

Albert Schweitzer and Adolf von Harnack – an unlikely alliance

von James Carleton Paget

I. Introduction

Writing to Albert Schweitzer on the 10th of April 1930, after receiving from him a copy of his recently published *Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, Adolf von Harnack noted that “the book has succeeded for you wonderfully – it is the necessary corrective to Paul the teacher of justification and will certainly succeed in bringing the whole of Paul to our knowledge, the Paul who only secondarily thought about justification, but primarily was a mystic.” Harnack’s praise for Schweitzer’s last work of New Testament scholarship seems surprising – Schweitzer’s interpretation of Paul as an eschatological mystic, might be thought to contrast with Harnack’s thinking about the Apostle, a contrast reflected also in the two men’s understanding of the ministry of Jesus. And yet Harnack appears to have been convinced by Schweitzer’s presentation of Paul, a point to which Schweitzer referred on a number of occasions after Harnack’s death.¹

This exchange marks the end (Harnack died on the 10th of June, 1930) of a relationship, which began in 1899, but became much stronger in the 1920s. In the wake of the publication of this correspondence,² this article seeks, for the first time, to discuss the character and nature of this relationship.³ It will show that, in spite of real differences of opinion, not least on how to understand the historical Jesus and Paul,

¹ See Schweitzer’s letter to M. Carrez, dated 11th July 1952, in: Albert Schweitzer, *Reich Gottes und Christentum*, ed. by Ulrich Luz/Ulrich Neuenchwander/Johann Zürcher, Munich 1989, 469.

² Albert Schweitzer, *Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel (1900–1965)*, ed. by Wolfgang Zager together with Erich Grässer, Munich 2006, 273–285.

³ Some biographers of Schweitzer refer to his first meeting with Harnack in 1899, recorded in Schweitzer’s autobiography. See James Brabazon, *Albert Schweitzer. A Biography*, Syracuse 2000, 85f.; Nils Ole Oermann, *Albert Schweitzer. Eine Biographie*, Munich 2009, 41f., makes more of the relationship, using the correspondence referred to in no. 2 above. Those who have written about Harnack never mention the relationship, referring to Schweitzer, fleetingly, as part of Harnack’s theological hinterland. See Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack*, Berlin 1951, 279; and Bernd Moeller, *Adolf von Harnack – der Außenseiter als Zentralfigur*, in: Kurt Nowak/Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds.), *Adolf von Harnack. Theologe, Historiker, Wissenschaftspolitiker*, Berlin 2001, 20, who sees Schweitzer as contributing to the dismantlement of Harnack’s picture of Jesus.

as well as contrasting intellectual mindsets, in important ways the two were closer than might at first seem to be the case; and that one can, for instance, understand Harnack's enthusiasm for Schweitzer's views about Paul as arising from more than simply deferential respect for the latter's growing reputation as a great humanitarian. In explaining this unlikely alliance, attention will also be drawn to the fact that on the basis of broadly similar presuppositions, theologically liberal in character, both were critical of aspects of the changing cultural and theological climate of the Weimar Republic, and saw in each other, especially Harnack in Schweitzer, potential allies in an increasingly alien intellectual climate.

II. Early Encounter

Harnack and Schweitzer first met in Berlin in 1899.⁴ By this time Harnack was the doyen of theologians and at the centre of the cultural world of Wilhelmine Germany. Ordinarius at the University of Berlin since 1888, member of the *Preussische Akademie* since 1890 (only the fourth theologian to receive such an honour in its nearly 300 year history), friend of the Kaiser, soon to be the General Director of the *Königliche Bibliothek*, and the President of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft*, the major research establishment in Germany, and already the subject of two highly publicized theological controversies,⁵ he was as notable a member of the German 'Bildungskultur' as the young Schweitzer could meet.⁶ The latter, then studying theology and philosophy at the University of Strassburg, had come to Berlin principally to deepen his knowledge of philosophy, as he sought to write a dissertation on Kant's philosophy of religion.⁷ He attended lectures by such figures as Friedrich Paulsen, Julius Kaftan, Georg Simmel, and Harnack himself. Through Paul Rohrbach,⁸ he was introduced to Harnack with whose much-discussed work, the *Dogmengeschichte*, he was acquainted and about which he was enthusiastic.⁹ During his time with Harnack,¹⁰ Schweitzer states that he felt so intimidated, that when Harnack addressed questions to him he failed to answer them. It is clear, however, from later

⁴ See Albert Schweitzer, *Aus meinem Leben und Denken*, in: *Gesammelte Werke in fünf Bänden*, ed. by Rudolf Grabs, Vol. 1, Berlin et al. 1974, 41 f.

⁵ For Harnack's biography, see Zahn-Harnack, *Harnack* (cf. fn. 3); and Kurt Nowak, *Adolf von Harnack als Zeitgenosse*, Berlin 1996, Vol. 1, 1–95. For the theological controversies, relating to his appointment as Ordinarius at Berlin in 1888, and to his opinions on the Apostolic Creed in 1892/1893, see Nowak, *Zeitgenosse*, 17–22; and 30–34.

⁶ Hindenburg's judgment of 1926 that Harnack was the "Träger deutscher Bildung", quoted in Zahn-Harnack, *Harnack* (cf. fn. 3), 409, though from a later time, was applicable to Harnack at this earlier point.

⁷ See Schweitzer, *Leben* (cf. fn. 4), 41 f.

⁸ See Schweitzer's letter to Harnack of 10th October, 1913 (*Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 2], 275). Rohrbach was then general secretary of the *Evangelischer Sozialer Kongress*, and subsequently the imperial commissioner for education in German South West Africa.

⁹ See Schweitzer, *Leben* (cf. fn. 4), 41.

¹⁰ In a letter to Carrez, Schweitzer spoke of seeing Harnack often during this period. See Schweitzer, *Reich Gottes* (cf. fn. 1), 462.

reminiscences, that Schweitzer found this meeting important.¹¹ At one level an introduction to Harnack would have seemed natural. Schweitzer, from a family of liberal Lutheran pastors, and the student of a number, including Heinrich Holtzmann and Karl Budde, and probably set upon a clerical career himself (he was to be ordained in 1900), found himself broadly sympathetic with what Harnack represented – a strong commitment to the scientific study of Christian history and the development of Christian doctrine whatever the cost; a belief in the convergence of theological and human concerns, and so of the role of theology in the formation of culture; and a related commitment to the public role of the theologian. Although he attributes significance to the meetings, Schweitzer does not say what he and Harnack discussed. Harnack was interested in Kant and German idealistic philosophy, though he was not wholly sympathetic towards it,¹² but with Schweitzer reflecting upon such matters, and soon to complete a book on Kant,¹³ it is likely that that was a topic of conversation. Schweitzer was also beginning to develop distinctive positions on New Testament subjects, and since 1897 he had been investigating the problem of the last supper, the substance of which was to be submitted as his Licentiate thesis of 1900, to be published in 1901. In it Schweitzer mentions a number of Harnack's contributions to the subject. We also know that Schweitzer had by now reached his own distinctive views about the ministry of Jesus. He could have discussed these with Harnack, though given their distance from what Harnack thought on this matter, Schweitzer might have felt reluctant to do so.

Harnack and Schweitzer were not to meet again until the autumn of 1929. In the meantime, however, Schweitzer was to engage with aspects of Harnack's work; and the two were to correspond. While it is clear that Schweitzer's work both on the New Testament, the development of Christian doctrine, and on more philosophical issues, not least the relationship between philosophy and history, developed in ways distinct from Harnack, they were to converge at certain points.

III. Scholarly Engagement (on the part of Schweitzer)

As already noted, Schweitzer's first explicit reference to Harnack occurs in his work on the last supper.¹⁴ In Schweitzer's attempt to divide up previous solutions to the problem into four different typologies, Harnack occurs as an example of the fourth typology. Schweitzer's account of Harnack's work refers to the latter's essay, *Brot und*

¹¹ Schweitzer to Axel von Harnack, Harnack's son, dated 20.vi.1965: "Obwohl ich nicht ein Schüler war, verhielt er sich zu mir, wenn ich in Berlin war, als ob ich es wäre. Ich durfte mit ihm zusammensein und mich mit ihm unterhalten." (Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 285).

¹² Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Der 'Kant der Kirchengeschichte' und 'der Philosoph des Protestantismus'*. Adolf von Harnacks Kant-Rezeption und seine Beziehungen zu den philosophischen Neukantianern, in: Kurt Nowak et al. (ed.), *Adolf von Harnack. Christentum, Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft*, Göttingen 2003, 113–142.

¹³ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Religionsphilosophie Kants von der Kritik der reinen Vernunft bis zur Religion der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Tübingen 1899.

¹⁴ Albert Schweitzer, *Das Abendmahl im Zusammenhang mit dem Leben Jesu und der Geschichte des Urchristentums. Erstes Heft: Das Abendmahlsproblem auf Grund der wissenschaftlichen Forschungen des 19. Jahrhunderts und der historischen Berichte*, Tübingen 1901, 22f.

Wasser: die eucharistischen Elemente bei Justin, published in 1891, a review in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* of 1892, and a page of the *Dogmengeschichte*. Harnack's view is presented, and subjected to criticism, the most severe being that his essentially symbolic reading of the event does not explain how it was that an apparently unique meal came to be repeated.

Schweitzer comments at greater length on Harnack's work, especially his *Dogmengeschichte*, in a series of lectures from 1902 on the subject of the origins of baptism and the eucharist.¹⁵ One of the principal claims of these lectures is that the history of dogma and its development is best traced through an analysis of the development of these Christian sacraments.¹⁶ Schweitzer complains that the four main accounts of the history of dogma, those by F. C. Baur, Albrecht Ritschl, Ernest Renan and Harnack, fail to explain the essence and the development of Christianity in connection with the origin and development of baptism and eucharist, and this is generally true for discussion of the subject, where the development of doctrine is discussed without reference to the sacraments, or the latter are discussed in monographs dedicated to their study and nothing else.¹⁷ In his discussion of Harnack's account of the eucharist, Schweitzer attacks Harnack's failure to see the sacrament as originally eschatological and sacramental, and his 'Abfallstheorie', which assumes a falling away from Jesus' originally symbolic interpretation of the meal to a more sacramental view.¹⁸ In unpublished work on the eucharist, written a year later, Schweitzer repeats his criticism of Harnack that his *Dogmengeschichte* fails to put at its centre the transformation of ideas of the sacraments.¹⁹ This constitutes part of a more general attack upon Harnack's theory of the development of Christian dogma, which, in Schweitzer's opinion, only really accounts for the Hellenization of Christology, but not so clearly for the occurrence of the same process to the ideas of redemption and of the sacraments. Here Schweitzer criticizes especially Harnack's view that the Hellenization of Christianity arose not out of a type of reengagement with eschatology as the end did not arrive, but rather out of the simultaneously occurring spiritualization of Christian ideas. One does not, Harnack asserts, *think* in eschatological categories, but one lives and fantasizes in them, and such fantasizing had essentially diminished by the middle of the second century.²⁰ But Schweitzer argues the opposite, that one can think in such categories, and that Christology, soteriology and the teaching on sacraments are connected with a belief in eschatology (this is his claim about Paul). One then moves beyond this view to show how Hellenization is possible. As Schweitzer puts it, pitting his views against Harnack's: "Die christliche Dogmatik ist aus der eschatologischen in die spirituelle übergegangen, wobei das Wie näher zu erklären ist: so lautet das Problem in seiner natürlichen Fassung. Mit dem Satze: 'Die christliche Dogmatik ist nicht der eschatologischen,

¹⁵ Albert Schweitzer, *Arbeit über Taufe und Abendmahl*, in: ders., *Straßburger Vorlesungen*, ed. by Erich Grässer/Johann Zürcher, Munich 1998, 42–242.

