. Heim's paradox in 1911 is "just that synthesis of both opposing ways of thinking [i.e., intuition and reflection, S.S.]"[141] which Tillich presents in the 1913 systematics.

Also, we saw above how Tillich characterises the Pauline-Lutheran doctrine of justification as (somehow) "a fight against the relativities of the standpoint of reflection",[142] i.e., a solution to an epistemological problem. Heim also characterises the paradox as the Reformers' solution to the opposition of the

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[135] Karl Heim, *Das Gewißheitsproblem in der systematische Theologie bis zu Schleiermacher* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1911).
[136] Karl Heim, *Leitfaden der Dogmatik. Zum Gebrauch bei akademischen Vorlesungen*. 2 Bände (Halle: Niemeyer, 1912).
[137] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 165.
[138] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 166.
[139] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 165. Of course, it is impossible to imagine an actual end of thought in a fundamental sense, for one would use arguments to assert such a situation. The end or destruction of thought refers to the end of thought's ability to accurately provide answers to ultimate questions, or access to the absolute.
[140] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 167
[141] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 167.
[142] *EGW* IX, A§24, 319.

standpoints.[143] In Heim's *Leitfaden der Dogmatik*, dogmatic method follows the self-sublation of thought, and Christ is the "absolutely concrete".[144]

As we will saw in relation to the question of arbitrariness, Tillich also offers a critique of Heim in 1913. But Heinemann's comments sum up the close relationship well:

> The proximity with regard to content is uncanny. From the basic form of [Tillich's] systematic thought in the tension of intuition and reflection, for which the paradox can then appear, to the close connection between general-epistemological and specific reformed-Christian perspective, on whose intersection the paradox comes to stand, up to the establishment of the thought as a material foundational principle in the second edition of Heim's Leitfaden: Where Kierkegaard's understanding of the paradox could no longer offer a point of connection in systematic respect, that which had been gained from him was able to be moved forward theoretically in the direction Heim showed. The closer design of the notion of paradox, particularly in connection with the notion of justification un-limited into that which is principle, is a genuine achievement of young Tillich.[145]

I agree with this characterisation of similarity in the basic form and Tillich's originality with respect to justification. Precisely this double conclusion highlights one of the difficulties of interpreting Tillich's 1913 system and is pertinent for our evaluation of Tillich in 1913. There is a temptation to grasp statements from the various sections of the systematics without recognising the dialectical relations in which they stand. This means that our evaluation of Tillich has to bear in mind the overall structure of the system.

ii. The distress of reflection

One example demonstrates the difficulty of interpreting the system without the whole dialectic in view. If we focus on the conflict between intuition and

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[143] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 167.
[144] See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 168.
[145] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 170.

reflection, it would seem that the goal to which Tillich is heading in 1913 is not simply the mere *relation* of doubt to truth (as in the opening paragraphs of the Apologetics), but the distress (*Not*) of the standpoint of reflection, i.e., the crisis of thought itself.

At the heart of Heim's apologetic was a dethroning of understanding by using skepticism to demonstrate its failure and descent into relativity, clearing the ground for the emergence of a saving revelation through the concrete absolute. Tillich would appear to therefore pursue a similar strategy, pointing to the "dissolution of the unity of the spirit".[146] Remembering our discussion of Heim's notion of deepest need (*tiefster Not*) in the previous chapter, here also: the relative standpoint, reflection, characterised by the Kantian forms of intuition, not only cannot lead to God but also results in a loss of all orientation:

> the standpoint of reflection ends with the alternative: to lose either God or oneself. For the decision of this alternative the insight is relevant: To lose God means to lose oneself, to gain God means to gain oneself in another form.[147]

This alternative between belief in God or unbelief entailing disorientation appears characteristic of Heim's approach, offering the alternative between faith on the one hand and epistemic and moral relativism on the other.

iii. Justification in the systematics

Yet when we consider the abstract moment of the absolute paradox (justification), this inability becomes the corollary of justification being applied to thought. In paragraph §24 of the Apologetics, the un-achievability of the absolute by way of reflection points to the fact reflection needs justification, i.e., not simply

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[146] *EGW* IX, A§18, 309.
[147] *EGW* IX, A§20, 314.

redemption, and certainly not clever arguments to convince the doubter of gaps in her logic. Justification is universalised to apply to thought.

In 1919 Tillich calls Heim's apologetic attempt "the last and most genial attempt to overcome doubt".[148] In 1913, Tillich speaks similarly of Heim's "most genial attempt" to overcome the antithesis of historical and dogmatic method by showing it is impossible to make a historical judgement without presuming a judgement of faith.[149] This does appear to be almost the same critique. The connection between the two is that overcoming Troeltsch's separation of methods would be tantamount to overcoming historical doubt. Therefore, in both 1913 and 1919 Tillich sees Heim's theology as a genial (but failed) attempt to overcome doubt. He also already thinks Heim's "distress [*Not*] of the standpoint of reflection"[150] is a bad place to build Christian conviction. One cannot simply insert Christ into the ground zero of deconstructed thought. But the question is not whether Tillich think Heim fails, but why.

Stefan Dienstbeck, in his discussion of *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, recognises that the 1919 criticism of Heim on the issue of arbitrariness is already shared by Tillich in 1913.[151] Dienstbeck focuses on this issue, and the role of Christ in epistemology.[152] Dienstbeck also sees Tillich's further criticism of an intellectual overcoming of doubt through a scientific concept of God (expressed in the Hirsch correspondence of 1917, as we will see in the next chapter), but calls

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[148] *EGW* X/1, 217.
[149] See *EGW* IX, A§25, 321.
[150] *EGW* IX, A§25, 321.
[151] See Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 273–279.
[152] Dienstbeck notes Tillich's criticism of the arbitrariness of Christ appearing after thought has been destroyed. Dienstbeck sees this as the major point of continuity, for Tillich sees in 1913 and 1919 that Heim's attempt to make Christ a fixed epistemological point will not work. With this I agree.

it merely a *modification* of his earlier position in the systematics,[153] and 1919 as a more precise formulation of the theological principle that should not be considered as a break with 1913.[154] The passage on justification exhibits a justification of the standpoint of reflection and not its overcoming.

iv. Anti-synthesis

In 1919, Tillich's theological principle only has two moments, the first absolute and abstract, the second relative and concrete. The first moment stands over the second in critique, but a tension remains between both.[155] Tillich contrasts his principle with that of speculative theology, which "brings a third moment to rule [...] a synthesis of absolute and relative".[156] Tillich's principle "can only present itself in this tension" and any sublation of the two moments can only imagined as "endless goal, not empirical solution."[157] In this, Tillich's rejection of synthesis is rather like what Paul Ricoeur has called Kierkegaard's 'cut-off' dialectic.[158]

In 1913, there are two levels of synthesis and sublation. First the synthesis of intuition and reflection by the absolute paradox, and then, within the paradox (the theological principle), the synthesis of the abstract and the concrete moment of the absolute paradox through the absolute moment. Clearly, this is a contrast in structure. Yet Tillich's absolute moment of the paradox is itself a disavowal of

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[153] See Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 239.
[154] Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 253n7 and 261.
[155] Ulrich Barth remarks: "In the background are obviously the alternative synthesis models of Fichte and Hegel [...]. Instead Tillich prefers the model of a tension-unity which keeps the remaining significance of the moment of negation but at the same time secures the dominance of the principle of identity." Barth, 'Protestantismus und Kultur', 18.
[156] *EGW* X/1, 190.
[157] *EGW* X/1, 190.
[158] See Joel D.S. Rasmussen, 'Paul Ricoeur on Kierkegaard, the Limits of Philosophy, and the Consolation of Hope', in Jon Stewart (ed), *Kierkegaard's Influence on Philosophy*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 233–255.

any absolute system and an insistence on the continuing contradiction of intuition and reflection. The absolute moment is also eschatological. Thus, despite the difference in system-design, there is similarity in terms of content. I agree therefore with Heinemann that Tillich's systematics exhibits "characteristics of an open notion of system".[159]

v. What happens to doubt?

Having pointed to the absolute moment of the paradox, and the universalisation of justification as signs that Tillich's 1913 systematics exhibits similarities to the 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, I now turn to an important difference. I identify this by comparing the way Tillich deals with doubt. The key question is: What happens to doubt between 1913 and 1919?

Erdmann Sturm makes a significant observation here that what Tillich calls *reflection* in the 1913 systematics is in 1919 "fetched into the theological principle of the paradox as doubt, as autonomy, subjectivity and modern cultural consciousness, namely in debate with Karl Heim's attempt to solve the problem of certainty."[160] Here, at the level of structure, doubt occupies a different place. Doubt is not the distressed standpoint of reflection of 1913 which requires sublation by the absolute paradox. Rather, in 1919 the absolute paradox is that the doubter *qua* doubter stands justified. I agree therefore with Folkart Wittekind that a decisive new development of 1919 lies

> in the immediate connection of justification *and* doubt: [that] justification is not added to doubt as an overcoming, more developed step in the system of the spirit, but is the reflexive deep structure of doubt itself.[161]

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[159] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 153.
[160] Sturm, 'Das absolute Paradox', 35.
[161] Wittekind, 'Allein durch den Glauben', 39.

Furthermore, Wittekind speaks of an adaptation of the 1913 Apologetics in 1919, entailing criticism of the system's structure:

> with the reception of doubt into the objective principle of justification [in 1919], Tillich adapts the Apologetics of his system of 1913. He rejects every form of apologetics as an "intellectual work", every "real overcoming of doubt" is impossible. The logical thought of the system in which the truth asserts itself as paradox against doubt, is thereby sublated. […] the new notion of faith unites doubt and assurance of salvation. This is to be shown against all constructions of opposites determined by the notion of a way of salvation. Therewith Tillich expresses criticism of the logical structural idea [*logische Aufbauidee*] of his own earlier system.[162]

The criticism of an absolute system is present in both 1913 and 1919. But despite Tillich's caveat about the remaining tension inherent in thought, the paradox is still – at least at some points – cast as the *redemption* of contradicted thought, "the return of [*Verstand*] to reason [*Vernunft*], of doubt to truth, of the relative to the absolute."[163] In 1913, reflection needs an extraordinary sublation.

But is this conclusive to show that the 1913 systematics is an 'intellectual work' in the sense intended in 1919? I think not. Dienstbeck's characterisation of the text of 1919 as a modification and not a break is an attempt to capture what is a very complicated set of relations of continuity and discontinuity. The discussion around the difference between Tillich in 1913 and 1919 is difficult terrain in Tillich scholarship, with many observations shared, and valiant efforts made to understand Tillich.[164] Dienstbeck's characterisation is supported when we consider we have something analogous to the rejection of an intellectual work in §24 of the Apologetics. There, Tillich says the relativities of reflection cannot achieve the absolute, unless the standpoint of reflection is justified. Yet the

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[162] Wittekind, 'Allein durch den Glauben', 55.
[163] *EGW* IX, A§22, 315.
[164] See, for example Dienstbeck's discussion of Folkart Wittekind in Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 252n7.

Heimian triadic structure and emphasis on a redeeming synthesis and sublation of the distressed standpoint of reflection are evidence of a greater change than a modification.

One response to these observations is simply to say Tillich is unclear. This is true, and it is also the case that Tillich is under no obligation to present clear answers to the questions from 1919 we bring to the text from 1913. I think we should therefore acknowledge the ambivalence of the 1913 systematics. It is not clear if the kind of criticism Tillich offers in 1919 actually finds a target in 1913. Tillich's 1913 systematics has for our purposes a hinge-function between a more Heimian project and the justification of the doubter. It is the culmination of his pre-war period, and we have no writings of similar abstraction until his correspondence with Hirsch, beginning late 1917.

As we will see in the next chapter, the wartime correspondence confirms that whatever the actual nature of Tillich's 1913 system, he later *regarded* it as something he should abandon, because it was an intellectual work. The reason for this has to do with Tillich's insistence in 1913 that God is the absolute. But it is distinct from the question of whether the systematics in fact warrant this evaluation, based on the critique of Heim in the 1919 draft.

6. Conclusion

With regard to the development of Tillich's justification of the doubter, I draw the following conclusions concerning the 1913 systematics:

In the survey of the Dogmatics and Ethics, we discovered again Tillich's inclusivist soteriology which was already present in both the Nauen and Moabit

sermons. First in his notes on eschatology, and second in his ethic of neighbour-love which coincides with his belief in the universal scope of God's justifying work: "every human should be viewed and treated as *justified* in principle sense."[165] By saying 'coincides' I am suggesting a co-dependency of theology and ethics where one cannot discern one is necessarily deduced from the other. Tillich's practice of sustained conversation (or better: shared life) with those outside the Christian faith is not simply an expression, but always also a source of his soteriological convictions, provoking the question: Should they live in vain?

In the Apologetics, Tillich's truth-theoretical account interprets doubt as inhering in the truth: "Even doubt assumes the notion of truth; principled doubt in all its forms sublates itself."[166] "The principle sceptic posits doubt as truth (cf. §1)."[167] In 1919, this truth-theoretical interpretation of doubt provides the grounding for Tillich's augmented interpretation of doubt *as faith*. Here, "God is, before every determination and objectification […] the truth to which we can only truly and thus "justly" relate through unending doubt."[168] In 1919 we therefore have not only a truth-theoretical account, but also a normative statement concerning (religious) epistemology, with pastoral implications: the only true relation to truth involves restless doubt. In 1913 this last step is not present.

Tillich's account of the paradox as theological principle is enigmatic, pointing to Christ the incarnate and crucified redeemer, while also providing a point of intersection between philosophy and theology. The paradox is about Christ and about justification. It entails the unlimiting of justification

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[165] *EGW* IX, E§14, 406. Emphasis added.
[166] *EGW* IX, A§1, 278.
[167] *EGW* IX, A§17, 309.
[168] *EGW* X/1, 203–204.

(Heinemann) so that it becomes a universal and theoretical principle, and it is redemptive, while Christ is the concrete realisation of the paradox.

Tillich's critique of Heim regarding the arbitrariness of Christ is continuous between 1913 and 1919. I have concluded Tillich's 1919 critique of Heim's apologetics as an 'intellectual work' is hard to accurately map onto Tillich's 1913 systematics. On the one hand, structural similarity with Heim suggests both want to demonstrate to the autonomous, doubting subject that she needs redemption through the paradox. Tillich's insistence on the paradox being the *redemption* from the standpoint of reflection suggests that in 1913 Tillich offers redemption from doubt, but not the justification of the doubter. Tillich's account of the distress of reflection appears to drive thought into a position of capitulation, much like his objection against Heim in 1919.