¹⁶ "Das Aufkommen und die Entwicklung dieser Handlungen verstehen, heißt den innersten Gang der Dogmengeschichte begreifen." (Vorlesungen [cf. fn. 15], 167).

¹⁷ Schweitzer, *Vorlesungen* (cf. fn. 15), 154.

¹⁸ Schweitzer, *Vorlesungen* (cf. fn. 15), 160f.

¹⁹ Schweitzer, *Vorlesungen* (cf. fn. 15), 485.

²⁰ Schweitzer, *Vorlesungen* (cf. fn. 15), 486.

sondern der spirituellen Betrachtungsweise entstammt', ist es schon für eine bestimmte Lösung zurechtgemacht und vereinfacht."²¹

The above gives evidence of a disagreement over a point of exegesis (the original meaning of the eucharist), and over one of more far-reaching significance, namely the point from which one should set out when writing a history of dogma. While Schweitzer and Harnack agreed that eschatology constituted an important element of early Christian theology, Schweitzer was clear that if one wished to understand the development of Christian doctrine from that point to its Hellenization, indeed to understand how Hellenization was possible, one had to move out from this concept. For Harnack eschatology, though significant as a feature of early Christianity, does not explain how it became what it became – that is explained by taking account of the other aspect of developing Christian thinking, which one might describe as spiritualisation.²² It was also Schweitzer's conviction that this development was best traced through an account of the way in which understanding of the sacraments developed. The importance of this issue for Schweitzer is indicated by the amount of time he gave to exposition of the sacraments in lectures during his time as a Privatdozent at Strassburg, and his interest in returning to the subject as late as 1926.²³ Elements of all of these ideas were to find expression in Schweitzer's *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*.

Schweitzer next refers to Harnack in his contribution to a collection of essays published as *Das Wesen und Werden des Protestantismus. Fünf Vorträge* (Strassburg, 1903), entitled 'Der Protestantismus und die theologische Wissenschaft'.²⁴ He divides the history of Protestantism into three periods: the first period from the Reformation to the period of the Enlightenment, marked by an alliance between theology and confessionalism, the second from the Enlightenment to about 1850, characterized by a union between thought and theology, and the third, from 1850 onward, marked by a separation of thought and theology and the movement of the latter into a bond with history. Interestingly, Schweitzer, in seeking to characterize the two last periods, contrasts Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, with Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, first delivered as 16 lectures between 1899 and 1900. Schleiermacher, in Schweitzer's opinion, moves out from religious thought and feeling, from religion as a need of the human spirit, in general, and only then engages with the question of history, while Harnack is skeptical about speculative thought in general, and for him, Schweitzer asserts, all true knowledge comes from research into history.²⁵ But, for Schweitzer, history only constitutes the

²¹ Schweitzer, *Vorlesungen* (cf. fn. 15), 486.

²² "It is now evident that the theology, and, further, the Hellenising, of Christianity, could arise and has arisen in connection, not with the eschatological, but only with the other conception." (The History of Dogma [ET], Edinburgh ²1894, 131; See Adolf Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Tübingen ³1909, 149).

²³ See Albert Schweitzer, *Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze*, ed. by Claus Günzler/Ulrich Luz/Johann Zürcher, Munich 2003, 362.

²⁴ Schweitzer, *Vorträge* (cf. fn. 23), 239–254.

²⁵ "Alle wahre Erkenntnis kommt aus der Erforschung der Geschichte: Dieser Satz beherrscht die Periode theologischer Wissenschaft, in der wir stehen, und hat sich in Harnacks *Wesen des Christentums* ein Denkmal gesetzt." (Schweitzer, *Vorträge* [cf. fn. 23], 242).

form of religion, not its essence. "Views in history change," he goes on, "the essence of religion remains the same. Historical research cannot explain the essence of the religious tendency in the human spirit, but that is a matter for philosophy." As Schweitzer states, sounding Nietzschean, "Geschichte kann kein Leben wecken. Sie setzt es voraus und klärt es." (Vorträge, 242). Schweitzer understands Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums* as a monument of its age and its historicist presuppositions, and criticizes it as such,²⁶ not least for its lack of concern with the relationship between Christianity and philosophy.²⁷

In 1906 Schweitzer published his *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*.²⁸ In a chapter entitled, "The struggle against eschatology", Schweitzer makes two points against Harnack's presentation of Jesus' message found in *Das Wesen des Christentums*, and also *Dogmengeschichte*. First he castigates Harnack for ignoring the limitations of Jesus' Gospel, and for starting out "with a Gospel which carries him down to the year 1899,"²⁹ referring to "the anti-historical violence" of this procedure. Here Schweitzer simply alludes to the complexities of Harnack's views on this matter. The latter had accepted that Jesus shared with his contemporaries the view of a future kingdom,³⁰ but had argued that the distinctive aspect of Jesus' understanding of this term as the reign of God in the hearts of men³¹ should be accorded greatest importance³² because this is what is original about Jesus' message (Jesus' attempt to demythologize eschatology); and what is shared with his contemporaries, that is, the future, dramatic, view, should be discarded.³³ To think that Jesus, in adopting these views simultaneously is contradictory, is wrong, and it is up to later generations to discern what is of lasting significance (kernel), and what is not (husk).³⁴

Schweitzer indicates that Harnack's view on these matters is complex.³⁵ He notes that if historical science wants to continue the history of Christianity beyond the life

²⁶ Elsewhere in the lecture he describes it as an excellent work, whose popularity is proof that the world had not lost the religious instinct (Schweitzer, Vorträge [cf. fn. 23], 250).

²⁷ "Was ist Christentum? – lediglich im historischen Sinne wollen wir diese Frage hier zu beantworteten versuchen [...]" (Adolf Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, ed. by Claus-Dieter Osthöener, Tübingen 2007, 11). Note his attempt to argue against an apologetic or philosophical answer to the question, though he is clear that "absolute judgements as to the value to be assigned to past events cannot be attained from a purely historical survey", but "are the creation only of feeling and of will; they are a subjective act." For the systematic assumptions of this work see Claus-Dieter Osthöener, *Adolf von Harnack als Systematiker*, in: *ZThK* 99 (2002), 296–331. See also Michael Basse, *Die dogmengeschichtlichen Konzeptionen Adolf von Harnacks und Reinhold Seebergs*, Göttingen 2001.

²⁸ Albert Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, Tübingen 1906 (ET: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London 1910).

²⁹ Schweitzer, *Quest* (cf. fn. 28), 252. See Harnack's words at Wesen (cf. fn. 27), 19: "Ich zweifle nicht, dass schon der Stifter den *Menschen* ins Auge gefasst hat, in welcher äusseren Lage er sich auch immer befinden mochte – den *Menschen*, der im Grunde stets derselbe bleibt [...]"

³⁰ Harnack, *Wesen* (cf. fn. 27), 38f.

³¹ See Harnack, *History*. Vol. 1 (cf. fn. 22), 58f.

³² Harnack, *Wesen* (cf. fn. 27), 39f.

³³ Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 22), 71: "Er [Jesus] lebte innerhalb der Kreise der eschatologischen Vorstellungen, die das Judentum seit mehr als 200 Jahre ausgebildet hatte, aber er beherrschte sie in eine neue Richtung zwang."

³⁴ Harnack, *Wesen* (cf. fn. 27), 39.

³⁵ Schweitzer, *Quest* (cf. fn. 28), 251f.

of Jesus, it has to protest against the so-called one-sidedness of the eschatological view; and it does so by distinguishing in the thought of Jesus between permanent and transitory elements, that is, eschatological and not essentially eschatological moments, a necessity if it is to explain how it was that Christianity developed in an apparently Greek, non-eschatological direction. Schweitzer then turns to Harnack as an exemplar *par excellence* of this approach, here using a typically Schweitzerian metaphor: “Instead of that (writing a history which adopts a consistently eschatological view of Christian origins), they lay down from the very first, alongside the main line intended for ‘contemporary views’ traffic, a relief line for the accommodation of through trains of ‘no-temporal limited ideas’; and at the point where primitive Christian eschatology becomes of less importance they switch off the train to the relief line, after slipping the carriages which are not intended to go beyond that station.”

Schweitzer’s observations here are important as it is the major aim of his book to show that Jesus, the eschatological prophet, is a man reflective of his own time, and so alien to ours. Liberal theology’s failure, Schweitzer asserts, lies in the fact that it thought that historical research would produce a Jesus at home in its own time. But such a Jesus who preached an inner kingdom, and whose sentiments were universal and modern, did not exist, while the figure who did, the eschatological enthusiast, appears incompatible with the present time. So what Harnack regards as the husk, Schweitzer regards as the kernel.

IV. Jesus and History

In 1913 Schweitzer wrote a new edition of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*.³⁶ In a chapter devoted to work on Jesus written from 1907 to 1912, Schweitzer, who retained unchanged the reference to Harnack in the chapter connected with the struggle against eschatology, includes a reference to Harnack’s critical investigation of Q, published in 1907,³⁷ one of a number of works by Harnack on the New Testament.³⁸ The work is praised by Schweitzer, although he accuses Harnack of failing to do justice to Q’s eschatological character: “He thinks that their ‘(sayings and discourses in Q)’ nature is sufficient refutation of ‘the exaggeration which is made of the apocalyptic eschatological element in the message of Jesus and its consequent domination of the purely religious content.’ Thus even he has been slightly affected by modern prejudice.” Schweitzer states that, unlike Harnack, Jesus would not have

³⁶ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, Tübingen 1913 (ET: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London 2000 [= Quest 2]). For the background see James Carleton Paget, Albert Schweitzer’s second edition of *The quest of the historical Jesus*, in: *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 88 (2006), 3–39.

³⁷ Adolf Harnack, *Sprüche und Reden Jesu. Die zweite Quelle des Matthäus und Lukas* (Beiträge zur Einleitung des Neuen Testaments, Heft 2), Leipzig 1907 (ET: *The sayings of Jesus: The second source of St. Matthew and St. Luke*, Edinburgh 1908). Altogether Harnack produced seven volumes of ‘Beiträge’. For a discussion of these and a list of titles, see Christoph Marksches, Adolf von Harnack als Neutestamentler, in: Nowak/Oexle (eds.), *Harnack* (cf. fn. 3), 373f., esp. 374, n. 34.