Yet on the other hand, Tillich's attempt to universalise justification resists intellectual steps towards the absolute and insists that the standpoint of reflection must be justified. Furthermore, Tillich's emphasis of the eschatological nature of the absolute moment of the paradox, and remaining tension between intuition and reflection, exhibits the same concern as the 1919 opposition to synthesis. Whether Tillich's critique from 1919 finds a target in 1913 therefore remains ambivalent. I am not sure, based on the criteria of 1919, whether it counts as an 'intellectual work'.

However, what I think remains clear is that whatever the nature of the 1913 systematics, Tillich was later very critical of the project. Heinemann refers to what Erdmann Sturm calls the "puzzle" that Tillich never later referred to his 1913 systematics, and suggests the answer is that Tillich later found it too

speculative.[169] I agree, but our speculation about Tillich's dislike for his early systematics can be more specifically defined. It is possible that Tillich found his early systematics embarrassing, i.e., an 'intellectual work', an arcane, abstract truth-theoretical "perfectionism and asceticism",[170] analogous to ethical works-righteousness. This would indeed be an explanation of his reticence to ever mention the work in later years, whereas in other cases he stylises certain pieces of writing as indicative of great theological insight (such as the lecture on the historical Jesus from 1911).

Tillich's own negative verdict on the systematics is confirmed in Tillich's correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch in 1917–1918, during the war. There, Tillich's notion of a 'faith without God' is connected to the notion of justification, indeed comes from his reflection on justification, since he comes to see the demand to think God as a kind of 'work'. Such considerations are not present in 1913, suggesting important developments took place during the First World War.

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[169] Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 171.
[170] *EGW* X/1, 217.

Chapter 9

Tillich at War

1. Introduction

On 30th July 1914, Tillich stood in crowds in Berlin with his father and his friend Eckart von Sydow, waiting for word from the Kaiser and the special edition newspapers. When Tillich heard Russia had mobilised its troops, his reaction was one of "inner horror".[1] When Germany mobilised, he volunteered to be an army chaplain. Two months later he had married Greti Wever and joined his army division,[2] called to the Western front to preach, administer the sacraments, attend to the wounded, bury the dead. He would spend over four years in service, winning two medals for bravery.

> Karl Barth once conjured an image of army chaplains
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> > speaking their little motivational piece on field-pulpits between two cannons, like sparrows that hop around between the teeth of a crocodile. The military monster knows precisely he has nothing bad to fear from the doughty chaplains.[3]

Barth is right; chaplains of every nation were subordinated to the logic of war.[4] Tillich was no special case; we can pull out many awful passages from his

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[1] EGW V, 73. See Kubik, *Paul Tillich und die Religionspädagogik*, 253n831
[2] See *EGW* V, 51; *GW* XIII, 71.
[3] Karl Barth, 'Religion und Leben', *Evangelische Theologie* 11, 1951/52, 437–451. The talk was originally given in 1917.
[4] See Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War: How World War I Changed Religion For Ever* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2014); Martin Greschat, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Christenheit. Ein globaler Überblick* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014); Hanneke Takken, *Churches, Chaplains and the Great War* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2019). It is even more disturbing that in the Second World war, German chaplains were subordinated to the logic of genocide. See Dagmar Pöpping, *Kriegspfarrer an der Ostfront: Evangelische und katholische Wehrmachtseelsorge im Vernichtungskrieg 1941-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017).

war sermons.[5] But in our study of his theological development, we will pay attention to Tillich's own creative agency from within the confines of his task.[6] The gravity of the experience portrayed in Tillich's reports and letters to his family do invite and reward close attention by anyone interested in (and moved by) the tragedy of the war. But the chapter's focus must be the issue of doubt in his war sermons and theological correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch.

First, I show how Tillich speaks to doubting soldiers in his sermons, focusing on Tillich's method of theodicy, and his insistence God is the doubting soldier's friend, regardless of the soldier's faith. We find one sermon in October 1917, marking the Reformation anniversary, where Tillich speaks explicitly about the trust in God's gracious judgement which can be present in the doubter.

Then I exposit Tillich's correspondence with Hirsch 1917–1918 which proves highly relevant for understanding the development of his notion of the justification of the doubter. The paradox of "faith without God"[7] from 1917 is precisely the justification of the doubter who cannot believe in the objectification which is the concept of God.

Finally, I summarise the results of the chapter, commenting on the connection between sermons and correspondence, concluding that Tillich had developed all the key aspects of his notion of the justification of the doubter by

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[5] See Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, 'Tillichs Durchbruch', *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 8/2 (2014), 37-50.
[6] In this respect, see Erdmann Sturm, 'Holy Love Claims Life and Limb. Paul Tillich's War Theology (1914–1918)', *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 2/1 (1995), 60-84; Matthew Lon Weaver, 'Thrown to The Boundary: Tillich's World War I Chaplaincy Sermons', *BNAPTS* 32/2 (Spring 2006), 21-27.
[7] Paul Tillich to Emanuel Hirsch, 12th November 1917; *EGW* VI, 97; Letter to Maria Klein, 5th December 1917; *EGW* V, 121.

the end of the war in the intersection between his preaching and correspondence with Hirsch, and that the correspondence formed the basis of the draft of 1919.

2. Sermons for doubting soldiers

Judging by the content and the assumed stance of the listeners exhibited in Tillich's sermons in Moabit, we noted that even in industrial Berlin, Tillich had been preaching to bourgeois congregants. He saw the life of poorer families through visitations, baptisms and funerals. But Sunday preaching was for the middle class. At war, officers and soldiers of his division were required to attend Protestant or Catholic field services as part of their *Dienst*.[8] Men from all backgrounds were present.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the rise of social democracy among the working classes increased the number electing to leave the church they had joined through baptism at birth. Mistrust of the church remained among some members. Thus Tillich was preaching to religiously mixed military congregations, from the keenest believers[9] to those openly hostile to Christianity and leaving the services with apparently audible "railing and mockery".[10]

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[8] Tillich makes this explicit in one sermon, see No. 127, [1917], *EGW* VII, 532.
[9] While some attended reluctantly, others found the services a treat. Tillich's colleague Kapell reports that at Christmas in 1914 some soldiers attended both the Catholic and the Protestant service. See 'Wie Naumburger Jäger in Frankreich Weihnachten feiern', newspaper cutting in *PTAM* Box 008A. The cutting is marked, drawing attention to the place where a "young Protestant" minister is mentioned, and with the words "for Papa". Therefore, it must be from his Catholic colleague Kapell, in an unknown newspaper.
[10] No. 127, [1917], *EGW* VII, 532. Judging by his report from the beginning of the war, such phenomena were only present later in the war. See *GW* XIII, 76.

i. The undoubtable war

Having invoked Barth's image of the pastor as a sparrow cleaning the crocodile's teeth, I also referred to Tillich's creative agency in that task. This is clear in the way he addresses his soldiers as men of faith and doubt. Doubt is a religious issue, but in the context of war motivation, it is a dangerous subject. For it would be disadvantageous for the division if a group of soldiers doubt word of God's wonderful providence leading Germany to victory and a new era of European maturity. And if doubting becomes normal, doubt could extend to the word of the divinely appointed authority of the German Kaiser and government, and their insistence war is morally justified.

Religious faith, and thus the addressing of doubt, is always integrated into the war motivation machinery, interpreting the horror as hidden but meaningful divine progress. In this sense, it was imperative upon the chaplain to fight against doubt. Whatever befalls the troops, Tillich must preach to soldiers in a way which makes them carry on sacrificing their own bodies and minds while they kill and maim the enemy. The war must remain undoubtable.

Tillich uses various theological motifs to encourage his soldiers to fight on, regardless of whether these motifs contradict each other or stand in incredible tension. He can allude to demonic forces, God's providence, God's judgement and wrath, God's pedagogy and sanctification to interpret the war. Having made such claims, he tries to cover the collateral damage of unwanted logical consequences. For example, having claimed God is judging the Germans with high sacrifices,

which would imply the fallen are sinners, he then says God's judgement only meets the best.[11]

One of his key tasks is convincing soldiers (and himself) that a good conscience is possible. Tillich does not merely claim the Germans are the innocent party and must protect themselves, but also that Jesus has given Germany the sword to enact judgement, fighting a holy war. God has even elected Germany (like Israel) for the task of bringing about the kingdom of God.[12] In contrast, on leave in Halle, giving his lectures for the Habilitation process, Tillich drops the religious pathos and offers a Nietzschean *Realpolitik*: Non-militant peoples are inferior; the goal of a people *never* being the kingdom of God but rather self-preservation. The inner and foreign missions of the *Volkskirche* always serve social and colonial politics "from the national standpoint […] [e]verything is expression of the people's will to power."[13]

Friedrich Wilhelm Graf sees no evidence Tillich thought differently about the war in private.[14] Tillich did write some letters with the bombast and morale of the sermons.[15] However, most letters are sober, and I find evidence of Tillich's doubt, especially towards the end of the war. In 1915 he mentions to his father the constraint of only being allowed to say positive things.[16] When America enters the

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[11] See No. 86, *EGW* VII, 407.
[12] For Jesus' sword placed in German hands, see No. 86, *EGW* VII, 406–407. For Germany's election and the kingdom of God as God's war aim see No. 78, 27th January 1915, *EGW* VII, 385; No. 89, around 30th April 1915, *EGW* VII, 416; No. 104, Ascension Day [1916], *EGW* VII, 462; No. 112, 1st August 1916, *EGW* VII, 490.
[13] Tillich, *Der Begriff des christlichen Volks*, *EGW* X/1, 114–126; here: 125. In a draft version prepared in France, Tillich is even more strikingly martial: "Our conversion is our will to war. Our devotion is our will to victory. Our obedience is our will to sacrifice." *EGW* X/1, 116.
[14] See Graf, 'Tillichs Durchbruch', 48.
[15] See for example his Letter to Familie Wever, October 1914, *EGW* V, 83.
[16] Letter to father, 9th March 1915, *EGW V, 88*. Typoscripts of Tillich's war letters to his father are collated in the Marburg archive on pages with typed numbers. However, someone undertook corrections (presumably comparing the transcripts with original letters) and added them with pencil

war in April 1917 he says Germany's prospects are hopeless,[17] asking his father to try and arrange a job in Berlin, hoping he might be diagnosed as at the end of his war nerves.[18] In two Lent sermons he maneuvers himself into a potentially difficult spot, articulating the possibility Germans are no better than those who, struck by blindness, crucified Christ.[19] But he does not join the dots. The most fascinating evidence is his New Year's Eve sermon 1917 where, under the impression of the ceasefire at the Eastern Front brought about by revolution, Tillich plays with the idea that political change in Germany might not be a disaster,[20] suggesting Tillich may have in this moment supported a *Verständnisfrieden* rather than the *Siegfrieden* propagated by the German establishment.[21]

In public, standing before his soldiers, he has no choice but to perform good morale and political certainty. Even if he almost always believed he was

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or pen, also giving a corrected page number, which, if there I add in square brackets. Some of these typed pages are missing, and the whereabouts of the originals is unknown.

[17] See Letter to Father, 5th April 1917, *PTAM* Box 008A, 25.

[18] Letter to Father, 12th April 1917; *PTAM*, Box 008A, p.26 [corr. 61]. Typoscripts of Tillich's war letters to his father are collated in the Marburg archive on pages with typed numbers. However, someone undertook corrections and added them with pencil or pen, also giving a corrected page number, which, if there I add in square brackets. Some of these typed pages are missing, and the whereabouts of the originals is unknown.

[19] See No. 99, Good Friday [1916], *EGW* VII, 447 and No. 100, Lent [1916], *EGW* VII, 449–450.

[20] See No. 156, New Year's Eve 1917, *EGW* VII, 629.

[21] Juxtaposed with his comment in a letter to Hirsch from December that he had "inwardly largely closed myself against the war" (*EGW* VI, 98–99), and his praise of Trotzky in his Christmas letter to his father (see Letter to Father, 27th December 1917, *PTAM* Box 008A, 36), this is a fascinating moment in Tillich's political development, as Weaver and Sturm recognize. See Matthew Lon Weaver, *Religious Internationalism: The Ethics of War and Peace in the Thought of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 55–56; Sturm, 'Holy Love', 82n44. Another piece of anecdotal evidence is that his friend Wegener supported the anti-war *Aufruf für Frieden und Verständigung* published at the anniversary of the Reformation in 1917 in the liberal theological newspaper *Die Christliche Welt.* See Karlheinz Lipp, *Berliner Friedenspfarrer und der Erste Weltkrieg: Ein Lesebuch* (Freiburg: Centaurus, 2013), 188 (text) and 203 (Wegener's signature). That is not conclusive as to Tillich's own position. More striking is that in Berlin after the war, Tillich gravitated immediately to the same anti-war milieu, taking part in the "religious-social" group organised by pastor Rittelmeyer, who had drafted the anti-war *Aufruf* about a year earlier with a group in his living room! See Walter Bredendiek, *Kirchengeschichte von "links" und von "unten": Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 19. Und 20. Jahrhunderts unter sozialhistorische Perspektive* (Berlin/Basel: Leonhard-Thurneysser-Verlag, 2011), 84.

speaking the truth, there is evidence he harboured doubts. Yet doubts about the justification of the war among soldiers are not even countenanced in the sermons. Foreign governments are to blame; Germany's hand has been forced. But as we will see further below, doubt of God and the Christian message is possible, and he speaks of it as a reality in the lives of his soldiers.

ii. Piety and justification

Surveying Tillich's student days, there is scant evidence of the doctrine of justification. Sanctification was handled formally and legalistically, not as fruit of justification. Notwithstanding some difficulties dating the war sermons,[22] Tillich's preaching in the first two years of the war exhibit more emphasis on moral guidance and an otherworldly personal piety than towards the end of the war.