³⁸ Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 461f.

made the kind of distinction he has between ethics and eschatology, nor would he have been inclined to subordinate one to the other.³⁹

Schweitzer's decision to write a second edition of *Reimarus* was not simply the result of a desire to update the first edition, however. A number of other reasons could be adduced.⁴⁰ One of the most important was the appearance following the publication of *Reimarus* of a number of books attempting to prove the non-existence of Jesus. Schweitzer devotes two chapters to this phenomenon. While keen to refute the claim, he also saw it as raising the question of the significance of the historical Jesus question for the exposition of the Christian faith (what he termed 'the religio-historical problem'). Schweitzer stated that most of those who had responded to the debate had overlooked its wider implications by attending exclusively to the narrow question of whether Jesus existed. In relation to this question, Schweitzer insisted that from a purely logical point of view, whether Jesus existed or not was strictly hypothetical, noting that a theology which did not take account of the philosophy of religion exposed itself to dangerous contingencies.⁴¹ It was Schweitzer's view that Christian scholars' obsession with history, rather than metaphysics, had led them to fashion a Jesus who responded to their needs rather than the one who actually lived and died in Palestine, Schweitzer's eschatological enthusiast. As he wrote: "The remarkable thing about the problem which confronts the philosophy of religion is that all compromises which lie between the two extremes are basically worthless [...]. Religion has to reckon either with an unhistorical Jesus or with a too historical Jesus. All intermediate solutions can only have an appearance of plausibility." For this reason Christians must live with the possibility of discarding the historical Jesus and must develop a metaphysics entirely independent of history and knowledge transmitted from the past.

Schweitzer was using a current debate about the existence of Jesus to reintroduce concerns which he had expressed elsewhere about the flight of Christianity, as he saw it, to history from philosophy. Harnack had himself responded differently to the existence of Jesus debate, concentrating in the main upon the issue as to why the claims of Drews and others had found so much traction in the Germany of his day, and presenting some arguments in favour of the existence of Jesus (precisely the response Schweitzer thought inadequate).⁴² While agreeing with Schweitzer in opposing Drews's case, he would have found the former's more discursive response

³⁹ In this book Harnack, as Schweitzer implies, had repeated what he had said earlier about the mix in Jesus' ministry of the eschatological and non-eschatological. The following is striking in the strength of its tone: "If, however, any one finds it impossible to accept the antinomy "the kingdom is future and yet present", argument with him is useless. The sovereignty of the eschatological point of view is not impaired by this antinomy – only this sovereignty must not be exclusively in that dramatic eschatology, to which Q also bears witness, with the result that the message of Jesus is stunted in the interest of a meager and inferior unity (a possible hint a Schweitzer's work?). Behind and above the dramatic eschatology, stands the 'eschatology' that God is guided by justice in his rewards and punishments, and that his will is expressed in the moral law, to which man must offer himself a living sacrifice." (Harnack, *Sayings* [cf. fn. 37], 131f.).

⁴⁰ See Carleton Paget, *Schweitzer* (cf. fn. 36).

⁴¹ See Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 402.

⁴² Schweitzer, *Hat Jesus gelebt?*, in: Nowak (cf. fn. 5), *Zeitgenosse*, 168–176.

problematic. It was crucial for Harnack that Jesus existed, and he was skeptical about the role of thought, or philosophy alone in forming the main substance of the Christian message. The whole purport of *Das Wesen des Christentums* was precisely that Jesus had through his life and teaching embodied more clearly than anyone else what it is to be a God-filled person, that is, the Gospel. It would, therefore, be wrong to assert, with Schweitzer, that the question of whether Jesus existed or not was in some senses beyond proof, and that the study of the historical Jesus, by necessity almost, pointed to the primacy of the religio-philosophical question.

Schweitzer's view of Jesus was, however, more complex than some of his utterances, referred to above, imply. In the book's conclusion, he repeated many of the judgments that he had made about the alien character of Jesus's outlook when compared with our own day. But in seeking to save Jesus for the present, he sought to argue for a permanent element. In his first edition this had been bound up with the idea of Jesus' spirit, which somehow was able to transcend the limitations of the age of which he was a part, and permeate our own with a sense of Jesus' moral imperatives. In the second edition Schweitzer introduced a new idea to circumvent the ditch of historical difference, namely the will.⁴³ In this construction the will is conceived as an entity which transcends the particularities of its own time: "The will is timeless [...] however extensive the differences between old and new world views [...] in fact these differences only go so far as there is a difference in the direction taken by the will determining the view."⁴⁴ It is the aim of the Christian interpreter to translate Jesus' will into his own, to allow it to penetrate his own. Such a translation can only take place "to the extent to which a period [...] can produce in its own worldview the equivalent of those desires and expectations which hold such a prominent position in his [...]."⁴⁵ Such a disposition is difficult to adopt in an age which lacks all sense of enthusiasm for the ultimate goals of mankind and of being, and so misunderstands Jesus. But Schweitzer is clear that "the idea of the moral consummation of all things and of what we must do in our own time has not come down to us from him through historical revelation. It is inherent in us and part of the moral will", thus retaining the idea of the priority of thought rather than history in the formation of a proper world view. But he qualifies such a view: "But because Jesus [...] grasped the entire truth and immediacy of it and imbued it with his will and personality, he can help us to master it and so become moral forces for our time."⁴⁶ A relationship is achieved with Jesus when "we become united with him in the knowledge of a shared aspiration", when we are "enlivened by his will and when we rediscover ourselves through him. Our religion, in so far as it proves to be specifically Christian, is therefore not so much a Jesus-cult as a Jesus-mysticism."⁴⁷

I have only found one place where Harnack refers to Schweitzer's work on Jesus, and that is in the 4th edition of the *Dogmengeschichte*, published in 1909, where in a

⁴³ On Schweitzer's hermeneutic see Richard H. Hiers, *Jesus and Ethics: four interpretations*, Philadelphia 1968, 47–61.

⁴⁴ Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 481.

⁴⁵ Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 483.

⁴⁶ Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 486.

⁴⁷ Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 486.

footnote,⁴⁸ in which he also refers to J. Weiss' *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*,⁴⁹ he describes Schweitzer's work as 'glänzend geschrieben', but states unambiguously that he disagrees with it. He was no doubt aware of the hostile response to Schweitzer's work of some liberal theologians with whom he was acquainted, including P. Wernle, whose excoriating review of *Reimarus* appeared in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* of which Harnack was one of the editors, and A. Jülicher's critique, which was equally hostile. He must also have read other reviews and shared with them a strong sense that Schweitzer's work was one-sided and misguided, as his brief reference to it in *Dogmengeschichte* implies. How could the author of *Dogmengeschichte* and *Das Wesen des Christentums* have thought otherwise, and how could the man who held Jesus' references to a coming kingdom to be no more than the husk of what was his real and lasting contribution have not reacted negatively to what he read in *Reimarus* and saw repeated in *Geschichte*? Moreover, Schweitzer's anti-historicist tone (we should study history, he was later to write, in order to be free of it),⁵⁰ must also have struck a harsh chord in Harnack's ear. Similarly rebarbative would have been Schweitzer's view that Jesus' importance for religion was only incidental, for history was in the end subservient to metaphysics.⁵¹ When one adds to this Schweitzer's strong sense that Jesus' ethic was only an 'Interimsethik', determinative of how one entered the kingdom but nothing else, the sense of disagreement becomes greater.

Against this background, it is surprising that Harnack wrote to Schweitzer in 1913, when he was first in Lambarene, expressing a broadly positive attitude to *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*. Harnack's original postcard does not survive (or at least is not reproduced in the most recent volume of the Schweitzer Nachlass), but Schweitzer gives us some indication of its contents in his reply to it, dated 10th October, 1913.

⁴⁸ Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 22), 68, n. 1. In this footnote, Harnack states that he has hardly changed the section of which it is a part, namely the one dealing with the message of Jesus' ministry.

⁴⁹ Harnack never responded to Johannes Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, Göttingen 1892. Ernst Bammel, *Der historische Jesus in der Theologie Adolf von Harnacks*, in: Tutzinger Texte 1 (1968), 78 and 92f., argues that Harnack was aware of the debate about eschatology taking place in the 1890s, a point indicated by the fact that at this time he was corresponding with Franz Overbeck, who, along with Weiss, was a fervent advocate of the eschatological view. Also relevant is a lecture from 1895, entitled, '*Das Christentum und die Geschichte*'. In discussing the importance of historical findings, Harnack states that it would matter if it was proven that Jesus was "ein apokalyptischer Schwärmer oder ein Träumer", who only reached an elevated state in subsequent writing about him. (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 895), indicating his distaste for the views of Weiss and Schweitzer.

⁵⁰ Such a view should not be understood to imply that Schweitzer was straightforwardly anti-historical. As he states in his *Selbstdarstellung* of 1926, historical truth was sacred to him, and he was opposed to any form of historical skepticism. Moreover, he is not indifferent to the kind of solution historical criticism arrives at but rises above a particular historical solution. He argues that through history one must strive to be free of history, stating that our relationship to the past must be to the spiritual essence of personality, not to its contemporary expression. (See Schweitzer, *Vorträge* [cf. fn. 23], 370).

⁵¹ There are many places where Harnack waxes lyrical on the glories of Jesus, aside from *Das Wesen*. See his essay of 1901 *Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten*, where he states that Christianity is the religion "weil Jesus Christus nicht ein Meister neben anderen ist, sondern der Meister." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 809).

After noting that the lines that Harnack had written about *Geschichte* were so friendly, he continues: “Es war mir eine Wohltat zu sehen, dass die Principien, denen ich gefolgt bin, die Zustimmung Eurer Excellenz gefunden haben.”⁵²

One might argue that Harnack’s commendation of the ‘Principien’ of Schweitzer’s work was the vaguest of praise given to a man whose celebrity had grown, and whom Harnack, with his strong support for missionary activity,⁵³ admired in spite of their differences. This is a possible explanation. The first edition of *Reimarus*, while negatively reviewed in Germany, had elicited some interest. Schweitzer’s work on Bach was widely read, especially the second edition in German, published in 1908;⁵⁴ and his decision to go to Africa had caused a stir amongst his friends, and possibly a wider body of individuals, at least one of whom was closely associated with the Harnacks (Elly Knapp, later to be Heuss-Knapp). Schweitzer had also received financial support for his work in Africa from academics in Germany. Harnack’s decision to write to him only in 1913 acknowledged that celebrity.

But such an argument assumes too much celebrity for Schweitzer at this time (on his return to Europe in 1917 he was the subject of little interest as he himself was to admit). More importantly, it overlooks elements of the *Geschichte* with which Harnack would have found some genuine commonality. Some of these were technical: the essential conservatism of Schweitzer’s assessment of the historical value of the contents of the Gospels, in particular Matthew and Mark, seen especially in his strong disagreement with Wrede’s thesis about the non-messianic view of Jesus’ ministry, would have pleased Harnack.⁵⁵ It is also the case that Harnack would have found the tone and skill with which Schweitzer went about decimating the case of those who denied the existence of Jesus heartening. Harnack may also have noted that in the second edition of his work, Schweitzer had softened some of the more extravagant language of the first part in an attempt, possibly, to give a less rebarbative account of Jesus’ character. But perhaps more than anything else, Harnack would have noted that Schweitzer’s hermeneutical ruminations, discussed above, were

⁵² See Schweitzer, Briefwechsel (cf. fn. 2), 274.