Tillich admonishes soldiers' behaviour and speech: charging them to be reconciled with every (comrade) enemy; to not lie, to not injure with angry, evil and humiliating words, nor gossip, slander, boast and speak impurely.[23] They should fight against lust and impurity,[24] taking seriously the call to repentance,[25] forgiving each other as Christ forgave them,[26] trusting God instead of magic,[27] living a life growing in the fruit of the Spirit[28] and pursuing the higher pleasures

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[22] Unlike the sermons from before the war, the war sermons not all accurately dateable. Therefore, a clear argument about development during the war is not possible. Where the editor Erdmann Sturm has estimated the date based on internal and external factors, the estimate is given in square brackets.
[23] No. 73, nach Weihnachten 1914, *EGW* VII, 371–372.
[24] See No. 69, October 1914, *EGW* VII, 361. The call to personal piety and clean living at war is a common theme. See *EGW* VII, 362.
[25] See No. 119, end of November 1916, *EGW* VII, 509.
[26] No. 135, Holy Week [1917], *EGW* VII, 557.
[27] Tillich mentions "Himmelsbriefe" and "Zaubermittel" in *EGW* VII, 374; "Zaubermächte", *EGW* VII, 377.
[28] See No. 110, *EGW* VII, 479–482.

of the human spirit.[29] Peace is not to be found in the world but "in me, for God is there."[30] Here is undoubtedly an attractive vision of fellowship and friendship among soldiers. But at times his admonishments may have felt like a schoolmasterly policing of that fellowship: "Where the ugly, impure word is spoken, there God is further than when the sin of the deed occurs."[31]

Although we do not see the exclusive piety of rigid Wingolf days, the vision of faith which Tillich paints for his mixed audience may have seemed like otherworldly kitsch:

> The Sunday-soul has wings and raises itself again and again in light clear heights. […] Whoever carries the Sunday-like spirit in himself, keeps light eyes for the beauty and sublimity of the world of God, he guards gladness for himself in the daily burden and trouble, he retains enthusiasm for the great earthly and eternal things. And when a beam of divine beauty falls in his eye […] then it is Sunday in him […].[32]

This ideal picture of a pious soldier, struck by rays of divine beauty, and "soft and full of love" toward his comrades,[33] is nevertheless juxtaposed with the demand for great hardness toward the enemy, going through life as a ruler and not a slave[34] while accepting God's unchangeable will.[35] Such strong soldiers learn

> to die for things which are greater than us […] being lord over all fear, like a victor free and proud and walking kinglike over the earth and at the same time serving as the least of all […] such a life cannot die but has eternity in it […] .[36]

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[29] See No. 102, *EGW* VII, 455 and No. 103; *EGW* VII, 458.
[30] No. 71, [Advent 1914?], *EGW* VII, 366.
[31] No. 127, [1917], *EGW* VII, 533.
[32] No. 127, [1917], *EGW* VII, 533.
[33] No. 71, [Advent 1914?], *EGW* VII, 364.
[34] See No. 96, [1916], *EGW* VII, 437–438.
[35] No. 134, Holy Week [1917], *EGW* VII, 555.
[36] No. 68, [1914?], *EGW* VII, 359.

He does preach the content of the doctrine of justification whenever he speaks of God's forgiveness of soldiers' sins and peace with God. God's forgiveness is the inspiration and ground for the soldiers' reconciliation among themselves. Across the breadth of the sermons, however, these themes of forgiveness and peace with God are not strongly emphasised. If we ask about the nature of Tillich's soteriology in general, soldiers are justified not by faith, but by their military service, their sacrifice. Dying like Christ for their friends, their homeland, they are received as faithful servants. It is explicit, for example, in a Lent sermon (perhaps 1915) where Tillich interprets soldiers' self-denial, meaning their continued military service, as "confession of God", confession of God in the sense of implicit assent to God.[37]

There is however one striking exception to this general trend, in the one sermon where he uses the word justification: Tillich's sermon for the 400th anniversary of the Reformation, at the end of October 1917. This sermon is devoted to the doctrine. I will talk about this more below under my fourth heading, 'Friend of the doubter', since it is chiefly relevant for Tillich's interpretation of doubt.

Tillich invites all soldiers, whether believing or not, to express their piety by partaking in the Eucharist; Tillich says not their faith but their *lives* will demonstrate whether their relation to God is "true and living".[38] For neither sin nor guilt can make that relation untruthful. Rather, the proof of truthfulness is the soldiers' serving "gladly and full of power and confidence", and their

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[37] No. 80, [Lent 1915], *EGW* VII, 390.
[38] No. 106, [1916], *EGW* VII, 469.

fellowship with each other.[39] Tillich is not concerned for the eschatological salvation of his soldiers because he assumes it. As soldiers, he wants them to develop their piety, being receptive to God's presence, sensing his nearness as a companion in rest or danger, and his coming near in bread and wine.[40]

iii. Faith and suffering

Tillich knows the war has provoked doubt: "The full churches of the beginning became empty".[41] Thus he articulates the questions and doubts he believes his soldiers have, such as the problem of prayer or recognizing the experience of alienation from the church. The dominating topic is doubt on account of suffering. He speaks of losing faith, losing God, of not being able to believe, not being able to think of God, not understanding God, of asking whether God is hard and terrible, of faith being broken. He recognises hidden burdens, inner failures, bitterness, frustration, defiant rebellion, hopelessness, sadness that life's hopes have been dashed, that words of divine peace sound like mocking.

His answers to the questions and emotions of his soldiers take various forms. We do not know which sermons were preached within the range of enemy artillery, and which were spoken before bored and distracted soldiers way behind the front.[42] However, we do possess a systematic account of his response to doubt of God's justice on account of suffering, in his public lecture for the habilitation. I turn to this first, before comparing the sermons.

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[39] No. 106, [1916], *EGW* VII, 469.
[40] See No. 119, end of November 1916, *EGW* VII, 509.
[41] No. 146, [1917], *EGW* VII, 595.
[42] On the variety of situations, see *GW* XIII, 71–74.

Tillich's public lecture on Monotheism and Theodicy was held in Halle on 22nd July 1916.[43] His opening remarks on the concept and method of theodicy culminate in the claim that theodicy is always connected to the concept of God and vice versa. The rest of his lecture expounds dualistic and monistic types of theodicy (which will not concern us here),[44] and his own solution. This solution, which he insists is endless, i.e., never complete, has what he calls three moments: God's No, God's Yes, and the God-given right of every human.

The first moment is what he calls "the monistic principle and the holiness of God".[45] Humans should recognise God has every right to do whatever he pleases, he need not protect us from any horror, and if he does not, we have no basis for legal complaint. Any theodicy which starts with God's goodness and providence must fail. The foundational problem of such theodicies was "the dialectical attempt to keep the thought of the world next to the thought of God [...] God is right, unconditionally, and every theodicy is wrong, that is the first sentence of theodicy."[46]

The second moment of Tillich's theodicy is that God "participates in the factual [*Tatsächlichen*]".[47] God does not dwell in blesséd aloofness. This was the theological mistake which darkened God's face and provoked angry questions.

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[43] See Tillich, *Theodicee*, *EGW* X/1, 101–113. Correcting the textual history in *EGW* IX, 101. For the report about the process of the Habilitation, see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and Alf Christophersen, 'Neukantianismus, Fichte- und Schellingrenaissance. Paul Tillich und sein philosophischer Lehrer Fritz Medicus', *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte* 11 (2004), 55–60. For correction of the dating see 59n21.

[44] See Tillich, *Theodicee*, 101–110.

[45] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 111.

[46] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 112. In the first draft, even: "Our cultural optimism was a sin against God's holiness." Tillich, *Theodicee*, 105.

[47] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 112. In the first draft of the lecture, he expresses this more simply: "God suffers with us. Every grave-cross is a symbol of the victorious fight of God with the factual." Tillich, *Theodicee*, 106.

Real theodicy is that he who carries all things participates in all things, enters into the sphere of relativity and submits himself to its judgement.

> God leads [the theodicy] himself by, while participating in the factual, redeeming the factual to his own glory. In this way, monotheism becomes trinity and theodicy becomes Christology.[48]

The third moment of Tillich's theodicy is that through the No (the first moment) and the Yes (the second moment),

> a God-given right comes about, a meaning and goal for everyone and everything. Everyone has a certain place, a value, a right in the order of the world. This place is only clear to us in a limited way.[49]

Only God could know this place and value and right of every individual in the world. Thus, every human can only confess God is right and

> have the certainty that everything negative and positive he encounters corresponds to that which he is in truth and before God; thus relative viewpoints also become living, aesthetic, pedagogical, ethical, developmental. […] For the individual here is the task of integrating himself alive in the place which befits him, in the fate which is appropriate to his being.[50]

The wording of the second and third moments of Tillich's theodicy in July 1916 (God leading the theodicy, participating, leading to glory) is like the 1913 *Systematische Theologie*:

> Every attempt to justify God because of sin and misery has to fail as long as God stands abstractly above it, ruled by logical or ethical necessity. Only a God who leads the theodicy himself, who participates in the suffering and leads to triumph, is "justified": The paradox is the theodicy.[51]

When we compare the 1916 lecture on theodicy to Tillich's war sermons, we can see all three moments at work. However, they are not each always present

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[48] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 112.
[49] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 113.
[50] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 113.
[51] *EGW* IX, D§6, 342.

in the same sermons. Some sermons are blunt admonishments in keeping with the first moment – God's "No". Despite their sadness and broken dreams, soldiers should bow themselves under God's hand in pain and obedience,[52] unifying themselves with God's will, as were he a comrade.[53] If they thought they had a right to a good life, then their God was a "chimaera":[54]

> In truth the God in whom you believed never existed. He was only a part of the world [...]. He was there to give you a comfortable life in the world [...] And when your faith in the world broke, your faith in this God was broken. And that is good, for this your God was an idol, created to make you feel good."[55]

Some sermons contain admonishments which point not to theological but moral error: a "bad conscience against God", i.e., sin and therefore fear of God is the hindrance to faith.[56] These are moralisations of doubt, the kind of statements which Tillich criticises in 1919.

Other sermons speak of God's suffering with us, in keeping with the second moment. God in Christ is he who "feels with us all the suffering of the earth";[57] the suffering of the world is hard for God, in whom there is a holy necessity that joy must come through suffering:

> God is not far from our suffering, but he carries the strife and guilt and suffering of all times and all creatures in his father's heart with endless divine mercy. He suffers himself; how should we grumble against him for the sake of our suffering?[58]

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[52] See No. 92, the very end of 1915, *EGW* VII, 425.
[53] See No. 148, [1917], *EGW* VII, 601.
[54] No. 147, [1917], *EGW* VII, 598.
[55] No. 116, [1916], *EGW* VII, 499. See also No. 156, New Year's Eve 1917, *EGW* VII, 630.
[56] No. 105, [1916], *EGW* VII, 465; see also No. 106, [1916], *EGW* VII, 467 and No. 140, [20th May 1917], *EGW* VII, 575–576.
[57] No. 91, Christmas 1915, *EGW* VII, 423–424.
[58] No. 130, March/April [1917], *EGW* VII, 542.

The third moment emerging out of the first two is the assurance of a meaning and goal for everyone. We saw this on a grand scale in the way Tillich talks about the progress of the kingdom of God. God's grace is that he leads us to his goal even through such suffering. Inner riches, victory can grow, more mature and better things are growing; "that is our […] faith for the peoples of Europe, for humanity."[59]

But Tillich also applies this to the individual, speaking of God having graciously placed the dead and wounded

> under the great, holy, eternal law of sacrifice. He placed them in the divine, world-conquering order, that they no longer belonged to themselves, but to that which is greater than them, the fatherland. Everyone who looks back at this year with wounded body, with wounded soul should be filled with a holy pride to have been honoured with this sacrifice […].[60]

On June 3rd 1917, all three moments are combined: When God's "holy will speaks the death sentence over the lost and self-destructive world, another voice in him speaks the sentence of life."[61] The solution to the puzzle is God suffers with us, as we see in the Son at the cross, and that the Spirit leads his children back "into the abyss of his divinity from which they came."[62]

Tillich said in the lecture "monotheism becomes trinity and theodicy becomes Christology".[63] This is not always clear in the sermons, but always clear at Christmas. In 1914, Tillich does not mention doubt but forgetting, saying God leads back to the child of Christmas; the soldiers should "worship him like the shepherds and take him in [their] arms like Maria and become one with him".[64]

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[59] No. 156, New Year's Eve 1917, *EGW* VII, 630.
[60] No. 85, 1st August 1915, *EGW* VII, 404.
[61] No. 142, 3rd June 1917, *EGW* VII, 582.
[62] No. 142, 3rd June 1917, *EGW* VII, 583.
[63] Tillich, *Theodicee*, 112.
[64] No. 72, Christmas 1914, *EGW* VII, 369.

Every following year, Christ the child is the answer to all bitterness and doubt and broken faith; hopeless soldiers should look to the child and see divine light and love in his eyes.[65]

At Christmas the contrast is stark with the interpretations of the war as God's wrath, judgement and testing, and assertions of his sovereign rule over the kingdoms of the earth. At Christmas, God comes "to the stable and the tent, to the trenches and the caves of the earth".[66] God's love does not change the world but is "tender and quiet like the child in Maria's arms, it is hidden and invisible like the Christmas story, and yet it is more powerful than all powers of the earth".[67] Having said in 1915 that Jesus gave a sword of judgement to the Germans to fight a holy war,[68] at Christmas 1917 Tillich reminds soldiers Christ did not come with a sword. Rather,

> [a]s a small and poor baby God knocks on our heart. He does not demand as it would be his right, he pleads: Let me come into you! Do you want to push him away? O melt, all you hard hearts, you embittered and blunted, you cold and empty of love! Melt before the gaze full of divine love from the eyes of the Christmas child![69]

In the end, the coexistence of such meek Christmas sermons alongside admonishing dismissals of human expectations of divine benevolence and stark affirmations of God's severe providence point on the one hand to the fact these sermons are offered on various occasions and situations on the Western front we cannot reconstruct. On the other hand, the variety also points to the "endless" deferral of any static solution to the problem of suffering, as Tillich intended in

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[65] See No. 91, Christmas 1915, *EGW* VII, 423; No. 123, Christmas 1916, *EGW* VII, 522; No. 125, Christmas 1916, *EGW* VII, 527; No. 155, Christmas 1917, *EGW* VII, 626.
[66] No. 91, Christmas 1915, *EGW* VII, 423–424.
[67] No. 125, Christmas 1916, *EGW* VII, 526.
[68] No. 86, end of August / beginning of September 1915, *EGW* VII, 406.
[69] No. 155, Christmas 1917, *EGW* VII, 627.

his lecture by pointing to three moments. Despite this pluriformity, my impression of the sermons, insofar as one can date some, is that the affirmation of the second moment (God's Yes, God's participation in the factual: God's suffering), becomes stronger in the last year of the war.

iv. Friend of the doubter

When Tillich addresses soldiers struggling with doubt, the question of theodicy is always close. However, there are a group of Tillich's responses which do not so much offer an answer but begin to reinterpret lack of faith in new ways. From the perspective of 1919, we are looking for something approaching Tillich's claim that doubt is a kind of faith, even that the doubter as doubter stands justified.

We have seen Tillich's blanket implicit justification of every soldier bringing sacrifice in his military service. But there is also a way of addressing doubters which encourages the unbeliever their lack of faith is either no matter for God or even that their state of unbelief is somehow equivalent to faith.

For example, there is the common pastoral counsel that even the *desire* for faith is "already the tender seed of faith",[70] just as consciousness of sin is a work of the Holy Spirit's conviction. Tillich however also appeals here to those whose faith is broken to pay attention to the voice, sense or feeling of their hearts or souls. His conviction is obviously that humans share a religious *a priori*, that those who say they have lost faith still experience what Calvin called a *sensus divinitatis*.[71] Tillich does not spell this out, but he certainly performs it:

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[70] No. 83, [1915] *EGW* VII, 398.

[71] In claiming Tillich holds on to a religious *a priori*, I do not believe that like Schleiermacher he characterises religion as a special function of consciousness or *Provinz im Gemüt*. Rather, the point is that Tillich believes consciousness is fundamentally religious. This is more similar to Troeltsch, who speaks of humanity's deeply rooted "feeling for the absolute". See Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des*

> you too feel you are more than every creature, you can also not really believe you should end in nothingness, you also hear in the depths of your soul a wind from eternity, a voice which says to you: I am more than death. You also sense a hidden ground, an unknown goal, a divine meaning of all that happens, you also feel carried from a holy power which penetrates everything, which stands in the fight with all the terrible, horrific things of life […]. Stand in faith, that means listen to the voice of your heart which says "I will not die, but live" (Psalm 118,17) […].[72]

You feel, you hear, you sense: Tillich appeals not to mere feelings but to deeply seated religious convictions which remain even when someone's God has been lost. Such hidden religious conviction is expressed in someone who, despite not being able to believe or pray, releases a "silent sigh" and experiences "divine presence […] calm[ing] the tense nerves".[73]

The call to discover a hidden life with God is also formulated as a question:

> Is there not in the depths of your soul the sound and sense of another order, whether you call it future or universe or eternity? Is that not your name for God, does not power flow from them, which lifts you up above your happiness or your life?[74]

This passage is particularly interesting for thinking about Tillich's theory of religious symbols. For here he suggests to his listeners that apparent unbelievers use and relate to certain concepts in ways analogous to religious belief in God, the order at the horizon of our lives which we hear and sense in our souls.

Those soldiers who deny God cannot prevent God from being friend, accompanier and faithful shepherd of their souls, divine presence surrounding

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Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902/1912) mit den Thesen von 1901 und handschriftlichen Zusätzen, ed. Trutz Rendtorff and Stefan Pautler (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1998), 220.
[72] No. 83, [1915] *EGW* VII, 398. Similarly, see No. 125, Christmas 1916, *EGW* VII, 525.
[73] No. 97, [January – March] 1916, *EGW* VII, 441.
[74] No. 146, [1917], *EGW* VII, 595–596.

them like the air they breathe.[75] And Tillich tells soldiers who deny God that God gives "the best you have, your power, your heroism, your pride".[76]

For the 400th anniversary of the Reformation in 1917, Tillich delivered four sermons. The last of these, just days before the celebrations on 31st October, is on the doctrine of justification. Tillich exposits Luther's translation of Rom 3:28, "that the human becomes righteous without the works of the law, through faith alone."[77] Luther the monk searched for certainty that God is gracious towards him. Our conscience, says Tillich, also accuses us, and the desire for righteousness before God "is the concern of every human soul".[78] We arrive at such righteousness not through the law but through faith. "There is a bit of Pharisee in us all",[79] when we think we are safe because we are "obedient and brave, truthful and ready to sacrifice", "pious and faithful to your church", but still there is a voice in our conscience.[80] But God differentiates between "those who want to be righteous through themselves and those who want to be righteous through his grace. And to both belong honourable and villains, good and bad, pious and godless."[81]

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[75] See No. 158, April 1918, *EGW* VII, 637; No. 146, [1917], *EGW* VII, 596; No. 159, end of May [1918], *EGW* VII, 639.
[76] No. 146, [1917], *EGW* VII, 596. Every heroic "nevertheless [*Dennoch*] is a confession to God"; No. 108, [1916], *EGW* VII, 475–476.
[77] Stefan S. Jäger exposits just this sermon at greater length as an example of Tillich's early sermons. I agree with his judgement that this sermon "marks an important step in Tillich's theological development … [which is] essentially about a new form of the doctrine of justification and of the relation between faith and doubt." Stefan S. Jäger, *Glaube und religiöse Rede bei Tillich und im Shin Buddhismus. Eine religionshermeneutische Studie.* Tillich Research 2 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 183.
[78] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 614. On the date: At the beginning of the sermon, presumably on the Sunday, Tillich says the Reformation festivities of 31st October (a Wednesday) are happening in "just days".
[79] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 615.
[80] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 615.
[81] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 616.

The key distinction is therefore not believer and unbeliever, but reliance upon grace. Thus, relevant faith is not the "holding-to-be-true [*Fürwahrhalten*] of any doctrine […] faith is trust. Righteous through faith means trust in God… trust in his gracious judgement."[82] This kind of reliance upon God's gracious judgement can also be present "when the storms of doubt rage through the heart and God himself becomes a puzzle and a question, it can be there in the deepest inner part of the doubter and can be missing in the continually orthodox believer."[83]

Recalling the notion of levelling I introduced in chapter six, Tillich also levels distinctions between not only the believer and the unbeliever, but also between himself as chaplain of the church and the soldiers. In contrast to sermons where I found otherworldly kitsch and a schoolmasterly tone, two sermons stand out. One is after a terrible battle in 1916, where Tillich speaks candidly to his soldiers about finding preaching harder than ever: "All great words must sound like hot air to you that only someone could utter who was not with you."[84] All, together, clergy and laity, believers and enemies of the faith, carry a "monstrous burden […] all of us hung with a part of our souls on the world and believed in it, we all experience the same unending pain that this faith is broken."[85]

Another sermon, perhaps from Spring 1917, speaks of hidden burdens, disappointment, bitterness and guilt, "not just behind the walls of the prisons but also on the thrones of kings and in the middle-class house and under the chest

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[82] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 616.
[83] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 616.
[84] No. 116, [1916], *EGW* VII, 497–498.
[85] No. 116, [1916], *EGW* VII, 498–499.

adorned with medals and under clerical garments."[86] Here is no charge to soar above the clouds with blissful piety but an invitation to weary comrades: "Come here to me, all you who are weary and burdened!"[87] In such clearly self-referential moments, Tillich's own exhaustion is unmistakeable.

What have we discovered here in relation to Tillich's preaching about doubt for doubters? First, a call to doubters to discover a hidden life with God, a voice in their soul. At Christmas this call becomes Christological; Christ is the answer to broken faith; hopeless soldiers should look to the eyes of the Christmas child and rediscover divine light and love, finding God and faith once again.[88] Second, the possibility that sceptics have other names for God. Third, that God is always near as a friend of doubters whether they know it or not. Fourth, that soldiers already have a true relation to God exhibited in their sacrifice and camaraderie. Fifth, that the dividing line is not between belief and unbelief, but between self-reliance and trust in God's grace. Sixth, that such trust can be present independent of belief. Seventh, that Tillich on occasions places himself on the same level as the weary soldiers, as a man of broken faith in the world. Tillich's God is a friend of doubters.

3. Theological letters 1917–1918

Having observed the various ways in which Tillich deals with doubt in his war sermons, we will explore the genre of his theological and philosophical

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[86] No. 130, Spring [1917], *EGW* VII, 545.
[87] No. 130, Spring [1917], *EGW* VII, 545.
[88] See No. 91, Christmas 1915, *EGW* VII, 423; No. 123, Christmas 1916, *EGW* VII, 522; No. 125, Christmas 1916, *EGW* VII, 527; No. 155, Christmas 1917, *EGW* VII, 626.

correspondence. Tillich pursued programmes of philosophical and theological reading, particularly from August 1917, hoping the war might end soon so he could hold various seminars.[89] He was also granted the usual periods of leave to visit his wife and family in Germany, where he might visit an art gallery, or, as in July 1916, give the lectures associated with his Habilitation.

While letters to his family give an impression of his war experience, there is no serious theological reflection. His correspondence with Emanuel Hirsch is the opposite, with barely a mention of the realities of war. The extant Hirsch correspondence begins in November 1917, shortly after the Reformation anniversary sermon on justification. It is preceded by one relevant extant letter, written to his Wingolf friends in August 1917. I will exposit these letters chronologically.

i. Nietzsche, truth, and godlessness

In his Wingolf letter, Tillich characterised himself as a Nietzschean theologian in lonely pursuit of the truth. In at least two previous letters, now lost, he had written about his theological principle and the present state of religion. In the summer of 1917, using an argument like one we know from 1919, Tillich claims the pursuit of the truth is necessarily theological. For "if the equation of God and truth is valid" then through giving oneself to truth one comes to God, even if such "radical objectivity in the name of the truth [...] also makes God a problem."[90] Emboldened by Nietzsche, Tillich's ideal is the undogmatic, humble sceptic in

[89] In December 1917 he wrote that he started to work again in August 1917 "after two years of complete rest", now becoming "more learnéd" and having "inwardly largely closed myself against the war." *EGW* VI, 98–99.
[90] Paul Tillich to Wingolf friends, 19th August 1917; *EGW* V, 105.

lonely pursuit of the truth: questioning and mistrusting claims, especially if they make him feel good.[91]

Since such commitment to truth is laudable, Tillich refers to his renewed theological principle, where godlessness is a possible form of piety, and piety is somehow godless, for what matters is truth:

> The highest achievement of the theological principle, i.e., the paradox of "justification" is the term "God of the godless" or "to be pious as if one were godless – being godless, as if one were pious."[92]

ii. Faith without God

Tillich wrote to his friend Hirsch mid-November 1917 after hearing he was in hospital. Tillich starts describing his version of the notion of justification, perhaps indicating previous discussions.[93] Here, Tillich writes for the first time of "faith without God":

> My understanding of the notion of justification has driven me towards the paradox of "faith without God." For if thought is a deed, a work (cf. the concept of *sacrificium intellectus*) and if God is thought of as somehow being [*seiend*], the positing of objectified thought, then to a certain degree he cannot demand the work of this thought from someone who he wants to justify. The same expressed differently: The "atheist" can also believe themselves in their atheism to be "justified" by an order or reality or depth which stands above that which they negate as the "being [*Sein*] of God". That "order" is of course not to be thought of as a being [*als ein Sein*], which would be a circulus, but as "depth" or "meaning" etc. You can find similar thoughts in Simmel's "Rembrandt" in the section on religious art. I do not express this for me, but as consequence and possibility from which a wonderful wide [open space] follows.[94]

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[91] See Tillich to Wingolf, 19th August 1917; *EGW* V, 105–106. As we saw in chapter six, Tillich was already gesturing to Nietzsche in his sermons from Nauen in 1911.
[92] Tillich to Wingolf, 19th August 1917; *EGW* V, 107. The quotation marks are original.
[93] Tillich mentions writing to Hirsch earlier in the war about finding the "personality". See Paul Tillich, Letter to Emanuel Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 115. This theme is present in an early war letter. See Paul Tillich, Letter to Familie Wever, October 1914, *EGW* V, 83.
[94] Tillich to Hirsch, 12th November 1917; *EGW* VI, 97.

The paradox of faith without God follows here from justification because of Tillich's aversion to any 'intellectual work'. Expressed positively, the atheist 'believes' in justification not through an objectified God but through an order of depth or meaning which stands above negated objectifications. A few weeks later, Tillich mentions "faith without God" to Maria Klein, daughter of pastor Ernst Klein from Lichtenrade: "I have for a long time, through stringently thinking through the notion of justification, come to the paradox of "faith without God" […]."[95]

Klein's letters to Tillich (now lost) evidently included theological reflection, Tillich referrings to her notions of 'endlessness' (*Unendlichkeit*) and 'life' playing a big role in thinking through this paradox. Such terms are not concepts of God but, for example in the case of endlessness, affirmations of life's endlessness as an act and the immanent endlessness of all living things. In short, consciousness of freedom. Religious life consists of the opposition of such consciousness of freedom and consciousness of "dependency on an order of value".[96]

Both these kinds of consciousness are not objective, but purely "*urständlich*". This rare, untranslatable word is Schellingian, it's opposite being *gegenständlich*.[97] Tillich means to say they belong to the subject transcendentally, i.e., they are the conditions of the possibility of subjectivity (i.e.,

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[95] Paul Tillich, Letter to Maria Klein, 5th December 1917; *EGW* V, 121.
[96] Tillich to Klein, 5th December 1917; *EGW* V, 121.
[97] "The expression 'urständlich' should, according to Schelling, serve as a contrasting term to 'gegenständlich' […] That which is gegenständlich can be made an object of thinking and [thought's] grasping, unpreconceivable [*unvordenkliches*] being however is just that being for which this is not possible. […] in many cases he just calls it 'Ursein'". Andreas Lückner and Sebastian Ostritsch, *Existenz* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 88.

unpreconceivable, as we saw in chapter 5). As such, the concept of God is no obstacle to faith, for the concept of God is not an object of faith. The concept of God is (an objectification which is) "the consequence of a faith which rests in itself".[98]

iii. The absolute is an idol

In his December 1917 letter to Hirsch he calls the problem of certainty and doubt his central problem. He rejects three solutions: mysticism, intellectual overcoming of doubt through a scientific concept of God, and overcoming doubt through "the ethical-religious experience of reality".[99] The second he refers to as his earlier solution, of which he is now critical. The third he thinks is Hirsch's own.

The explicit "self-criticism"of his "earlier"[100] position is evidence Tillich has changed his mind.[101] The change is firstly his stance toward Kähler's motto that the absolute is an idol. In 1908 Tillich flatly contradicts Kähler, saying the absolute is indispensable.[102] In 1913 Tillich similarly says, "it is impossible to reach the concept of God [...] without starting from the absolute".[103]

In late 1917 Tillich says he now *does* accept the Kählerian sentence: "the absolute is an idol", when the religious function should be grounded in the

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[98] Tillich to Klein, 5th December 1917; *EGW* V, 121.
[99] Paul Tillich to Emanuel Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 100.
[100] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 99.
[101] Contra A. James Reimer, *The Emanuel Hirsch and Paul Tillich Debate: A Study in the Political Ramifications of Theology* (Lewiston/USA: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 35.
[102] See Tillich, *Monismusschrift*, 101.
[103] *EGW* IX, D§1, 329.

completion of the theoretical concept of God."[104] This is a similar point to that made in 1919:

> 'The absolute is an idol', as Kähler used to say – wrongly, when he wanted to make an objection to philosophical thought, rightly, when he rejected the grounding of religious certainty on this product of non-evident thought.[105]

Rather than claiming, as in 1913, that the notion of God as the absolute has "not been shattered by the critique of reflection",[106] Tillich says in 1917 that if God is the absolute then this makes religion doubtful since the doubter has a duty "as 'conscientious one of the spirit' to be skeptical of every special process of proof."[107]

iv. Intellectual and ethical works

The second aspect of this change is that his affirmation of the Kählerian motto is linked explicitly to his opposition to any 'intellectual work':

> It contradicts the centre of religious life that the right to believe should be dependent on an intellectual work: from this arises either an intellectual indifference or an intellectual pharisaism.[108]

In the previous chapter, based on my comparison of 1913 and 1919, I argued it is possible but inconclusive that the critique of 1919 means that the 1913 systematics should be considered embarrassing, as an 'intellectual work'. His correspondence with Hirsch in late 1917 makes it likely that Tillich thought so.[109]

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[104] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 99.
[105] Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1919]', *EGW* X/1, 205.
[106] *EGW* IX, D§1, 329.
[107] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 99–100.
[108] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 100.
[109] I agree with Heinemann that notwithstanding any continuities, Tillich's acceptance of Kähler's motto 'the absolute is an idol' was the "polar opposite" of his earlier position, Tillich now believing "against all the effort of an intellectual grounding of the concept of religion […] simple doubt is religiously and theoretically correct." Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 182.