⁵³ See his sermon entitled, ‘Unsere Botschaft an die Heidenwelt’ of 1898 (see Zahn-Harnack, Harnack, [cf. fn. 3], 171); and his essay, Grundsätze der evangelisch-protestantischen Mission, in: Reden und Aufsätze von Adolf Harnack, vol. 2, Gießen 1902, esp. 122: “Immer bedarf es hier eines lebendigen Menschen, genauer eines Zeugen, der in seiner ganzen Persönlichkeit das zum Ausdruck bringt, was er verkündigt”, which could be taken to describe Schweitzer. See also his words in his speech proposing Schweitzer for election to membership of the *Preußische Akademie* in 1929, found in Schweitzer, Briefwechsel (cf. fn. 2), 293, where he talks about Schweitzer working “in aufopfernder Menschenliebe.”

⁵⁴ Albert Schweitzer, J. S. Bach, Vorrede von Charles Marie Widor, Leipzig 1908.

⁵⁵ For Harnack’s conservative approach to the New Testament, see Marksches, Harnack (cf. fn. 37), 382–88. Note a letter to Martin Rade, dated 30th August, 1910 (see Johanna Jantsch [ed.], Der Briefwechsel zwischen Adolf von Harnack und Martin Rade. Theologie auf dem öffentlichen Markt, Berlin 1996, 659), where Harnack states that the main problem that has occupied him for many years is “die Zuverlässigkeit unsrer N[eu]-T[estament]lichen Tradition wieder zu Ehren zu bringen.” See also ‘Vorfragen der Glaubwürdigkeit der evangelischen Geschichte betreffend’ (Nowak, Zeitgenosse [cf. fn. 5], 140–166), where Harnack sounds a cautiously optimistic note about what we can know about Jesus.

broadly sympathetic to the liberal cause with which he so strongly identified.⁵⁶ Two things need to be emphasized here. First, Schweitzer's attempt to argue for an unchanging aspect to Jesus, identified with his will, and based in part upon a static conception of man, associated with liberal theologians like Harnack,⁵⁷ could have appeared to the latter as equivalent to a husk and kernel approach to Jesus' message, not dissimilar to that proposed by Harnack in *Das Wesen* and elsewhere.⁵⁸ At one point Schweitzer appears to reject the view that what he is trying to do is to separate out the transitory from the permanent in his approach to Jesus, arguing that such an approach detracts from the greatness and unity of Jesus' message and only appears to enrich our religion without really doing so. "Jesus", he asserts, "is greater if he is allowed to remain in his own eschatological setting and, despite all that is strange to us, in that way of thinking, can influence us at a more elementary and powerful level."⁵⁹ But even if Schweitzer is insistent that the full character of Jesus' will can only be properly understood if it is placed in its eschatological setting, conceived of as a unity, there is still, in his apparent claim that the will of one person can be apprehended regardless of its original setting, a whiff of the husk and kernel approach, implied also in some of the editing of *Reimarus* manifested in *Geschichte*.⁶⁰ The second point to make is that Schweitzer's understanding of the significance of Jesus is ethical. Of course, the type of ethic which Schweitzer was describing, what he termed eschatological ethics, with its dialectic of being part of, and different from the world, and Schweitzer's assault upon present-day exegetes for their failure to apprehend the core aspects of that ethic because of their too easy acceptance of societal norms, might have been thought to have had cultural Protestants like Harnack in its sights.⁶¹ But there was enough in common, in spite of Schweitzer's ongoing insistence on the otherness of Jesus, for Harnack to commend Schweitzer for the "Principien" of his study. That Schweitzer's book, in both its editions, ended with the call of Jesus to follow him, a type of piety which would have appealed to Harnack, and which carried such an obviously autobiographical note for Schweitzer, would have reassured Harnack of the essentially palatable character of

⁵⁶ Note Harnack's comments in *Wesen* (cf. fn. 27), 17: "Es sind hier nur zwei Möglichkeiten: entweder das Evangelium ist in allen Stücken identisch mit seiner ersten Form: dann ist es mit der Zeit gekommen und mit ihr gegangen; oder aber es enthält immer gültiges in geschichtlich wechselnden Formen. Das letztere ist das Richtige."

⁵⁷ See Henning Pleitner, *Das Ende der liberalen Hermeneutik am Beispiel Albert Schweitzers*, Tübingen 1989, 227.

⁵⁸ For the liberal origins of Schweitzer's hermeneutic, see Pleitner, *Das Ende* (cf. fn. 57), esp. 235 f.

⁵⁹ Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 481.

⁶⁰ See Schweitzer's *Selbstdarstellung* of 1926: "Unser Verhältnis zur Vergangenheit ist ein unmittelbares, geistiges, bei dem es zuletzt nur auf das geistige Wesen der Persönlichkeit, nicht auf das zeitgenössische Vorstellungsmaterial, in der sie sich dachte, ankommt. So ist das geistige Wesen Jesu zeitlos [...]" (Schweitzer, *Vorträge* [cf. fn. 23], 370). Compare this with Harnack's comment in "Das Christentum und die Geschichte" of 1895: "Aber der geistige Inhalt eines ganzen Lebens, einer Person, ist auch eine geschichtliche Tatsache, und sie hat ihre Gewissheit an der Wirkung, die sie ausübt. Das, was uns an Jesus Christus bindet, liegt in diesem Rahmen." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 897).

⁶¹ See Schweitzer, *Quest 2* (cf. fn. 36), 483.

the Schweitzerian Jesus' message,⁶² and of his highly developed sense of commitment to Jesus, in spite of statements which might have appeared to have marginalized the latter, at least from a religio-philosophical point view.

V. Preliminary thoughts about Paul

Before Schweitzer came to pen the second edition of his *Quest*, he had written his introductory work on the history of Pauline research,⁶³ in which, only briefly, he presented the central elements of his own understanding of Paul's theology. In his preface, Schweitzer spelt out the overall context into which his work fitted. This was to explain how the teaching of Jesus developed into what he called the early Greek theology, associated with Ignatius, Justin and others. While Renan and Strauss had taken seriously the obligation "to trace the path from Jesus to the history of dogma", more recent work in this area "has come to place the teaching of Jesus, as well as that of Paul, outside the scope of its investigations and to regard its own task as beginning at the point where the undisputed and general Hellenisation of Christianity sets in. It describes therefore the growth of Greek theology, but not of Christian theology as a whole."⁶⁴ In criticizing such an approach for its failure to give the history of dogma a secure base, Schweitzer, recalling his earlier criticisms of Harnack, notes that "anyone who knows and admires Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte* is aware that the solid mason work only begins in the Greek period; what precedes is not placed on firm foundations but only supported on piles."⁶⁵ When Schweitzer accounts for this state of affairs by claiming that it arises from a clinging to a rigid division between the New Testament and the history of dogma within the academic syllabus, it is not certain that he includes Harnack in such a criticism, and if he does, whether that is fair.⁶⁶

In the main part of his book, Schweitzer mentions Harnack's work a number of times, mainly in relation to the debate about the Hellenization of Paul. Harnack's views are presented summarily. Paul prepared the way for the projection of the Gospel upon the Graeco-Roman world of thought, but he never allowed Greek ideas

⁶² See Schweitzer's words about his understanding of Jesus in his autobiography. While he is still clear that his book was "a heavy blow to Liberal Protestantism", he was convinced that this Christianity was not reduced to living on historical illusion, but could equally appeal to the Jesus of history, for "it still has the spirit of Jesus not against it but on its side." Jesus is a thinker and bids people meditate upon religion, and in the Sermon on the Mount he lets ethics "as the essence of religion, flood their hearts." Furthermore this essentially ethical religion has been freed from any dogmatism which clung to it by the disappearance of the late Jewish expectation. "We are now at liberty to let the religion of Jesus become a living force in our thought, as its purely spiritual and ethical nature demands." This looks like liberal Christianity in all but name (Schweitzer, *Leben* [cf. fn. 4], 74f.).

⁶³ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung; von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart*, Tübingen 1911. (ET: *Paul and his interpreters; a critical history*, London 1912).

⁶⁴ Schweitzer, *Interpreters* (cf. fn. 63), viii.

⁶⁵ Schweitzer, *Interpreters* (cf. fn. 63), vi.

⁶⁶ See Marksches, 'Neutestamentler' (cf. fn. 37), 389 quoting Zahn-Harnack, Harnack (cf. fn. 3), 361, for evidence of Harnack's opposition to the division of study of the New Testament and of Patristics.

to influence his doctrine of salvation.⁶⁷ Accordingly, there is no bridge leading from the Pauline Gospel to the doctrine of the early Greek church,⁶⁸ and so, as stated previously, the history of dogma only begins after Paul. Harnack is praised for denying any role to the mystery religions in a discussion of influences upon Paul,⁶⁹ though Schweitzer agrees with the supporters of such an influence that Harnack has failed to take sufficient account of the physical and sacramental elements in Paulinism. Harnack is further censured for according some Hellenistic Jewish influence to Paul.⁷⁰ While Schweitzer approves of Harnack's denial of any influence of Greek ideas upon Paul's conception of universalism and freedom from the law, and of his attempt to show that Paul is more in agreement with the primitive church than Wrede and others allowed,⁷¹ Schweitzer criticizes him for seeing such opinions as practicable and separable views which have no connection with any wider thoughts of the apostle. Schweitzer, in his consistently eschatological view of Paul, sees all aspects of his thought as interconnected.

VI. The First World War and Beyond

Aside from the letters written in 1913, communication between the two, as far as the record goes, was to recommence in 1921.⁷² In the meantime the First World War had broken out, and the two spent contrasting lives during this period, Schweitzer as an internee of the French government because he was a German national resident in a French colony, and Harnack as a civilian in Berlin with close contacts to the government. Their responses to the outbreak of the war were also very different. Infamously, Harnack was one of the 93 academics, including W. Herrmann and Schweitzer's own philosophical teacher, W. Windelband, who signed the document entitled 'Aufruf an die Kulturwelt', of September 1914, attacking the allies for waging war against the Germans and presenting the war as a battle to defend German culture from both eastern and western enemies. Harnack also signed the 'Aufruf an die evangelischen Christen im Ausland', and composed the text of the Kaiser's 'Aufruf an das Deutsche Volk', delivered on August 4th 1914.⁷³

Schweitzer's response was different. In his unpublished, *Wir Epigonen*, a work he began writing in 1915, he saw the war as evidence of a general decline in culture, understood by him as moral culture, whose roots lay back as far back as the 1850s. Uncompromising in his attacks upon nationalism, which he saw as so much a part of

⁶⁷ Schweitzer, Paul (cf. fn. 63), 63f., and 69.

⁶⁸ Schweitzer, Paul (cf. fn. 63), 81.

⁶⁹ Schweitzer, Paul (cf. fn. 63), 231.