Tillich's anticipation and rejection of Hirsch's 'third way' of overcoming doubt through ethical experience is something we also find in 1919 where Tillich insists one cannot move from value to being.[110] Here in late 1917 Tillich characterises it as an ethical work, with doubt rendered lastly as an unethical response. Tillich believes doubt is ethically demanded, out of a concern for truthfulness:

> It is not hard to burden religious skepticism with a bad conscience; on the one hand the power of a tremendous tradition stands against it, on the other side it concerns the points of absoluteness of inner life and to doubt here is indeed objective guilt; but a guilt which is at the same time necessary, for the overcoming of doubt through injury of truthfulness would be both objectively and subjectively guilty.[111]

The concern to free doubt from a bad conscience is the same as 1919. Talk of a possible injury of truthfulness anticipates the language of an intellectual conscience in 1919. "We stand before the doubter, who holds up his doubts with good conscience."[112] Thus doubt cannot be overcome.

v. Faith without objectification

If doubt of the objective moment of religion cannot be overcome, then religious certainty must rest on the "subjective, *urständliche* moment of religion",[113] that which the subject experiences in the broader sense, not as a concrete experience of an object, but as its own undoubtable 'absolute' consciousness, for example consciousness of absolute endlessness or value (as in November 1917).[114]

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[110] In 1919, Tillich says moral(ity)-theology [*Moraltheologie*] which attempts to move from the experience of values to the sphere of being fails, because such experience is merely "heightened I-consciousness" which is always susceptible to "the fundamental experience of value-nothingness [*Wertnichtigkeit*]". Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1919]', *EGW* X/1, 212.
[111] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 101–102.
[112] Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel [1919]', *EGW* X/1, 167.
[113] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 102.
[114] When Tillich talks about various kinds of consciousness being "all under the exponent 'absolute'" (*EGW* VI, 102) Heinemann concludes: "*The absoluteness-theoretical standard of the early theory should in no way be given up but rather lead to the form of a transcendental theory of experience.*"

Scepticism cannot be directed toward such consciousness for it is the description of a "pure state [of consciousness] [*reine Zuständlichkeit*]" which is there or not just as pain is present or not.[115] Consciousness of endlessness, for example, is not a little *episodic* religious experience but a comprehensive foundational human experience, "a colouring, a sound, a direction, a form, an expression, a soul of *every* experience".[116]

Justification implies objectifications are criticised as conditioned, as relative. But this does not destroy religion for "the phenomena of consciousness of justification are present without objectification".[117] This is "analogue to the Lutheran experience of justification."[118] This is what Tillich means by the piety of the godless, for 'faith' in a special sense is present even without objectifications. The meaning of 'faith without God' is 'faith without objectification'.

The objection that this might lead necessarily to an entirely contentless religion is already implicitly addressed when Tillich says that upon such a universal ground of consciousness, not susceptible to skepticism, objective aspects of religion can be built. Faith can be present without a particular

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Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 185. I agree, but I should emphasise that *this* use of the term has nothing to do with speaking of God as the absolute, as Dienstbeck rightly points out. See Dienstbeck, *Transzendentale Strukturtheorie*, 243–244. In Tillich's habilitation, Tillich also emphasises that self-consciousness is above every doubt. See Tillich, *Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen, sein dialektischer Charakter und das Prinzip der Identität – dargestellt an der supranaturalistischen Theologie vor Schleiermacher (1915)*, in *EGW* IX, 506.

[115] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 102. Heinemann associates the very rare German word *Zuständlichkeit* with the unmediated self-consciousness of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*, §3. See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 184. The word is likely to be appropriated from Theodor Lipps (1851–1914): Tillich mentions reading Lipps's aesthetics at the top of the same letter and Tillich immediately uses pain as an illustration of *Zuständlichkeit*. That sounds like Lipps. For example: "Die Gegenstände der Empfindung, die wir Kopfschmerz oder Hunger oder Durst nennen, sind […] eine Zuständlichkeit." Theodor Lipps, 'Zur Einfühlung', in F. Fabbianelli (ed), *Theodor Lipps Schriften zur Einfühlung*, 373–636; here: 481.

[116] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 102. Italics not original.

[117] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 103.

[118] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 104.

objectification (i.e., affirmation of a creed), but it still leads to objectification. Indeed, Tillich insists objectification is a "necessity" for the spirit.[119] Such possibilities are developed more in 1924, when Tillich considers what sanctification by faith might mean in the sphere of knowledge. There, Tillich speaks of salvific names emerging out of foundational revelation, "out of the centre [...] of the living creative truth".[120]

vi. Hirsch's submission

In Hirsch's response, he tries to argue there is an unmediated certainty of God through uncontradictable evidence available to the subject, denying his position amounts to an ethical work. The subject, says Hirsch, has "two foundational intellectual experiences":[121] it becomes not only aware of itself but also aware of the "other", of the "foreign" as the divine, "before all conceptual interpretation."[122] The subject's awareness of Godself is God's movement, something given and not achieved by the subject; prevenient grace. God is not created ethically. Yet an "ethical deed of submission [*Unterwerfung*]" is still necessary.[123]

Doubt is not given a bad conscience, says Hirsch, but the only solution to doubt is "bowing under the justice of the divine."[124] Doubt for Hirsch is "an angst-filled expression of the unredeemedness of that person who has not found eternal home in the "other"."[125] Though Hirsch agrees atheists may be directed toward

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[119] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 103.
[120] Paul Tillich, 'Rechtfertigung und Zweifel', 134. For more detail on the continuity between this letter and Tillich's writings from the 1920s, see Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 193–195.
[121] Emanuel Hirsch, Letter to Paul Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 105.
[122] Hirsch to Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 106.
[123] Hirsch to Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 111.
[124] Hirsch to Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 111.
[125] Hirsch to Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 111–112.

the truth and values in a way analogous to the believer, he wants to hold on to a character difference between the unbeliever and the pious as a difference between egocentricity and "the pious demand that the feeling of self should have its centre in God".[126] Hirsch believes that without belief in God he would have been a far harder person.[127]

vii. Tillich's autonomous immanence

Tillich's response to Hirsch in February 1918 includes a fascinating retrospective self-description:

> I remember how, coming from of the Spring mood and the Spring magic of the philosophy of nature, I was arrested by the dark power of the "positive philosophy" and how the great sentence, which ruled the whole of this philosophy; "*Deitas es dominatio dei*", "God is the Lord" shook me deeply, religiously. And then came the ratio and first I interpreted Schelling II from Schelling I, then I left him, went to Hegel – and finally to Nietzsche.[128]

That Tillich *left* Schelling and moved towards Hegel is a statement which raises the question which writings might correspond to this philosophical development. A little later, Tillich says:

> Have I forgotten [Schelling II]? Never completely, otherwise I would have stood years ago, i.e., at the time of my composition of the "dogmatics" (1914), where I now stand, and would not today face the mistrust of Wegener and v. Sydow or rather feel something foreign to them in me.[129]

Tillich considers his draft *Systematische Theologie* to still be in line with Schelling II, though this feels like years ago. The move to Hegel does not correspond with the Habilitation which largely draws on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century theologians but focuses on the critique of their

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[126] Hirsch to Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 112.
[127] See Hirsch to Tillich, early 1918; *EGW* VI, 112. Since Hirsch was a vocal supporter of the National Socialists in the 1930s, his belief in God did not decisively help his ethical life.
[128] Paul Tillich, Letter to Emanuel Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 114.
[129] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 115.

supranaturalism. Considering the lectures given in the process of his Habilitation in the Summer of 1916, it is possible these are part of his reported Hegel phase, given the brusqueness of the monistic moment of his theodicy. However, his eschewal of cultural optimism suggests otherwise. It is something of a puzzle which only the lost Wingolf letters from before Summer 1917 could shed light on.

In February 1918, Tillich says he lives in the Nietzschean "principle of autonomous immanence of life, as it resonates in the whole of modern literature and poetry," trying to "live more and more deeply in its three most important moments: autonomy instead of bowing [*Beugung*], life instead of self-abandonment [*Selbstaufgabe*], immanence instead of transcendence!"[130] Tillich finds himself in inner conflict with the rational principle of which Hirsch is the representative.[131] Here is a striking contrast between the friends: Hirsch's call to submission instead of egocentricity and Tillich's principle of autonomous immanence instead of bowing to authority.

viii. God as objectification of the immanence of the spirit

Here, Tillich takes up a theme from his habilitation, the "dialectic of the supra",[132] which is an argument which claims supranaturalism either borrows from the natural to create a "pale copy [...] of the transcendent world" or unwittingly becomes part of the natural or is an evaluation of the natural.[133] He "affirm[s] the position without change."[134]

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[130] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 115.
[131] See Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 115.
[132] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 115.
[133] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 115–116.
[134] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 116.

Therefore, Tillich thinks Hirsch's notion of the "foreign" succumbs to this dialectic of the supranatural. Even if Hirsch's experience of the "foreign" is unique, necessary and the only possible experience,[135] it still belongs to the autonomous human spirit, for the spirit calls that which is "foreign" God "and [the spirit] understands something by this word, it is a concept in the system of concepts".[136]

Therefore Tillich recognises no double foundational intellectual experience like Hirsch but sees the difference between the two as "an expression of the polarity in the [human] spirit itself,"[137] between "value-consciousness and consciousness of endlessness".[138] Since we *"experience that which is [always already] burdened with meaning and value*",[139] Hirsch's experience of the "foreign" is also interpretation and creation of the human spirit. Thus, Hirsch's second foundational experience reduces to the first.

In a passage important for understanding the development of Tillich's theory of symbols (what he here calls 'objectifications'), Tillich explains that the concept of God is dialectical: factually immanent but involving the impossible ideal of thinking in a transcendent way.[140] It receives content as it is determined through both poles of the spirit, endlessness and value. It is the result of "the ontological objectification of the consciousness of endlessness" becoming connected with "the axiological [objectification] of value-consciousness."[141]

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[135] See Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 116.
[136] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 117.
[137] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 117.
[138] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 119.
[139] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 118. Emphasis original.
[140] See Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 119.
[141] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 120.

The spirit's polarity and its reflection on its own transcending in consciousness of value and endlessness recognises a positive and negative judgement. Consciousness of value and endlessness are "*genitivus objectivus* and *subjectivus*".[142] This means the spirit is conscious of its own value, yet also of absolute value, which implies one's own unworthiness (*Unwertigkeit*) and it is conscious of its own endlessness and endlessness which implies one's own finitude. Justification is the "solution" to such a "foundational paradox" present in the polarity of the spirit.[143]

The foundational paradox gives birth to that objectification of the spirit's polarity (the concept of God), and the content of that concept is determined by the polarity.[144] Important for our purposes are his comments on doubt in this context:

> The doubter finds himself on the path from one objectification to others, since there is no [such thing as an] atheist, it is only a boundary-concept. An exact analysis of all concepts like absolute, life, nature, development, culture, cosmos, totality etc. shows clearly that value- and endlessness-consciousness are objectified in them. These concepts are also dogma and whoever doubts them still believes in the truth which makes him doubt, and has herein his objectification. Therefore, one can say: it is impossible to doubt God and it is impossible not to doubt God. The first refers to the content, the second [refers] to the form of objectification.[145]

Tillich's comments here remind us of the structure of his "God above God": the distinction between the truth (here: value- and endlessness-consciousness, the content) and symbolic representation of the truth (here: the form of objectification).[146] And we find the familiar trope that doubters, in order to doubt,

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[142] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 120.
[143] See Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 120.
[144] See Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 121.
[145] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 122.
[146] In his next letter he will say "Myth is the unmediated and necessary form of objectification of the religious experience". Paul Tillich, Letter to Emanuel Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 126.

have to indeed affirm something (here: the truth which makes him doubt). Tillich says the basis of what he is saying is the Fichtean *Atheismusstreit*, "that it is logically and religiously impossible to put God in a row next to objects and that the sentence "God is" is only possible per paradox."[147]

ix. God and meaning

In May 1918, Tillich writes the final extant letter to Hirsch from this period, having received Otto's book *The Idea of the Holy*, presumably as a gift from Hirsch. Between the last letter and the present, Tillich spent the first two weeks of April in a field hospital at Guise, recovering from a nervous breakdown. He does not mention this episode in the letter.