⁷⁰ Schweitzer, Paul (cf. fn. 63), 90.

⁷¹ Schweitzer, Paul (cf. fn. 63), 160.

⁷² In a letter dated 5th May, 1921 (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 275), Schweitzer notes that a letter he tried to send Harnack in 1914 was sent back marked 'unbestellbar' (sic).

⁷³ For an assessment of Harnack's reaction to the outbreak of war and beyond, see Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf von Harnack. Wissenschaft und Politik in Berlin*, Berlin 1997, 518f.; and Christian Nottmeier, *Adolf von Harnack und die deutsche Politik, 1890–1930*, Tübingen 2004, 390–400. See also Jürgen and Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf an die Kulturwelt*, Stuttgart 1996.

that time, as well as political and social developments since then, including the growth of *Realpolitik*, he thought the war the inevitable result of a way of thinking, a developing attitude of mind. Eschewing any nationally partisan comments, he reviled those, like Harnack, who saw the war as bound up in any way with a defence of culture.⁷⁴ Whether Schweitzer knew of Harnack's early response to the war is unclear. Certainly the 'Aufruf' was widely disseminated, and became a considerable issue both during the war and after it, having a strongly negative effect upon foreign opinion of German academia, making it likely that Schweitzer, even if he had not had the opportunity to read it while he was in Africa, came to know of it subsequently. But to understand Harnack's war-time perspective exclusively on the basis of the 'Aufruf' and some other early utterances would be wrong.⁷⁵ Not long into the war, Harnack, the latter's brother-in-law, Hans Delbrück, Ernst Troeltsch and others, formed a group of moderate Germans who opposed the abandonment of moral standards for the sake of military advantage,⁷⁶ supported those who were intent upon an honorable peace, and an internationalist post-war settlement, the implementation of social and political reforms within Germany, and opposed those who wished to annex territories gained during the war. It may well have been this image of Harnack, carried forward in the latter's strong and often unpopular support of the Weimar Republic, rather than that of the more belligerent figure of the 'Aufruf'. Moreover, in the post-war period Schweitzer did not adopt an anti-German position (his wife and her family were Germans, and Schweitzer's anti-nationalist position was consistently held), was solicitous of his German friends who had been forced to leave Alsace, and highly critical of the treatment meted out to former German inhabitants of that land in the wake of German defeat, a point made plain in sermons delivered from 1918.⁷⁷

However we assess Schweitzer's reaction to Harnack's attitudes towards and conduct during the war, it is clear from a letter dated 5th May, 1921, written by the former, that he entertained warm feelings towards the professor. The occasion for the letter was Harnack's 70th birthday, which had elicited much interest in Germany. Harnack, though about to retire from his position as Ordinarius, was still the President of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, a productive scholar, as well as a keen observer of political life, and a respected figure beyond the borders of Germany.⁷⁸ Schweitzer, after being released from his internment, had returned to Strassburg, depressed and sick. As a person of German origins, he was unable to return to teaching at the university, now that Alsace had returned to French control.

⁷⁴ See Albert Schweitzer, *Wir Epigonen. Kultur und Kulturstaat*, ed. by Ulrich Körtner/Johann Zürcher, Munich 2005, 106: "In seinen Reflexionen über die Bedeutung des Krieges kam jedes Volk dazu, sich zu überzeugen, ihn nicht nur zu seiner Selbsterhaltung, sondern zugleich auch für die Kultur zu führen."

⁷⁵ See Nottmeier, Harnack (cf. fn. 73), 406–61; and Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* (cf. fn. 5), 72–84, who emphasizes Harnack's internationalist tendencies.

⁷⁶ See especially *Der Abschied von der weissen Weste* of 1916, in: Nowak (ed.), *Zeitgenosse* (cf. fn. 5), 1465–1472.

⁷⁷ See Albert Schweitzer, *Predigten 1898–1948*, ed. by Richard Brüllmann/Erich Grässer, Munich 2001, 1196f.

⁷⁸ On this see Nowak, *Adolf von Harnack in Theologie und Kirche der Weimarer Republik*, in: Nowak (ed.), *Harnack* (cf. fn. 12), 207–236.

He was attending some surgical clinics to improve his knowledge of relevant areas of medicine, and finding some time to write his work on cultural philosophy which he had begun to write in Africa. However, by 1920, in part as a result of the exposure given to him by a leading light of the developing ecumenical movement, Nathan Söderblom, bishop of Uppsala, and a friend of Harnack,⁷⁹ he was beginning to receive more publicity, and was lecturing and playing the organ in various parts of Europe, including Sweden, Germany, Britain and Spain.⁸⁰ In the letter referred to above, Schweitzer notes that he had wanted to pay a visit to Harnack the previous Spring when he was returning from Uppsala, but had not been able to.

Harnack wrote a brief reply to Schweitzer, thanking him for his book of African memories.⁸¹ Acknowledging a long period of no communication, he stated that he had never forgotten Schweitzer and that his thoughts had always been with him. He went on to note that we live hope against hope (here quoted in Greek as a citation of Rom. 4.18), a fact which needs to be learnt even if it is given to one to continue one's daily work as if nothing had changed.

Further communication between the two came in July of 1923. Schweitzer sent Harnack a copy of his *Der Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur*, published in 1923.⁸² Harnack states that he has read the work with profit. He wonders whether it will be possible to find a way out of this second Middle Age, as Schweitzer had dubbed the present era, noting that it was easier to free oneself from the first one because at least then people held to values which went beyond reality. But how, he wonders, will it be with this generation? Do not even its own cultural philosophers put on display its appearance of death? But Harnack expresses his hope that there are small signs amongst the youth of a way forward.

In his reply, written in September of that year, Schweitzer promises that he will send Harnack a copy of his *Kultur und Ethik*,⁸³ the second volume of his cultural philosophy. He describes this as the place where he wrestles with the problem of ethical worldview, and continues: "Das ist nichts anderes als das "Marcion-Problem". Dieses beschäftigte mich seit meiner Studentenzeit. Die Gnostiker haben einen ungeheuren Eindruck auf mich gemacht. Nun versuche ich selber Gnostiker zu sein und Naturphilosophie und Ethik in mir in ein Verhältnis zueinander zu bringen. So glaube ich, dass "Cultur (sic) und Ethik" den Marcionforscher interessieren wird," here referring to Harnack's much-discussed book of 1921 on Marcion.⁸⁴ He then mentions how he is attending a surgical clinic, and how he thinks a great deal about all the suffering in Lambarene, where he had worked in the Gabon.

This exchange reveals that Harnack had read one part of Schweitzer's cultural-philosophical project, and probably the second part also. Inevitably, there would have

⁷⁹ See Harnack's praise for Söderblom on his 60th birthday in Nowak (ed.), *Zeitgenosse* (cf. fn. 5), 1580.

⁸⁰ See Oermann, *Albert Schweitzer* (cf. fn. 3), 179–192.

⁸¹ Albert Schweitzer, *Zwischen Wasser und Urwald. Erlebnisse und Beobachtungen eines Arztes im Urwalde Äquatorialafrikas*, Bern 1921.

⁸² Albert Schweitzer, *Der Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur*, Munich 1923.

⁸³ Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik*, Munich 1923. See also Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* (cf. fn. 2), 277.

⁸⁴ Albert Schweitzer, *Marcion, das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, Leipzig 1921.

been elements of what Schweitzer proposed which Harnack would have found uncongenial. He would have objected to Schweitzer's apparently non-Christian solution to society's ills. One of the assumptions of both liberal and conservative theologians of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that any attempt to resolve the malaise of society's difficulties, brought about in particular by industrialization, would have a strong Christian component, and Harnack's membership of such organizations as the *Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress* as well as his many speeches, show his strong commitment to the building of a society based upon Christian principles. Moreover, Harnack was clear that Christianity was *the* religion, and that Jesus was the ultimate revealer of God's will seen in the character and nature of his kingdom. By contrast Schweitzer's formulation of his ethic of 'reverence for life' was the result, so he asserted, of a necessity of thought, and was not bound up with any particular religious conviction. In fact the appearance of Jesus in *Kultur und Ethik* is reduced to a handful of pages, where he competes for attention with other religious luminaries of the past. Here, in some senses, we have the logical outworking of what Schweitzer had said in the second edition of his *Quest* about the primacy of metaphysical questions, and the dispensability of the figure of Jesus in the construction of a solution to the world's ill. It also ties in with his growing sense of the importance of non-Christian religions for a proper answer to the problems related to culture. It is clear that Schweitzer attributed to Christianity the ultimate place amongst religions; that his own understanding of ethical mysticism was religious; and that Jesus was for him personally a hugely significant figure.⁸⁵ But even taking into account all of these things, it remains the case that *Kultur und Ethik* has all of the qualities of a philosophical work, unconcerned with advocating, at least directly, a Christian solution to society's ills.

We have also to wonder how much Harnack would have approved of Schweitzer's strong dialectic between optimism and pessimism, and between the manner in which God manifests himself within us and in the world. In the end Schweitzer's solution to the problem of the world's lack of a morally convincing 'Weltanschauung' is to give up on the creation of such a thing, and rather to accept the primacy of a 'Lebensanschauung', and advocate a moral mysticism which is itself the endpoint of thought. Schweitzer's use of words like 'mysticism' and 'life', would also have struck Harnack as regrettable,⁸⁶ as would his broadly positive, if critical, engagement with such philosophers as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, tendencies which typified aspects of thought associated with the 'fin de siècle' to which Harnack was inimical.

Schweitzer's language of difference, his insistence on the need for the ethical person to be other than the world, his implied skepticism about the capacity of society rather than the individual, to rectify the world's ills, all of this might have struck the 'kulturprotestantisch' Harnack as problematic, too. This is true up to a point. As a bureaucrat of note as well as an academic, he had a developed sense of the capacity of institutions to contribute to the nation's well-being, and though keenly

⁸⁵ See James Carleton Paget, 'The Religious Authority of Albert Schweitzer's Jesus', in: Markus Bockmuehl/Alan J. Torrance (eds.), *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible*, Grand Rapids 2008, esp. 78f.

⁸⁶ See Harnack's words in his memorial lecture on Albrecht Ritschl, cited in n. 94 below.

aware of the sacred character of the individual, and the primacy of the inner man, he would not have seen as much of a disjunction as Schweitzer did between the capacity of individuals and institutions to afford mutual help in the process of cultural revitalization.⁸⁷ Harnack took an active part in the life of the Weimar Republic, and while no enthusiast for it, held out hopes that it would create a better Germany. But Harnack belonged to no political party, and opposed efforts by some leaders of the *Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress* to give the church a political profile. Moreover, he was clear that, in the end, “the kingdom of God must be built upon the foundation not of institutions, but of individuals in whom God dwells.”⁸⁸ Moreover, Schweitzer’s sense that the properly ethical person had to be other than the world, a ‘Fremder’ in the society of which he was a member, would have appealed to Harnack. He was no uncritical advocate of the coming together of ‘Kultur’ and ‘Evangelium’ for the purposes of the development of mankind. In his book on Marcion Harnack returned to the theme of the sharp difference between Gospel and culture which, according to Nowak, had been with him since the 1870s;⁸⁹ and it is easy enough to find places in his work where he expresses the view that tension exists between the two.⁹⁰

So in spite of misgivings Harnack would have been broadly sympathetic to Schweitzer’s work,⁹¹ and especially when we consider the wider intellectual setting. Both were living at a time when many intellectuals were advocating a pessimistic view of the world’s future,⁹² a fact captured by the enthusiastic reception of Arthur Spengler’s *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*,⁹³ and by a concomitant critique of the

⁸⁷ Schweitzer was not an absolute individualist. He had a developed sense of the need of the individual to contribute to the wider world, precisely as a manifestation of his developed ethical sense. See Schweitzer, *Wir Epigonen* (cf. fn. 74), 154: “Die Rückkehr zur Kultur besteht also darin, daß die Einzelnen, in der Erreichung eines höheren Eigenwertes, auch die Kollektivitäten bereichern und erneuern.”

⁸⁸ See Hiers, *Ethics* (cf. fn. 43), 34f.

⁸⁹ See Kurt Nowak, *Theologie, Philologie und Geschichte. Adolf von Harnack als Kirchenhistoriker*, in: Nowak/Oexle (eds.), *Harnack* (cf. fn. 3), 234–237. He notes how the appearance of *Marcion* led some commentators to criticize Harnack for apparently doing away with “die Weltoffenheit des christlichen Glaubens,” and sounding a Barthian note. Nowak argues that Harnack’s book was a problematic witness to his view that there existed a real difference between society and Christianity, and though Harnack was keener than the dialectical theologians to allow his ‘yes’ to the former to be louder than his ‘no’, his book testifies to an overlooked tendency in ‘Kulturprotestantismus’.

⁹⁰ Note his words in ‘Das Christentum und die Geschichte’ of 1895 where he characterizes Christianity as “Entscheidung für Gott und wider die Welt.”

⁹¹ In his speech advocating Schweitzer for membership of the *Preussische Akademie*. Harnack describes both books, as “so schlicht und nüchtern, daß Soziologie und Philosophie nicht stehen bleiben können, aber seine (Schweitzer’s) charaktervolle Eigenart anerkennen müssen.” (Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 2], 294).

⁹² See Harnack’s words to Schweitzer, after receiving and reading *Verfall*, and dated 30th July 1923 (Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 2], 252): “Aber wie wird es unserem Geschlecht gehen? Stellen ihm doch seine Kulturphilosophen selbst den Todesschein aus?”

⁹³ Harnack corresponded with Spengler (see Harnack to Rade, in a letter dated 14th November 1922 [Harnack, *Briefwechsel* (cf. fn. 55), 772]), and was sympathetic to Spengler’s assumption that analogies existed between different periods of history (see ‘Was hat die Historie an fester Erkenntnis zur Deutung des Weltgeschens zu bieten?’ [Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* (cf. fn. 5), 957f.], dating from 1920). But he was more skeptical about the idea that all cultures were bound to prosper and then decline, and that there was no essential progress in history (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 970). Schweitzer, who

Enlightenment inheritance.⁹⁴ Schweitzer's essential optimism, shown in his faith in man's capacity to restore civilization,⁹⁵ his advocacy of an ethical understanding of the word 'Kultur',⁹⁶ and his emphasis upon the relationship between thought and action,⁹⁷ must have appeared refreshing to the retired Ordinarius, as must Schweitzer's willingness to articulate this in a manner which was intentionally non-specialist.⁹⁸

On March 7th 1929 Harnack delivered a speech proposing Schweitzer for honorary membership of the *Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, in both classes, 'philosophisch-historisch' and 'physikalisch-mathematisch', so reflecting the latter's attainments in a variety of fields.⁹⁹ In his summary of Schweitzer's achievements, Harnack was at his most expansive when discussing Schweitzer's New Testament work. After mentioning Schweitzer's *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* and *Pau-*

also met Spengler, opposed his view that cultures, like plants, by their nature flourish and then decline. Such a view precluded any idea of moral progress (see Schweitzer's 1934 Hibbert Lectures, in: Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik in den Weltreligionen*, ed. by Ulrich Körtner/Johann Zürcher, Munich 2001, 234). Elsewhere Schweitzer characterizes Spengler's work as "schwermütige Romanze", and states that "(e)r fungiert als gut bezahltes Klageweib bei der Totenfeier unserer Kultur." (*Weltanschauung der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben. Kulturphilosophie III [erster und zweiter Teil]*, ed. by Claus Günzler/Johann Zürcher, Munich 1999, 433).

⁹⁴ Note Harnack's conclusion to his memorial lecture on Albrecht Ritschl, delivered in 1922: "Über unser Vaterland, ja über die europäische Kulturwelt geht zur Zeit wieder einmal eine internationale romantische Welle. Ihre Anfänge liegen schon in der Zeit vor dem Weltkriege. [...] Statt 'Wissenschaft' will man 'Leben', statt der 'Ratio', die 'Intuition', und ein Weltlied voll geheimnisvoller Kräfte und seelenstärkender Elemente soll den Geist für den angeblichen Zusammenbruch aller rationalen Erkenntniss entschädigen." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 1570). Note Schweitzer's comment in 1934, in his Gifford lecture: "Ich tue es (i. e. lecture) in einer Zeit, die kein Vertrauen in der Vernunft mehr hat." (Schweitzer, *Vorträge* [cf. fn. 23], 119).

⁹⁵ On Harnack's positive view of man's moral capacity, see Nowak, *Weimarer Republik* (cf. fn. 78), 230. But such optimism was not held in an unthinking way – note how in *Das kommende Zeitalter des Geistes und der Geist unserer Zeit*, in: *Neue Freie Presse*, Nr. 21460 vom 8. Juni (1924), he is clear about the crisis Germany faces: "Ich wage nicht mit Zuversicht zu sagen, wie der Ausgang der Krisis sich gestalten wird; ich wage nicht, einen schlimmen bestimmt Ausgang zu verneinen." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 770).

⁹⁶ See Harnack's comments in 'Protestantische Kultur' of 1912: "Eine rein ästhetische Kultur ist keine protestantische Kultur; aber sehr schnell wird es sich erweisen, dass sie überhaupt keine Kultur ist, weil ihr der Ernst der Wahrheitserkenntnis und die Kraft des sittlichen Willens fehlt." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 310).

⁹⁷ For an expression of this see 'Das kommende Zeitalter des Geistes': "Allzu leicht begnügen wir uns mit der 'Innerlichkeit', handeln nicht, lassen die fertige Kleinarbeit beiseite und glauben, dass der Gedanke und das Wort genügen. Aber sie genügen nicht, vielmehr müssen Tat, Werk und Organisation ihnen folgen. Nur wenn der Geist sich einen Leib schafft, ohne sich in ihm einzuschließen, bringt er es zu dauernden Wirkungen." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 770); and note the way Harnack begins his brief piece congratulating Nathan Söderblom on his 60th birthday, alluding to Goethe's phrase, "Am Anfang war die Tat." (Nowak, *ibid.*, 1581), a favourite with Schweitzer with whom Harnack shared an enthusiasm for Goethe.

⁹⁸ Harnack, in 'Das kommende Zeitalter' (see n. 95 above) states "daß die, welche uns heute zurufen: 'Schaffet auf dem neuen Boden ein Neues, sucht euch im Sternenlicht der ewigen und unveränderlichen Ideale einen neuen Weg und tretet alles, was sich als feindlich und treulos erwiesen hat, unter die Füße' – nicht mehr nur Prediger in der Wüste sind." (Nowak, *Zeitgenosse* [cf. fn. 5], 770). The ethical enthusiasm of these words is almost Schweitzerian.

⁹⁹ The text of the speech is found in Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* (cf. fn. 2), 292ff.

linische Forschung, he states: “Durch diese Untersuchungen und Darstellungen hat er nicht nur *einen Schlusstrich unter die bisherige Forschung mit Kraft und richtig gezogen, sondern auch, wie allgemein anerkannt ist, den entscheidenden Fingerzeig für zukünftige Forschung gegeben*.” (italics my own). Such a statement could, of course, be taken as no more than the empty words of a *laudatio*: it is difficult to think that Harnack believed that Schweitzer had placed a final line under previous research given that in both of the works cited, positions represented by Harnack, in particular on Jesus, were attacked, though, as we will see, Schweitzer and Harnack had a not dissimilar understanding of Paul. Some may also think it odd that Harnack could claim that Schweitzer had put his finger on the future orientation of research. While it is true that publication of Schweitzer’s work on Jesus caused some stir, much of this was negative, and less intensive than the reaction to Johannes Weiss’ *Die Predigt Jesus vom Reiche Gottes*. Possibly Schweitzer’s opinions about Jesus were finding more traction in the early 1920s. In 1921 Ernst Troeltsch cited Schweitzer’s *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* against Harnack’s view that one can relate so easily to the ‘Lebensbild’ of Jesus;¹⁰⁰ and Schweitzer’s anti-historicism would have chimed in with emphases found in R. Bultmann’s work, as would in different ways, his claim about the importance of the concept of eschatology.¹⁰¹ His conservative attitude to the Gospel tradition, however, did not reflect the historical skepticism of Bultmann’s *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* of 1921 (Schweitzer was to express himself an opponent of form criticism); and the effect of Schweitzer’s *Paulusforschung* was negligible,¹⁰² although it is true that by 1930, a year after Harnack’s speech, scholarship appeared more open to Schweitzer’s interpretation of Paul, as the reception of his *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* shows.

Given the above, should we think Harnack’s words indicative of a man out of touch with recent trends in New Testament Studies, and intent upon misleading praise rather than accurate report? Harnack continued to publish on New Testament subjects to the end of his life, and even though such publications were on more specialist issues, of a text-critical or related kind, rather than on more contested general subjects, he would not have been ignorant of the questions of importance being addressed in the 1920s. In this context we should note that Otto Dibelius and K. L. Schmidt, leading practitioners of form criticism, had been his pupils. So there may be partial justification for the substance of Harnack’s comments, or at least for the view that they constituted the sincerely held opinions of the Ordinarius. They may also hint at what he thought *would be* the influence of Schweitzer’s New Testament work, reflecting his generally high opinion of aspects of it, and his perception of how New Testament studies would develop.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ernst Troeltsch, Adolf von Harnack und Ferd. Chr. Baur’, in Festgabe von Fachgenossen und Freunden. A von Harnack zum siebzigsten Geburtstag, Tübingen 1921, 290.

¹⁰¹ Note Bultmann’s praise for Schweitzer’s *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* in Bultmann’s, *Jesus of 1926*, Tübingen 1964, 11, and his earlier positive review of the same work in: *Die Christliche Welt* 28 (1914), 643f.

¹⁰² See Paul Feine, *Der Apostel Paulus: das Ringen um das geschichtliche Verständnis des Paulus*, Gütersloh 1927, 6f.