Tillich says he likes Otto's anti-supranaturalism but thinks his concept of the numinous also leads to objectification for it is "experienced in processes of consciousness, above all in feelings, and is therefore an object of the psychology of feelings".[148] Or, if it is not a special object in nature then it is

> a special *meaning*, the meaning of the object "world". Precisely this is now my opinion. Intellectual life is life in meaning or unceasing creative giving of meaning. In this way we give the world a logical – ethical – aesthetic, also a religious meaning.[149]

In Tillich's previous letter he wrote of value and endlessness-consciousness as "primarily religious feelings" and had reduced Hirsch's notion of the "foreign" to value-consciousness. In May 1918 he says value and meaning are "identical concepts". Value-consciousness "concerns the whole of the

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[147] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 122. Heinemann notes this a clear refutation of any suggestion the war meant a turning away from idealism, as Gunther Wenz once argued. See Heinemann, *Sinn – Geist – Symbol*, 191n76.
[148] Tillich to Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 124.
[149] Tillich to Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 125.

intellectual sphere".[150] Thinking this through further, and returning to the term numinous, he contradicts his demotion of the term numinous to mere objectification made a few lines earlier and says: "the numinous is not a new objectiveness, but rather a new depth or revelation of being."[151] Tillich is clearly thinking on his feet.[152]

The end of the letter makes clear that, as many Tillich scholars have commented, his letters to Hirsch mark the beginning of his *sinntheoretische* (meaning-theoretical) phase which starts properly in the 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*.[153] In his letter to Hirsch he says:

> The divine is meaning, not being, and it is a "different meaning". […] Being, the purely "factual" is a concept, is thus posited from the logical context of meaning, is a meaning- and value-product. […] I teach therefore a monism of meaning […].[154]

Unlike the first volume of his American *Systematic Theology*, where "God is being-itself"[155] is the only non-symbolic statement about God, this early monism of meaning demotes being to the level of objectification (i.e., a symbol). This is however in line with the pansymbolism of his 1928 essay 'Das Religiöse Symbol'[156] and of the 1957 second volume of the systematics, where the only non-symbolic statement about God is that "everything we say about God is

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[150] Tillich to Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 125.
[151] Tillich to Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 125.
[152] And nothing is wrong with that. It is a letter, written from a man at war. As the comparison of the letters helps us appreciate, Tillich is playing with various theoretical concepts, and one might say one cannot guess from one month to the next which set of terms Tillich will employ to express his thoughts. However, there is also something positive here about Tillich's ability to cast his vision of an ontological structure in various languages. Indeed, it is in the end an expression of his theory of symbols.
[153] See for example Folkart Wittekind, '"Allein durch den Glauben". Tillichs sinntheoretische Umformulierung des Rechtfertigungsverständnisses 1919', in Christian Danz/Werner Schuessler (eds) *Religion – Kultur – Gesellschaft. Der fruehe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919–1920)*. Tillich-Studien 20 (Wien/Berlin: Lit, 2008), 39–65.
[154] Tillich to Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 126–127.
[155] Tillich, *ST* I, 239.
[156] Paul Tillich, 'Das Religiöse Symbol', *MW IV*, 213–227.

symbolic".[157] In 1957, as in 1918, being "is a meaning- and value-product",[158] itself an objectification like other concepts such as "absolute, life, nature, development, culture, cosmos, totality".[159]

x. Epilogue to the letters

Hirsch writes two further letters beyond the scope of this chapter; Tillich does not reply. It is clear this correspondence was of great significance for facilitating Tillich's theological development. Although he must have spent hours reading during this part of the war, Tillich is unlikely to have had much opportunity to discuss his learning.

The position he presents in his letters is changeable, a work in progress, responding to Hirsch and reflecting the variety of influences and interlocutors: the idealists Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel are in the background; Nietzsche, Simmel and Otto are mentioned. And then there is a variety of concepts, from Nietzschean truth, to freedom and dependency, to endlessness and value, and finally a monism of meaning.

Constant is the concentration on philosophical and theological argument and high level of abstraction, and the contrast in both style and content with his war sermons. Reading the sermons and the correspondence alongside each other underlines once again the impossibility of ever fully capturing Tillich, for there are too many of him. But there should be no flight to apophaticism. In what follows I will summarise and point to the places where the correspondence and

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[157] Tillich, *ST* II, 9.
[158] Tillich to Hirsch, 9th May 1918; *EGW* VI, 126.
[159] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 122.

the sermons cohere with or contradict each other on points relevant for our understanding of the development of Tillich's justification of the doubter.

4. Conclusion

As we have seen, Tillich's claim that thinking stringently about justification led him to the paradox of faith without God is easily misunderstood if we do not keep in mind Tillich's quest to avoid an 'intellectual work', his Schellingian distinction between *urständlich* and *gegenständlich*, and his claim there are no atheists. Furthermore, the affect-laden sermons stand alongside the abstract correspondence without mediation. Therefore, to conclude this chapter I make seven summary claims I have distilled from the correspondence, relating them to themes from the sermons.

First, *the doubter can be justified*. Already in August 1917, Tillich's correspondence defines the paradox of justification as the "God of the godless". In the correspondence with Hirsch, Tillich insists atheists can also be justified by an order or reality or depth which stands above the God they negate. Similarly, in the sermons, those who deny God relate to an order which they sense in their souls.

Second, if God justifies the godless, if they can be righteous by grace and not works, and if justification is by grace through faith, then *the doubter has a kind of faith*. In the correspondence Tillich says the phenomena of consciousness of justification can be present without any belief in the concept of God, in a way analogous to the Lutheran experience of justification. He can also formulate this in in terms of the doubter's commitment to truth, or as faith in an order or reality

or depth. For Tillich, there are no real atheists, even if people deny God's existence. In the sermons, the doubter's faith is described as a trust in God's gracious judgement, reliance which can still be present in the person for whom God is a doubtful puzzle, who even says they do not believe in God.

However, there is a difference between the correspondence and sermons. In the sermons, Tillich invites doubters to take notice of their existing faith, that sense of a hidden ground, unknown goal or divine meaning of all that happens. Surely, he implores his listeners, you can hear a voice in your soul speaking to you, you can sense another order, whether they name it future or universe or eternity, and suggests these apparently godless concepts might be their name for God. Tillich is encouraging soldiers to search their souls to find deep-seated theistic faith (a sense of *divine* meaning).

The correspondence affirms non-theistic commitments and relations to the world as faith. The focus of his preaching is however not to tell doubters they already have faith but to address them as prodigals, consoling them with the thought that God's presence, friendship and nearness surrounds them, whatever their state of faith or unbelief.

Third, in his correspondence Tillich *opposes the 'intellectual work' of overcoming doubt* with a scientific concept of God and affirms Kähler's motto that the absolute is an idol. By connecting his change in stance to the imperative of avoiding an intellectual work, he is rejecting his earlier systems of 1908 and 1913 as amounting to an intellectual work. This is further evidence that Tillich's critique of Heim's approach in 1919 is a rejection of his own earlier position. In the sermons, the distinction between justification by grace and justification by

works is presented in his sermon on justification, October 1917. But he does not mention the notion of an intellectual work.

Fourth, the claim *there can be faith without God* sounds perhaps to some like a 1960s death-of-God theologian. After all, Tillich means justifying faith is possible without the stipulation that one believes in the existence of God. But Tillich insists there is no such thing as an atheist. Faith without God means faith without the necessity of the objectification 'God'. We saw this in the sermons when Tillich grants that doubting soldiers may have other names for God. In the language of the correspondence, the concept of God and all such terms as "absolute, life, nature, development, culture, cosmos, totality"[160] are objectifications of the polarity of consciousness. More specifically, the result of the connection of the objectification of the consciousness of endlessness and the objectification of value-consciousness. Since all objectifications stem from the same source, different objectifications of one's relation to that source (in the sermons: different names for God) do not negate the veracity of that relation.

In the sermons, we find something superficially similar in Tillich's claim that the benevolent God assumed by angry soldiers was an idol. This implies there is a faith without God (without God the idol, a chimaera) which is a true relation to the divine. However, this faith without an idol-God has nothing to do with the worry about an intellectual work. Rather it is an application of the first moment of his theodicy, that God is right and we have no claim before him. Faith without God in the sense of the correspondence means faith not only without an idol of my wishes but also faith without the God of the first moment of theodicy, doubt

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[160] Tillich to Hirsch, 20th February 1918; *EGW* VI, 122.

of that objectification of the polarity of undoubtable consciousness which is named God.

Fifth, *the doubter cannot doubt the pure state of consciousness*, for the subject can never doubt consciousness which belongs to the subject as the condition of its possibility. Thus Tillich is – at least regarding this issue – far more idealist and far less Nietzschean in the correspondence with Hirsch than he claims in his 1917 letter to Wingolf. Such claims concerning consciousness are not in the sermons. The structure of his call to sense, feel and hear that which remains when faith has been lost certainly is comparable to the structure of his argument that consciousness is certain when doubt in the objectification which is the concept of God is prevalent. But the call in the sermons appeals to objectifications such as a voice in the soul.

Sixth, Tillich addresses the objection that his faith of the doubter implies a contentless religion. He says *objectification is indeed necessary for humans* and therefore also in religion, and that *objectifications can be built on the universal ground of consciousness*. This is Tillich's theory of religious symbols without that word present. But the point is that objectifications always remain under doubt; they cannot attain the same level of certainty as undoubtable consciousness.

In the sermons, the necessity of objectification in religion is assumed when he preaches, most clearly at Christmas, where the call to feel and sense and hear becomes Christologically specified: Christ is the offer made to those doubting; those with broken faith should meet the gaze of the child Christ discover faith in that gaze. But here, pointing to Christ is also part of Tillich's strategy of theodicy – precisely the second moment – to correct an idolatrous view of God. In the Christmas sermons Tillich does mention the worry that the Christmas story could

also simply be a childhood dream. But rather than addressing this doubt seriously, he side-steps it, inviting doubters to open their eyes to the gaze of Christ in the manger.

Sixth, Tillich responds with *a commitment to autonomous immanence* when Hirsch mentions the word submission (*Unterwerfung*) in early 1918. Tillich expresses deep aversion to bowing and self-abandonment (*Selbstaufgabe*). On this point in the correspondence, Tillich is probably most self-consciously endebted to Nietzsche. In the context of war, this is quite significant. Much earlier in the chapter I talked about the undoubtability of the war for an army chaplain but pointed to some evidence of private doubts and possible enthusiasm for *Verständnisfrieden*, at the very end of 1917, despite the fact it was then reviled by the German government. Perhaps this aversion to bowing and submission in the correspondence is more evidence of such a political change. It certainly stands in considerable theological tension with his first moment of theodicy from 1916, where God is unconditionally right and we have no basis for complaint. But here we do not have much evidence that Tillich is a Nietzschean; in the sermons Nietzsche is only appropriated as a poet of the human condition.

Seventh *the divine is meaning, not being*. Tillich's final letter to Hirsch emphasises the identity of value and meaning, and that being (also the being of God) is a product of meaning. This fits with the idea that the concept of God is an objectification of the polarity of consciousness. This use of the word meaning (*Sinn*) in the correspondence is completely distinct from the way the word meaning (*Sinn*) is used in the sermons.

In the sermons, Tillich claims there is a meaning and goal for every dying soldier or calls the living soldiers to sense a divine meaning of all that happens.

Despite his decrying of a kind of belief in providence in which God makes my life comfortable (the first moment of theodicy), there is still a belief in God's ordering of individuals' lives in the order of the world (the third moment of theodicy), even if their roles include horrendous suffering.

Just as there is no mention in the sermons of the necessarily constructed nature of religious beliefs as objectifications of consciousness, so there is no mention in the sermons of the divine as the *meaning* of the object world. For Tillich in his final letter to Hirsch during the war, intellectual life is life in the sphere of meaning involving constant attribution of meaning; we give the world a religious meaning.

Surveying the breadth of the sermons and the correspondence during the war therefore demonstrates the contrast not only between the genres but also in Tillich's position, which as I said is impossible to capture fully. Tillich the theological pen-friend is quite another Tillich than the Tillich preaching to soldiers. Yet when we look for similarities, we find one in his stance toward doubters and another in the Reformation sermon on justification from October 1917. The occasion for Tillich's correspondence with Hirsch was apparently Hirsch's eye ailment. But it is surely no coincidence Tillich starts writing about "faith without God" to Hirsch and Klein as a result of thinking through justification after giving that sermon. The Reformation sermon was a key moment in helping him to gather his thoughts.

There are obviously great formal differences between the correspondence with Hirsch and the draft of 1919. The 1919 draft adds much more material. Some concepts, such as the unconditioned (*das Unbedingte*), the paradox and

autonomy, play a far larger role in 1919. Other emphases from the letters, such as the polarity of consciousness of value and endlessness, are later missing.

But key moves made in the correspondence to apply justification to the situation of the so-called atheist all find a correspondent in the notion of the justification of the doubter in 1919. Furthermore, a great deal of Tillich's objections to Hirsch find their way into the 1919 draft. We must imagine Tillich during the war developing his thoughts alongside his correspondence with Hirsch, keeping his own drafts of the letters he sent to Hirsch, and using all this as the foundation of the draft of 1919.

As we have seen, Tillich was already concerned to address the phenomenon of doubt and situation of doubters in sermons and his apologetic ministry before the war. However different the nature of the correspondence 1917-1918 from the sermons, both share a concern for the situation of doubters. More specifically: a concern to console the doubter.

I want to close this chapter by stepping back from analysis as a sign of respect for what happened 1914–1918. When we approach influential figures in the history of theology there is a temptation to hagiography but also a temptation to tear down. I hope my demonstration of the chauvinism of some sermons and cautious reading of his autobiographical narratives in earlier chapters make it clear I do not make him a saint. But I find it equally inappropriate to analyse with a sneer.

Like the hundreds of chaplains on all sides, the personal, psychological and pastoral achievement of Tillich's preaching at war, while tragically and willingly participating in the military machine, was his fallible expression of faithfulness to his ordination vows:

> You are called to feed the church of Jesus Christ, which he bought with his own blood, with the pure word of God, to administer the holy sacraments according to the words of consecration, to seek the salvation of the souls entrusted to you through faithful exhortation with persistent prayer, to teach the youth healthy doctrine with all industry, to strengthen the weak, to go after those gone astray and not give up a soul for lost, to comfort the afflicted, to visit the sick and prepare the dying for a Christian end [...].[161]

[161] Agende der altpreußischen Union, Ordinationsformular (1895), cited in: Karl Dienst, *Zwischen Wissenschaft und Kirchenpolitik: zur Bedeutung universitärer Theologie für die Identität einer Landeskirche in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 233.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This investigation of Tillich's early theological development began with Tillich's recollection of the relief he felt when he discovered the justification of the doubter. We studied a snapshot of this theological theme in the 1919 draft, *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*. In all the other chapters, I searched for the presence of themes pertaining to Tillich's justification of the doubter, whether in letters, sermons or philosophical writings.

Here I first trace significant themes across all the chapters, offering an overall characterisation of Tillich's development and discovery of the justification of the doubter. The four themes I have chosen are: the grace of God, faith and reason, rejecting an intellectual work, and doubt as a kind of faith.

In a further section, I reflect on the theological significance of Tillich's justification of the doubter. Tillich's draft, *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*, is now one hundred years old. Believing his discovery might still bring relief, I will also consider how Tillich might help us think about the nature of faith and the church's mission today.

1. Developing the justification of the doubter

i. The grace of God

The justification of the doubter is good news for the doubter, the grace of acceptance. Tillich's student days (1904–09) were marked by gracelessness, with none of Kähler's emphasis on the justification of the ungodly. Instead, strenuous pietist self-examination continues even in Lichtenrade (1909). Tillich's stated eschewal of pharisaic thinking does entail a generous attitude to those outside the Christian faith. But for 'those who know Jesus' the reality of indwelling sin leads Tillich to despair. Rewriting a despairing sermon, Tillich finds a message of grace: Christ enters the darkness of the despairing sinner who is also doubter.

In Tillich's work on Schelling (1909–11), Schelling's nature mysticism and doctrine of justification are moments of opposition to Kantian moralism, and an affirmation of underlying unity of humanity with God. Not as autonomous moral agents, but by grace.

In the Nauen sermons (1911–12), Tillich employs a law-gospel dialectic to emphasise human inability and the grace of God, levelling the distinction between believer and unbeliever. All share the same need and wait for the same grace. Tillich holds high eschatological hopes that unbelievers in his age of doubt will in fact come to the truth. In Moabit (1912–13), sermons on the puzzle of the masses and the puzzle of variety ask whether faceless millions in Germany and across the world should be excluded from grace. The question becomes most pressing as Tillich considers his irreligious friends. Should they live in vain? No is his answer, for whatever humanity's guilt, God's mercy is greater. Jesus' exclusive words are directed towards Christians.

In the theological system of 1913, the eschatological paragraph of the Dogmatics expresses inclusivist soteriology tending towards universal reconciliation. In the Ethics, every human is justified in a principle sense. At war, traditional Protestant soteriology becomes irrelevant. All the dying soldiers enter eternity, all the miserable and wounded are visited by an intimate friend.

Tillich appears at the end of a long Protestant theological history one could characterise as 'the decline of hell',[1] already expressed in his rejection of 'pharisaic thinking' in Lichtenrade. Tillich's experience of his own sinfulness and doubt, and therefore despair of his own spiritual position, combined with his shared life with close friends who did not believe, led Tillich to embrace Schelling's religious anthropology, that humanity is God-positing, united with God by grace. Thus in his Nauen sermons he attempted a levelling of divide between believer and unbeliever. We see such a trajectory confirmed in his American systematics, when he distinguishes between the latent and manifest spiritual community (church), refusing to countenance a limitation of God's saving work to the *ecclesia visibilis*.

ii. Faith and reason

The justification of the doubter implies a certain understanding of the relationship between faith and reason. Encouraged by Lütgert and Medicus, student Tillich criticises Kähler's circularity and rejection of metaphysics. Furthermore, he embraces the notion of God as the absolute which Kähler had called an idol. Tillich's 1908 *Monismusschrift* claimed idealist philosophy and Christianity could converge.

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[1] See John Casey, *After Lives: A Guide to Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 193–222.

Schelling enabled Tillich to talk about revelation in the history of religions. Tillich affirms an undoubtable condition of thought, whether as Schelling's concept of 'unpreconceivable being' or Fichte's I (*das Ich*). Within this paradigm, the divine paradox is the moment where knowledge confesses its inability; the abyss between God and humanity pertains to thought and not just ethical life. In the lecture on the historical Jesus, we see one element of thought's inability is its inability to use historiography as a basis for certainty. One can only have truth which is related to the immediacy of self-certainty, the unthinkable condition of the possibility of thought.

Tillich's Nauen sermons do not speak to the relation of faith and reason. In Moabit, however, the failure of reason demonstrates the need for the positive, for revelation. We also see an implicit Logos-Christology, expecting listeners to partake in a universal *sensus Christi*. Thus Christ is presented to the doubter.

In the Moabit memorandum on apologetics, thought plunges into its own abyss if it is not justified and given a foundation in Christianity. Precisely this insight into intellectual (and moral) failure is now to be skillfully taught to the erring unbeliever who should learn materialism is philosophically untenable and the paradox of thought is identical with the paradox of Christianity. The promise of reason for the apologist's task of correcting the unbeliever stands alongside the alleged failure of reason, without mediation.

The 1913 systematics repeats the 1908 affirmation of the absolute as the concept of God. The system explores the conflict between intuition and reflection as a tension requiring (eschatological) resolution by the absolute paradox, an enigmatic figure employed both as a synthesis and sublation of thought's tension and as a reference to the incarnation. Like the Moabit memorandum, the system

is based on the notion that the paradox of thought is really the same as Christ the paradox. Thus, Tillich on the one hand provides an intersection of faith and thought, while on the other hand demanding thought's completion through the paradox. As I outlined in chapter eight, Tillich's demanding system defies characterization, exhibiting moments of the redemption of doubt (reflection) alongside affirmation of the need for justification. Whatever Tillich says about the limits, tension and eschatological completion of reason, in creating such a truth-theoretical system Tillich is in effect confirming reason's ambition to build a system in which God is enthroned as the absolute.

Towards the end of the war, in Tillich's correspondence with Hirsch 1917–18, the system appears to Tillich as an intellectual work, a vain and painstaking *effort* to ground theology in a system of truth. In the war sermons, Tillich impresses on his soldiers that God is hidden for those who expect God to be a certain way. God should simply be sought in the Christ child. This is a great difference, continued in the 1919 draft *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel*. Indeed, when we look back on Tillich's system from his own perspective of 1917 or 1919, our conclusion has to be that he sees his great philosophical project, begun in 1908 and completed in 1913, as an embarrassment. Instead, in 1919 he wants his principle to be one which carries subjectivity in itself, yet can still become the basis for religious life. Only the unpreconceivable unconditioned fulfills this demand.[2]

I have been exploring the relationship between faith and reason in Tillich's early theology as it pertains to the justification of the doubter. In the systematics,

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[2] See *EGW* X/1, 190.

Tillich's notion of the absolute paradox is Tillich's reception of Kierkegaard, even if Tillich's reception of Kierkegaard is at times a mere appropriation. In surveying Tillich's development, I have a suspicion that Tillich's new emphasis on the embarrassment of apologetic systems pertaining to the absolute is fruit of further engagement with Kierkegaard.

I think Tillich's later rejection of his system bears considerable similarity to Kierkegaard's category of the comic in the *Postscript*. I cannot prove this, but only show a connection. Kierkegaard (Climacus) refers to the Christian minister who does not have the courage to preach that the paradox cannot be understood but "has speculatively understood everything".[3] There is a "false notion that the incomprehensibility of the paradox must be related to the difference between more or less understanding, to the comparison between good and bad minds."[4] But the true Christian "does not put it down to lack of understanding that someone is not a Christian."[5]

Regardless of whether Tillich actually drew on the *Postscript*, his Moabit apologetic memorandum, with its hope of correcting unbeliever's philosophical errors, must appear in such light as a comic project. And in the 1913 systematics, despite anti-Hegelian statements and talk of the justification of thought, the system remains a colossal attempt to explain and *understand* the absolute paradox. Yet when we consider not just Tillich's 1919 critique of Heim but also Tillich's theological principle, with his insistence on autonomy as the foundation

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[3] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. and trans. Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 472.
[4] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 474.
[5] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 476.

of religious and cultural life, he seems again to have left Kierkegaard's orbit. Tillich is clearly receiving much from Kierkegaard, but his reception is eclectic.

iii. Rejecting an intellectual work

Just as the justification of the sinner by faith alone entails rejecting works-righteousness, so the justification of the doubter entails a rejection of intellectual works. The trope of an 'intellectual work' analogous to ethical works is likely to have come from Tillich's reading of Wilhelm Herrmann. It is of course quite possible Tillich developed this kind of thought by reflecting independently on the Lutheran confessions, even taking note of Schelling's Lutheranism, or developing Kähler's insistence that dogmatism is pharisaism. We do indeed see a glimpse of its *substance* in the moment of his rewritten 1909 sermon: "you need hold nothing to be true". However, we do not find the trope in his work on Schelling, even when he cites a passage from Schelling which would have moved him in this direction. Instead, the theme is present in Tillich's Nauen sermon on the Prodigal Doubter from June 1911. There we find textual similarities with Herrmann's *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*, Tillich sharing a concern to question the hubris of some conservative Christians. Herrmann is again an influence for his Kassel lecture on certainty and the historical Jesus in September 1911. Tillich would later see the lecture as a key moment, having "shed the last remnants of my interest in the theology of mediation and its apologetics"[6] through his reading of Troeltsch. Troeltsch's critique is of course implicit in the boundary between history and dogmatics. However, Tillich misremembers his development with regard to apologetics, for shedding of apologetic interest came later.

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[6] Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 49–50.

In the *Kirchliche Apologetik* of the Moabit period, Tillich calls for apologetics as an answer to the church's decline. Tillich's 1919 attack of church and pietist apologetics finds a target in the memorandum, since his apologetic manual understands the apologist as a genius of culture offering philosophical correction to erring materialists. This grand effort is indeed an 'intellectual work'.

In the Moabit sermons, in the context of a sermon about the Christian's changing moods, including doubt, Tillich insists faith is not like a work with which one could attain God's favour. Similarly, in the Dogmatics of the 1913 system, when discussing new birth and opposing Roman Catholic dogmatics, Tillich says faith is a work of God and not an intellectual work.

Comparing the 1919 draft, where around a quarter of the text is concerned with the rejection of apologetics as an intellectual work, Tillich's apologetic interest and sparse references in the pre-war writings do suggest a new stance emerging at the end of the war. Analysing the 1913 systematics I was not able to come to a settled conclusion on whether the systematics count as an intellectual work. For Tillich explicitly rejects any 'intellectual work' and emphasises the justification of thought. Nevertheless, the very structure of the system as a redemptive paradox can create the impression of such an effort to redeem the distress of doubt (reflection). The language of redemption is indeed explicit.

The difficulty of interpretation is also illustrated by the fact that the notion of an intellectual conscience may well have been borrowed from Karl Heim's early writings, even though in 1919 Tillich deems Heim's apologetics to be a grave injury to the intellectual conscience Heim claims to cherish.

Thus, we should probably distinguish between at least two intentions of the phrase 'intellectual work'. One is directed against prideful orthodoxy for the

sake of the doubter. The other is directed against grand apologetic systems designed to deconstruct reason so that the doubter is tempted to abandon their intellectual conscience. The former emerges in his Nauen period. I think this latter intention is only present from 1917 onwards.

From the perspective of 1917–19, it becomes clear Tillich believes his earlier system was a mistake, an 'intellectual work' in the second sense and therefore an embarrassment. This would explain the puzzle that he never again mentioned the systematics in public. The early work he remained proud of was his Kassel lecture and theses from September 1911, writings which exhibit a thoroughgoing opposition to any intellectual work, specifically apologetics on the basis of historiographical research.

iv. Doubt as a kind of faith.

The doctrine of justification means the sinner is reckoned righteous before God. The justification of the doubter means the doubter is reckoned as having the truth. Doubt is form of faith because, like the sinner admitting her guilt before a holy God, the doubter, with a sharp intellectual conscience, admits she can never reach the absolute.

We saw in the church-political background and the doctrinal controversies in Wingolf that doubt had consequences for student Tillich. As a student leader he wanted to exclude those liberal Christians who could not assent to a dogmatic understanding of the Wingolf principles. Yet in private, philosophical study was causing him to doubt and he considered his doubts a barrier to being a theologian. Of course, from within the positive theological perspective, this was the case. For Tillich's father and his milieu, to seriously doubt doctrine was in the end to break faith with the creeds and thus exclude oneself from service as a minister.

In his preaching in Lichtenrade (1909), Tillich's moralistic and self-examining pietistic piety, combined with doubt fostered by his theological and philosophical studies, drove him to despair. We saw how Tillich experienced what I call a breakthrough of grace for the sinner *who is also doubter* in his preparation of a sermon for Sunday 31st May 1909. Christ enters into despairing darkness and says the doubter need hold nothing to be true.

In Tillich's initial work on Schelling, it is doubt caused by the likes of Ernst Troeltsch which Tillich looks to overcome. Doubt is in general something to be overcome; revelation is a redemption from doubt, but not its justification. Something closer to the justification of doubt appears in the Kassel theses of 1911: Tillich's statement that *autonomy* is justification in the area of thought and historical uncertainty is a necessity for autonomous faith. Such uncertainty belongs to autonomous faith because otherwise faith involves submission to a heteronomous authority.

In his Nauen sermons, Tillich employs the story of the Prodigal doubter and interprets his culture's doubt as God's tool for bringing about maturity and guarding against idolatry. Doubt is thus healthy for Christian faith. The disillusioned, protesting sceptic in fact seeks the truth and has faith more mature than some childish Christians. As a seeker of the truth, the sceptic shows she is 'of the truth'. Pontius Pilate's cynicism about truth is despair of truth; but this despair implies the question of truth still lives in him. Truthful willingness to face up to one's darkness and inability shows one is of the truth.

In Moabit memorandum, the sceptic's doubt belongs fundamentally to the category of error which needs teaching from the church apologist, even if the gift of faith is God's remit. In the Moabit sermons, Tillich tends to reduce the sceptics

question of doubt to the Christian question of assurance. But when he does address doubt proper, doubt is not reinterpreted as faith, and the answer to doubt is always the preaching of Christ, for Christ the image of God is hidden in every human soul.

The 1913 systematics begins with an incorporation of doubt into a truth-theoretical account of human knowledge. All statements, whether true or false, participate in a more fundamental notion of truth. This is open to, but not the same as Tillich's 1919 interpretation of doubt as faith. For in 1919 it is a normative statement with pastoral implications: the only true relation to truth involves restless doubt.

The conflict between intuition and reflection in Tillich's system involves the distress (*Not*) of the standpoint of reflection, i.e., ordinary understanding involving the Kantian forms of intuition. Testing, doubting thought cannot reach God and even loses itself. Since justification is also applied to thought, one might think this is an expression of the justification of the doubter. But as we saw above, the distress of reflection is not a place for the doubter to rest but described as reflection in need of redemption by the absolute paradox.

In contrast, in 1919 reflection or doubt is included *within* the paradox. Doubt does not need any redemption. Doubt is already *qua* doubt justified. Faith in the absolute paradox does not mean belief in the redemption of reflection but "to affirm, in faith, that doubt does not dissolve standing in the truth."[7]

At war, perhaps most strikingly in his Christmas sermons, Tillich thematises the reality of doubt and loss of faith among the soldiers. Tillich had

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[7] *EGW* X/1, 218.

always had many explanations of the war to hand, but as time went on the doubting soldiers were impatient with the pastor's words. His theodicy towards the end of the war tended toward an increasingly Christological focus, encouraging the soldiers to seek God not as the Almighty but in the face of the Christ child, even as the God who suffers with all creation.

The correspondence with Hirsch helps us understand the connection between understanding doubt as a kind of faith and the notion of 'faith without God' (1917). Tillich writes to Hirsch that atheists can be justified by an order or reality or depth which stands above the God they do not believe in. In a late war sermon this is expressed as a question:

> Is there not in the depths of your soul the sound and sense of another order, whether you call it future or universe or eternity? Is that not your name for God, does not power flow from them, which lifts you up above your happiness or your life?[76]

The doubter has a relation to God which does not involve God's name, which, in the language of the correspondence, does not share the same objectification as the theist. Not just doubt, even the atheism of the atheist is a kind of faith. This does not preclude objectifications, for objectifications are necessary, being built on the universal ground of consciousness. They just do not have to have the name 'God'.

v. Tillich's theological journey

The path from Tillich's exclusion of the liberal doubter, as a student, to an affirmation of atheism as a form of faith, at the end of the war, is a very significant change. It would of course be a mistake to assume linear development. This made me wonder if we could imagine Tillich's route of change as a mountain walk, where one goes down as well as up. My story of a mountain walk is of course

interpretive fiction, but I believe it helps capture something true about Tillich's discovery and development of themes. If Tillich's 1919 position is the summit, I discern a couple of intermediate peaks. The first peak is the rewritten sermon for 31st May 1909. I am content to call this crisis an experience of the 'breakthrough' of grace to the sinner who is also doubter. It is a renewed understanding of the traditional Protestant doctrine of justification, of the grace of God who justifies the despairing sinner. But in this moment of rescue, Christ's presence with the despairing sinner covers not only sin but the sinner's *modern* inability – the inability to believe the truth: The crucified one says: You need hold nothing to be true.