¹⁰³ In the letter to Rade, dated 30th August, 1910 (Harnack, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 55], 659), quoted above, Harnack notes that his views about the reliability of the New Testament are out of favour at the

Schweitzer's election to the *Preussische Akademie* was confirmed by the Prussian state ministry on July 2nd, of 1929. Harnack wrote to Schweitzer on the 6th of July congratulating him on his election and Schweitzer wrote back on the 11th, expressing his delight at the news. Describing his own activities, he noted that he was at present sitting through the nights working with his book on Paul. It was on this particular subject that the final part of the relationship between these two men was to concern itself.

VII. Harnack, Schweitzer, Paul and Dialectical Theology

Schweitzer visited Harnack in Berlin in the Autumn of 1929, and they spent one-and-a-half days together.¹⁰⁴ It seems that some of their discussions were taken up with Schweitzer's work on his soon-to-be-published book *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*,¹⁰⁵ and in the wake of this visit, Schweitzer records that he sent draft copies of individual chapters of the book to Harnack,¹⁰⁶ which were sent back to him, unmarked, save for a statement at the end which read "Alles in Ordnung."¹⁰⁷

Harnack responded warmly to Schweitzer's book. In a postcard dated the 10th of April 1930, he stated, as noted earlier, that the book had succeeded brilliantly and that it was the necessary corrective to the Paul associated with the teaching of justification, "and will certainly succeed in bringing to knowledge the *whole* Paul, who thought only in the second place of his schema about justification but was primarily a *mystic*." Consistent with this view, Harnack praised the section of the book running from pages 214-221, which concerned itself with justification by faith as a fragment of Paul's system of redemption. Harnack described the book as revolutionary and as presenting a neat and complete knowledge of Paul. He concluded by noting that colleagues would have to relearn their Paul, and that the equation ("Gleichung") Paul and Luther could no longer stand.

Harnack's enthusiasm for Schweitzer's book is not surprising, for, in spite of the criticisms which Schweitzer had aimed at Harnack's views on Paul, there was much

moment. But he asserts that he does not doubt that such views will one day be upheld. Given the conservative character of Schweitzer's own work on the New Testament, we might gain a sense from this quotation of how Harnack understood the phrase "putting his finger on the future orientation of research"

¹⁰⁴ In his letter of condolence to Harnack's wife, dated 19th July 1930 (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 283), Schweitzer refers to this visit. See also a letter sent to Harnack's daughter-in-law, dated 20th July, 1965, in which Schweitzer enclosed an account of this visit, describing it as "ein ergreifendes Erlebnis."

¹⁰⁵ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, Tübingen 1930 (ET: *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, London 1931).

¹⁰⁶ On the 15th May, 1929, Harnack wrote to Schweitzer thanking him for sending him birthday greetings (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 280). In the same letter he stated that he was excited about the appearance of Schweitzer's *Paulus*, indicating that he had not yet received the proofs. From the note to Axel von Harnack, contained within the letter to the latter's wife, (cf. n. 11), it is clear that it was as a result of their conversations in Berlin that Harnack made the request that he should receive the proofs. "Er wollte dabei", comments Schweitzer, "mir also aufzeigen, wenn etwas im Text nicht in Ordnung."

¹⁰⁷ From the same letter to Axel von Harnack.

that the two shared in common. First, Harnack, like Schweitzer, held Paul to have a clear connection to the primitive community out of which he emerged (so, for instance, he argues that Paul inherited his views on the law, even if he has given to them greater clarity).¹⁰⁸ Secondly, like Schweitzer, while accepting that Paul made primary reference to the supra-historical Christ, Harnack argued that he alludes to Jesus' earthly example and words, and refuted the view, associated with Wrede, that Paul is the second founder of Christianity (this is not quite what Schweitzer says but it is close enough to it).¹⁰⁹ Thirdly, Harnack argued that Paul is the first Christian to connect redemption to the person of Christ, a point Schweitzer emphasised in *Mystik*. Fourthly, Harnack thought that Paul influenced the development of ecclesiastical history only by way of occasional stimulus,¹¹⁰ partly because his views were difficult to digest,¹¹¹ but also because his doctrinal presuppositions were Jewish, and more specifically, Pharisaical.¹¹² And this leads on to a fifth point. While accepting that Paul gave evidence of the influence of Greek thought and so laid the basis for "die Projection des Evangeliums auf die griechisch-römische Gedankenwelt"¹¹³ (*pace* Harnack Paul used the Greek language well, and connected the Gospel to what he terms the "religionsphilosophische Denkweise der Griechen"),¹¹⁴ Harnack maintained that he had nowhere allowed that world of thought to influence his doctrine of salvation. In fact, according to Harnack, there was much within Pharisaism which prepared for Paul's message; and Harnack was clear that the most appropriate background against which to understand Paul was, what he termed, a late Jewish, one.¹¹⁵ This is important. Harnack had always expressed himself critical of the 'history of religion' approach to the study of early Christianity, especially as this manifested itself in the work of R. Reitzenstein and W. Bousset with their emphasis on the influence of Greek mystery religions and related elements upon early Christianity and Paul, in part on temperamental grounds, because it challenged his view of the nature of proper religion, and so of Christianity, which for Harnack was *the*

¹⁰⁸ See Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. 1, Tübingen 1909, 99 and 104 (all references to the fourth edition of the work unless otherwise stated).

¹⁰⁹ See Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 108), 106f.

¹¹⁰ "Sein Eigenthümlichstes hat nicht anders als stossweise auf die Entwicklung der kirchlichen Lehre eingewirkt" (Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* [cf. fn. 108], 102).

¹¹¹ See Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 108), 106; and Adolf von Harnack, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Theologie und des kirchlichen Dogmas*, Gotha, 1927, 57.

¹¹² Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 104f. Note Harnack's words to Schweitzer, dated 15th May 1929 (Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 2], 280): "Auf Ihren Paulus bin ich hochgespannt. Dass er sehr wenig Grieche u. eigentlich ganz und gar ein von Christen ergriffener Jude ist, davon bin ich überzeugt." (italics my own).

¹¹³ Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 105f.

¹¹⁴ Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 105.

¹¹⁵ Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 105: "Paulus, dieser erste Christ der zweiten Generation, ist die höchste Hervorbringung des jüdischen Geistes unter der schöpferischen Macht des Geistes Christi." See also Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 56f., where Paul is described as "ein jüdischer Denker". In reviews from the 1920s, especially of works of members of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, such as Richard Reitzenstein and Wilhelm Bousset, Harnack emphasized the origins of earliest Christianity in late Judaism (Spätjudentum). See his words in a review of Bousset's *Kyrios Christos* in: *ThLZ* 47 (1922), 147.

religion,¹¹⁶ but also on scholarly grounds.¹¹⁷ This scepticism continued to the end of his life. In *Entstehung*, for instance, Harnack praised Karl Holl's attack upon the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, in arguing that Paul was in no essential way influenced by the mystery religions.¹¹⁸ While Harnack does not explicitly refer to Schweitzer's hostility to the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, he does refer to his rejection of the idea that Paul was a Greek. Moreover, we should note that in the period of the 1920s there was little sign that the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule's influence was diminishing. Norden's *Agnostos Theos* appeared in 1923 and went through multiple printings in that year, and was reprinted in 1929. Bultmann's long article on Mandaean influence on John was printed in *Die Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* for 1925, and Reitzenstein's book on Iranian religion came out in 1921, and his *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen nach ihren Grundgedanken und Wirkungen* had gone into a second edition in 1920 and a third edition in 1927, both of which Harnack had reviewed in the *Die Theologische Literaturzeitung*.¹¹⁹ Bousset's *Kyrios Christos* went into a new edition in 1921, which Harnack also reviewed,¹²⁰ and was reprinted in 1926. The fact that one of Harnack's pupils was Gunkel, a leading light in the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, meant that he must have remained keenly aware of its claims. Against such a background Schweitzer's work must have struck the right tone.

Two further points need to be made. First, for Harnack what is central to Paul is Christ who as spirit continues to overcome the world of law, sin and death in believers,¹²¹ rather than the doctrine of justification, though these believers are the justified.¹²² Paul's theology looking forward is, correspondingly, the doctrine of the liberating power of the spirit of Christ ("die Lehre von der befreienden Macht des Geistes in allen concreten Verhältnissen"), found in union with Christ, in many ways Schweitzer's 'Mystik' without the word. Second, while Paul's theology looking backwards is a description of the old system before Christ in the light of the Gospel, scriptural proof here is only what Harnack terms "a super-added support to inner considerations". Hence "deductions, proofs and also conceptions, which in point of

¹¹⁶ For general comments, betraying aspects of Harnack's dislike of the approach see Dogmengeschichte (cf. fn. 108), 45f. For further discussion see Stefan Rebenich, *Der alte Meergreis, die Rose von Jericho, und ein höchst vortrefflicher Schwiegersonn*, in: Nowak/Oexle (eds.), *Harnack* (cf. fn. 3), 46f.; and for the general background to the 'religionsgeschichtlich' approach and its advocates and enemies, see Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, Cambridge, 2009, esp. 259f., where she discusses Harnack's attitudes.

¹¹⁷ For an early expression of his opposition see ThLZ 14 (1889), 199–212.

¹¹⁸ See Karl Holl, *Urchristentum und Religionsgeschichte*, in: ZStH 2 (1924), 387–430. Markschies, 'Neutestamentler' (cf. fn. 37), 389 notes that this is the only piece of secondary literature Harnack mentions in these lectures. See Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 56: "Nur sekundär war er von der Mysteriensprache der Griechen – kaum von Mysterienwesen und von ihrer idealistischen popularphilosophie beeinflusst." Note should also be taken of his reviews. See that of the second and third edition of Reitzenstein's *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* in: ThLZ 46 (1921), 26f.; and ThLZ 52 (1927), 364f.; and of the second edition of Bousset's 'Kyrios' *Christos* in: ThLZ 47 (1922), 145ff.

¹¹⁹ See n. 118.

¹²⁰ See n. 118.

¹²¹ Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 108), 103.

¹²² Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 108), 104; and Harnack, *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 111), 56.

form betray the theology of the pharisaical schools, were forced from the Apostle by Christian opponents”, and none of this dialectic, as Harnack calls it, forms the kernel of Paul’s thought.¹²³ Taken together these points make Harnack sound like Schweitzer arguing for the centrality of mysticism in Paul’s thought and against the Lutheran emphasis on justification. Against such a background it is unsurprising that Harnack could write to Schweitzer about his book praising it for, amongst other things, its presentation of a Paul “who only secondarily thought about justification, but primarily was a mystic.”¹²⁴

But what of the real stumbling block for Harnack, namely Schweitzer’s conviction that eschatology was the route to understanding all Paul’s theology? In his two postcards to Schweitzer about *Mystik*, Harnack never mentions the word ‘eschatology’; and it is difficult to see how the man who had been clear in a number of places about the secondary importance of eschatology, the husk of the Christian message, when compared with its primary message, its core, which lay in certain ethical principles, a view he noted as important for Paul, could have accepted Schweitzer’s Paul who was a thorough eschatologist.¹²⁵ The key to understanding this matter lies in the last of the two postcards Harnack wrote to Schweitzer. Here Harnack began by noting his strong agreement with *Mystik*’s final chapter, entitled ‘Permanent Elements.’ (‘Das Unvergängliche der Mystik Pauli’).¹²⁶ Harnack’s emphasis on this last chapter is understandable. First, in it Schweitzer gives a clear exposition of Paul’s lasting achievements. Paul’s critical engagement with the Jesus tradition enables Schweitzer to portray him as the patron saint of thinkers and as the legitimator of those who interact critically with the tradition, a point which Harnack would have appreciated.¹²⁷ Secondly, in this chapter Schweitzer uses more conventional language about salvation, which accords a central place to Christ as conceived through the prism of Schweitzer’s interpretation of Paul’s Christ mysticism.¹²⁸ Thirdly, Schweitzer shows how Paul, by connecting the kingdom of God (i. e. eschatological language)

¹²³ See the second edition of *Dogmengeschichte* where this point is slightly clearer (History [cf. fn. 22], 94) than it is in the corresponding section of the fourth edition (Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* [cf. fn. 108], 104).