The second peak appears in the Nauen period, in the Kassel lecture and the sermons, whether on the Prodigal Doubter, or his interpretation of his culture as an age of doubt on the way to maturity. The sermons and Kassel lecture of 1911 were both inspired by Tillich's reading of Herrmann. The last peak is the summit, albeit a broad summit including Tillich's correspondence with Hirsch 1917–18. The draft of 1919 is for our purposes the very top of the summit, but it is perhaps only the write-up and re-framing of Tillich's correspondence with Hirsch. Tillich's justification of the doubter is fruit of Tillich's reflection while at war.

Having spoken of peaks, there were surely trails between peaks. In the case of the period of Tillich's work on Schelling, their may have been no descent, and much ascent was made in the sense that Tillich's developed conceptual schemes for thinking about the unconditioned prerequisite of thought. In Moabit, Tillich appears to have gone seriously downhill, with his apologetic project attempting to convince the doubter and restore the church to a leading role in cultural life. The systematics of 1913 appear to continue in this vain. This means the war was indeed a steep learning curve. At war, Tillich saw his apologetics, his clever

reductio of monist materialism, and his theoretical grounding of a theological system in the concept of the absolute, as straw in the fire. First evidence of his new understanding of doubt is his Reformation Day sermon in late October 1917. His church had instructed him to preach on four themes, the fourth is the doctrine of justification. Tillich's preparation of this theme in the context of war leads him to continue after the exposition of the justification of the sinner, even if the question of the sinner is by no means *passé*. Something remains unsaid, and so he speaks about justification and the predicament of the doubter. The ensuing correspondence with Hirsch helps his develop his thoughts further. But the genesis of Tillich's justification of the doubter is in an important sense the fruit of the pastoral task of preaching to soldiers at the Western front.

2. The significance of the justification of the doubter

In this final section I want to open what has been a very involved historical account and consider the possible theological significance of Tillich's justification of the doubter. I make brief explorative claims, setting Tillich in relation to various theologians and movements, and arguing for the continuing usefulness of his intervention today.

i. Against apologetics

It is striking that like Tillich's Prussian church under pressure one hundred years ago, contemporary evangelicalism is characterised by an emphasis on apologetics, with the hope a reasonable faith will help disenchanted doubters.[8]

[8] I am referring to the trend of confessional universities offering higher degrees in apologetics.

Today, the call on doubters to investigate historical evidence stands in tension with the insistence of Lessing, Kierkegaard and Troeltsch that probabilities cannot ground faith, regardless of whether Albert Schweizer's scepticism has given way to more optimistic study of the historical Jesus.

Similarly, the apologetic employment of analytic philosophy of religion, whether giving a probabilistic account or arguing from the notion of a perfect being, suffers from a similar predicament. Thoughtful proponents of such methods will grant their arguments do not create faith. But Kierkegaard would cast as comic any apologist attempting to convince the doubter in such a fashion.

Tillich's critique of Heim's apologetic project as an 'intellectual work' remains relevant as a critique of apologetic attempts to deconstruct secular thought in order to provide a platform to insert Christianity. Tillich might here be critical of the school of Radical Orthodoxy, at least as represented by John Milbank. Tillich encourages theology not to see autonomy as an enemy, but to change its stance. He would certainly oppose church-led culture wars and insist on the levelling of believer and unbeliever and admission of a shared predicament.[9]

Nevertheless, Tillich's project remains an apologetics of sorts. His method of correlation aims to connect people's questions with the answers of the Christian tradition. But there is a difference in Tillich's method to all the variants mentioned above. For Tillich believes theology is a matter of 'ultimate concern', that one could only be persuaded to believe if one were gripped by a Christian answer. This does not mean pinning all one's hopes on an episodic religious

[9] One could offer a similar critique of any attempt to create a specifically Christian form of rationality, such as Bruce D. Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

experience. It is about an 'experience with experience' (Jüngel), referring to the very structure of experience.

An example of this apologetic work is Tillich's notion of 'metaphysical shock' in his American systematics. Tillich, perhaps picking up on the criticism of logical positivists like A.J. Ayer, says the ontological question, "Why is there something; why not nothing?" is meaningless in its logical form, for it leads to an infinite regression of answers.[10] Rather, the question of being arises in the experience of finitude and contingency. I could also *not* have been, there is no necessity attached to my temporal existence.[11] This is no argument for God, but in the perennial experience of shock at one's own contingent existence, and anxiety because of the threat of nonbeing, the *question* of God is implied. In my words: Tillich does not try to convince with answers, but point to questions which awaken curiosity. Perhaps given the "post-revolutionary climate" of our secular age,[12] where people are so weary of peddlers of religious truth, this is highly appropriate. But there are also more theological reasons for such reserve.

ii. Security, faith, and Christology

Karl Barth's criticism of Tillich's God as a contentless "frosty monster"[13] finds its contemporary echo in the work of Lutheran theologian Oswald Bayer. Bayer argues Tillich leaves us in a state lacking salvation (*Heillosigkeit*), since God the impersonal, abstract, unconditional gives no concrete assurance of who God is for

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[10] See *ST* 1, 163; A.J. Ayer, 'The Claims of Philosophy [1947]' in E.D. Klemke and Steven M. Cahn (eds), *The Meaning of Life. A Reader.* 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 199–202.
[11] See *ST* 1, 192–198.
[12] Charles Taylor, 'A Catholic Modernity?', in J.L. Heft (ed), *Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13–37; here: 24.
[13] *GW* VII, 231.

us.[14] Of course, Tillich always warned against a powerless, non-symbolic faith (in the language of 1917–19: objectifications or names are necessary). But the point to be made against Bayer and other confessionalists on Tillich's behalf is that such demands beg the question.[15] Peter L. Berger writes:

> *Fundamentalism is an attempt to restore the taken-for-grantedness of a tradition, typically understood as a return to a (real or imagined) pristine past of the tradition.* […] however much the fundamentalist may repress the memory that his or her position was chosen, that memory remains, along with the knowledge that any choice is, in principle, reversible."[16]

Bayer is a confessionalist and not a fundamentalist. However, it must be held against him that the attempt to go back to Luther's situation where one can apply Scripture or the Sacraments to settle questions of doubt is only possible by choosing a tradition or axiom for oneself. Only if I already believe in the efficacy of the Sacrament can it allay fears. Wolfhart Pannenberg also recognizes the inappropriateness of confessional pressure in modernity:

> The insistence on an authority which no longer convinces as an authority in general receives the character of an external compulsion, and the acceptance of such a demand of authority by the individual becomes an arbitrary decision […]. For then, however much one emphasizes a given authority, the believer themselves becomes the final ground of their faith, as Hume shrewdly ascertained. For when a claimed authority is not able to convince our understanding about itself then its acceptance can only take place by way of a *sacrificium intellectus* and therefore as a human work.[17]

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[14] Oswald Bayer, 'Wort und Sein', in: Gert Hummel et al. (eds) Being versus word in Paul Tillich's theology / Sein versus Wort in Paul Tillichs Theologie. Beiträge des VII. Internationalen Paul-Tillich-Symposions in Frankfurt/M. 1998 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 13–23; here: 21.

[15] See Erdmann Sturm, 'Tillichs Offenbarungsverständnis als Stein des Anstoßes und Prüfstein seiner Theologie: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Oswald Bayers Tillich-Kritik', in: Gert Hummel et al. (eds) *Being versus word in Paul Tillich's theology / Sein versus Wort in Paul Tillichs Theologie. Beiträge des VII. Internationalen Paul-Tillich-Symposions in Frankfurt/M. 1998* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 24–48.

[16] Peter L. Berger and Anton C. Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt. How to have convictions without becoming a fanatic* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 73. Emphasis original.

[17] Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Glaube und Vernunft', in: *Grundfragen Systematische Theologie. Gesammelte Aufsätze*. 2. Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 237–251; here: 241. Rudolf Bultmann, who was present at Tillich's 1924 paper in Gießen, later believed that the application of justification to knowledge entailed demythologization. See Rudolf Bultmann, 'Zum Problem der Entmythologisierung', in Hans-Werner Bartsch (ed), *Kerygma und Mythos, Band 2: Diskussion und*

Thus, invoking the authority of Scripture to quell a modern doubter's doubt would be like speaking of the pope's authority to quieten Luther's concerns. Eilert Herms says that in old Protestant orthodoxy, the formal authority of Scripture built up "conditions of the constitution of Christian certainty *next to* or *above* the general conditions of the constitution of certainty."[18] But this all crumbled in the Enlightenment, so we now have to distinguish between different kinds of certainty.

Like Tillich's prioritizing of self-certainty as unconditioned prerequisite of thought, Herms defines primary certainty as our "unmediated self-disclosedness [*Selbsterschlossenheit*] […] which causes every act of mistrust to fail because it appropriates the act of mistrust as its confirmation."[19] Secondary certainty is however "always doubtable… remaining on the ground of its condition of possibility".[20]

Tillich emphasises that Christ enters history and therefore stands under doubt, along with all finite things. Thus, *Christian* assurance is secondary certainty. It cannot function like a bedrock, a place to stand, or a weapon to wield in the dynamics of confessional exclusion. Expressing this in Lutheran language, Christian confession of faith which emerges out of the justification of the doubter cannot offer security (*securitas*) but has the character of trust (*fiducia*).

Wilfried Härle helps us further when he says, "faith as trust does imply (consciously or unconsciously) an element of knowledge [*notitia*] and an element

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Stimmen zum Problem der Entmythologisierung (Hamburg-Volksdorf: Reich, 1952), 179–208; here: 207.

[18] Eilert Herms, 'Gewißheit II. Fundamentaltheologisch', in RGG4 III (Tübingen, 2000), 909–913; here: 913.

[19] Herms, 'Gewißheit II', 910.

[20] Herms, 'Gewißheit II', 910.

of recognition [*assensus*]."[21] Härle is explaining traditional nomenclature here. But his additional word 'unconsciously' helps us relate what Tillich attempts to traditional formulations. In Tillich's Reformation Day sermon from the end of the war, Tillich says trust (i.e., *fiducia*) in God's gracious judgement can be present even

> when the storms of doubt rage through the heart and God himself becomes a puzzle and a question, it can be there in the deepest inner part of the doubter and can be missing in the continually orthodox believer.[22]

In his correspondence with Hirsch, Tillich claims that even in the godless doubter, "the phenomena of consciousness of justification are present without objectification [...] analogue to the Lutheran experience of justification."[23]

Tillich insists on the doubter having a real relation to God, the unconditional, whatever names she may employ. We saw that Tillich preached Christ for the doubter in his sermons with the assumption of a universal *sensus Christi*, an implication of his Logos-Christology. Thus, if we know the early sermons and his early and late theology, we know that the *nameless* voice of the American sermon *You Are Accepted* is the voice of the Logos. One can know (*notitia*) Christ without having heard his name, and one can recognize (*assensus*) his trustworthiness in the depths of one's soul without even having known that Jesus of Nazareth existed. This is strongly reminiscent of Karl Rahner's notion of anonymous Christianity, where the doubter can meet Christ in the horizon of her experience.[24]

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[21] Wilfried Härle, *Dogmatik*. Dritte, überarbeitete Auflage (Berlin/New York, 2007), 60.
[22] No. 152, 28th October 1917, *EGW* VII, 616.
[23] Tillich to Hirsch, December 1917; *EGW* VI, 103–104.
[24] See Karl Rahner, 'Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions', in: *Theological Investigations, Volume V: Later Writings* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), 115–134; Karl Rahner,

iii. The politics of doubt

This analysis has been focused on religious problems. This is consistent with Tillich's own concerns when he formulated the justification of the doubter. But theology always has practical implications.

Some contemporary Western Christianity participates in the ethnonationalist "repudiation of shame"[25] after colonialism. I am concerned that evangelical (or Anglo-Catholic) apologetics driven by shame after the end of Christendom may unintentionally foster over-confident, muscular Christianity through its habit of intellectual or cultural mastery.

I am not interested in a blanket discrediting of apologetic efforts, for they themselves are too diverse. But questioning security, allowing faith to be vulnerable and experience trial, is religiously appropriate.[26] And it is also political. Living at a time where those who are bombastically convinced of themselves employ religious identities as tribal markings, where faith becomes possession and *securitas* and no longer contested *fiducia*, we might do well to pray that doubt would increase.

'Anonymous Christians', in *Theological Investigations, Volume VI: Concerning Vatican Council II.* Second Edition (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), 390–398.

[25] See Donovan O. Schaefer, 'Whiteness and civilization: shame, race, and the rhetoric of Donald Trump', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, (*forthcoming*), DOI: 10.1080/14791420.2019.1667503.

[26] See Jörg Dierken, 'Zweifel und Gewißheit. Zur religiösen Bedeutung skeptischer Reflexion bei Paul Tillich', in: Jörg Dierken, *Selbstbewußtsein individueller Freiheit. Religionstheoretische Erkundungen in protestantischer Perspektive* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 299–323; here: 301.

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1. Abbreviations

AC	*Apologia Confessio Augustana*
BNAPTS	Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society.
CA	*Confessio Augustana*
DBWE	*Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works English* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994–2014).
EGW	*Ergänzungs- und Nachlaßbände zu den gesammelten Werken von Paul Tillich*, 20 Volumes (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1971–1983; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1994–2017).
GW	Paul Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Renate Albrecht, 14 Volumes (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959–1983).
IYTR	International Yearbook for Tillich Research/Internationales Jahrbuch für Tillich Forschung
MW	Paul Tillich, *Main works/Hauptwerke*, ed. Carl Heinz Ratschow, 6 Volumes (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter – Evangelisches Verlagswerk 1987–1992).
PTAH	Paul Tillich Archive, Harvard University Archives, bMS 649.
PTAM	Paul Tillich Archiv, Universitätsbibliothek Marburg.
ST	Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 Volumes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–1961).
SW	F. W. J. von Schelling: *Sämmtliche Werke*. Electronic Edition, ed. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart 1856–1861).
TBT	Theologische Bibliothek Töpelmann
UWA	Uniwersytet Wrocławski Archiwum

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