¹²⁴ See Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* (cf. fn. 2), 282.

¹²⁵ See Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (cf. fn. 108), 84, where he accepts the importance for Paul of eschatology but asks, pointedly, whether anyone who has read 1 Cor. 13 or Rom. 8 could argue that the essence of his Gospel lay in such a concept. He continues: “Sie beide (the relevant chapters) bezeugen es, dass das Evangelium über den Spannungen von diesseits und jenseits, Arbeit und Weltgeschichte, Vernunft und Ekstase, Jüdischem und Griechischem liegt.” Note also *ibid.*, 148, where Harnack is clear that of the two tendencies he notes as present within earliest Christianity, to look to future redemption, or attend to the conditions already wrought by Christ, Paul is a representative of the latter.

¹²⁶ Note Harnack’s words: “[...] bekenne ich mich gerne zu diesen Ausführungen, die in Kritik und Position gleich wichtig, ja fundamental sind.” (Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 2], 282).

¹²⁷ See Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 105), 376f. Note Harnack’s strong insistence in *Entstehung* (cf. fn. 92), 55, on Paul’s identity as a thinker (“ein wirklicher Denker in der Religion”), and his ability to bring coherence to developing Christian tradition. In contrast to Schweitzer, however, Harnack was keen to attribute importance to Paul’s inner experience which he understood as the starting point of his thought (Harnack, *Entstehung* [cf. fn. 111], 56).

¹²⁸ “In Jesus Christ, God is manifested as Will of Love. In union with Christ, union with God is realized in the only form attainable to us.” (Harnack, *Entstehung* [cf. fn. 111], 379). See also *ibid.*, 396.

with redemption in Christ, and so attributing to the baptized Christian who has died and risen with Christ, a state anticipatory of the new age to come has begun the process of the demythologizing of eschatology, of initiating a new and ethical understanding of that term.¹²⁹ Harnack, while not using the same language as Schweitzer, had come close to endorsing such a position, not just in his diminution of the importance of futurist eschatology when compared with his ethical utterances, for an understanding of Paul's Gospel, but also in his view that Paul's theology hinted at a form of realized eschatology.¹³⁰ All of the above supports the truth of Schweitzer's comment to M. Carrez,¹³¹ dated 11th July, 1952, that at the end of his life Harnack "hat [...] die konsequente Eschat. und das eschatologische Verständnis der Lehre des Paulus anerkannt."

One final point of comparison should be made. In his discussion of the process by which Christianity became Hellenized in his *Mystik*, Schweitzer makes a brief reference to Harnack.¹³² The latter, as we know, was clear that Christianity had undergone Hellenization as a result of its encounter with Greek philosophy, and not religious ideas of the Orient, in particular the mystery religions, a view advocated by Reitzenstein and others. Schweitzer is clear that on this point Harnack is right but where his work fails is in his "explanation of the teaching of Paul." By this Schweitzer meant that Harnack has failed to account satisfactorily for how we move from Paul to the Hellenized Christianity which follows (this should be taken as shorthand for failing to adopt Schweitzer's view of Paul). It is this failure, Schweitzer maintains, which allowed views about the influence of the mystery religions upon Paul to enter into the discussion: "It was at precisely this point that students of comparative religion set themselves in the last decades of the nineteenth century to make a breach in Harnack's theory."¹³³ The breach was easy to make because without an explanation of Paul in terms of eschatological mysticism, Christianity, transferred to Hellenistic soil, appeared to be best explained by reference to mystery religions. Schweitzer's own theory, then, is portrayed as "the relief of the beleaguered fort (Harnack's theory) and the defeat of Reitzenstein's attack upon Harnack. The theory that it was not Hellenistic-Oriental beliefs but Greek philosophy which influenced the formation of Christian dogma has no longer a weak point to invite attack."¹³⁴ Schweitzer becomes Harnack's ally, a fact which is unlikely to have escaped Harnack.¹³⁵ Interestingly, in a letter dated 8th July, 1930,¹³⁶ and written shortly after Harnack's death, Karl Budde,

¹²⁹ Ibid., Harnack, Entstehung (cf. fn 111), 380. See our comments in n. 125 above.

¹³⁰ See Harnack, Dogmengeschichte (cf. fn. 108), 102f. Such a view is connected with his conviction that through the spirit reconciliation has now been achieved.

¹³¹ See Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 105), 368f.

¹³² See Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 105), 369f.

¹³³ Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 105), 370.

¹³⁴ Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 105), 371.

¹³⁵ See Schweitzer's letter to Martin Werner, dated 14th November, 1947 (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 814), where Schweitzer states that in his meeting with Harnack in 1929, he presented his view, "dass die eschatologische Mystik Pauli den Übergang zur Hellenisierung bedeutete, ohne selber hellenistisch zu sein und dass so die feste Grundlage, die seiner Dogmengeschichte fehle gegeben sei." Harnack apparently agreed.

¹³⁶ Schweitzer, Briefwechsel (cf. fn. 2), 165f.

Schweitzer's former Old Testament teacher at the University of Strassburg, expressed himself delighted to hear about Harnack's final positive communication with Schweitzer about *Mystik*, declaring that "Hand in Hand mit Harnack bilden Sie eine Phalanx gegen die hellenistisch eingestellte Schule, und es ist durchaus nötig, dass die Öffentlichkeit es so bald wie möglich erfährt." Here at least was an early recognition of an alliance between these two apparently different men.

But in explaining Harnack's enthusiasm for Schweitzer's book, and for Schweitzer more generally, we need to examine the theological context in which Schweitzer's *Mystik* appeared. As is well-known, the period following the First World War witnessed a harsh attack upon the presuppositions of liberal theology. While most agree that the polemic of K. Barth, F. Gogarten and E. Brunner, was not a complete break with what had been occurring already before 1914, their writings, particularly in the wake of the First World War and some of the actions of certain liberal theologians, including Harnack, in apparently supporting it, were marked by a sharpness of tone, which seemed to catch the intellectual mood. Their insistence on the otherness of God, on the primacy of his word in all theological judgment, their polemic against what they perceived to be the over-reliance of many theologians upon history and historical study, their attacks upon the anthropocentrism of the liberal tradition and related matters, all found expression in Barth's *Römerbrief*, and in the exchange in 1923 between Barth and Harnack in the pages of *Die Christliche Welt*.¹³⁷ Harnack's intellectual alienation from this new wave of German theology is well captured both in the exchange with Barth and elsewhere. In particular he took issue with its anti-historicist rhetoric,¹³⁸ which seemed to reduce theology to no more than sermonizing, and with what he perceived as its dangerous polarization of Christianity and culture.¹³⁹ Schweitzer later recalled that in their meeting in Berlin in the Autumn of 1929, Harnack had stated that "Ich bin in meiner Zeit ein Fremder geworden, und meine Zeit ist mir fremd geworden,"¹⁴⁰ reflecting his sense that the world that he had known was disappearing into an horizon for which he had little

¹³⁷ See H. Martin Rumscheidt, *Revelation and theology. An analysis of the Barth-Harnack correspondence of 1923*, Cambridge 1972; and Hartmut Ruddies, *Evangelium und Kultur. Die Kontroverse zwischen Adolf von Harnack und Karl Barth*, in: Nowak/Oexle (eds.), *Harnack* (cf. fn. 3), 103–126.

¹³⁸ On this see Nowak, 'Weimarer Republik' (cf. fn. 78), 226f. See especially the 2nd and 14th question of Harnack's opening statement (Rumscheidt, *Revelation* [cf. fn. 136], 29f.). See also his first reply to Barth where he states: "You say that the task of theology is at one with the task of preaching; I reply that the task of theology is at one with the task of science in general." (Rumscheidt, *ibid.*, 36 [cf. fn. 136]).

¹³⁹ See especially his 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th questions to Barth in his opening statement (Rumscheidt, 29–30 [cf. fn. 136]). Also note his comment to Rade in a letter dated 15th September 1928 (Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 55], 837): "Was übrigens einstweilen ganz verloren zu gehen droht, ist für die Theologie ihr Zusammenh[an]g mit der universitas litterarum und der Kultur [...]"

¹⁴⁰ Schweitzer, *Vorträge* (cf. fn. 23), 246. See also Harnack's comments to Rade in a letter dated 18th November 1924 (Harnack, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 55], 786). Note Zahn-Harnack's description of Harnack's reaction to meeting and disputing with Barth at the Aarauer-Student-Konferenz of 1920: "Die Wirkung auf Harnack war erschütternd. Da war nicht ein Satz, nicht ein Gedanke, den er mitdenken konnte. Er anerkannte den tiefen Ernst, in dem Barth sprach, aber es schauderte ihn geradezu vor dieser Theologie." (Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* [cf. fn. 3], 415).

understanding, and some distaste.¹⁴¹ Against such a background, he looked back wistfully to a time when things had been done differently.¹⁴²

In 1926 Harnack gave a set of popular lectures, published a year later as *Die Entstehung der christlichen Theologie und des kirchlichen Dogmas*, arguing¹⁴³ defiantly that what he termed “die alte theologische Wissenschaft” had not yet been rendered obsolete and that the methodological and pedagogic tradition which it followed possessed advantages. Interestingly, and possibly for the same reasons, Harnack wrote to the publisher Georg Siebeck about the now out-of-print 4th edition of his *Dogmengeschichte*, stating that although the current position of historical theology was not a favourable one, his work had not yet been overhauled and that it still had its merits.¹⁴⁴ Siebeck and Harnack, it seems, came to an arrangement whereby each volume would be reprinted with a ‘Nachwort’ in which Harnack pointed out recent advances in study. Harnack died before this could happen.

By contrast, however, Schweitzer shared, at least in broad terms, some of dialectical theology’s concerns¹⁴⁵ – he, like Barth, was condemnatory of the way in which liberal versions of Christianity, in particular of Jesus and Paul, failed to take account of the otherness of this entity, and he spoke in both his theological and philosophical works of the need to be different, other than the world; he shared aspects of Barth’s anti-historicism, and also stressed, though from a different perspective, the importance of eschatology. But in general Schweitzer was largely unsympathetic to the movement. His reservations, mainly contained in the Hibbert Lectures of 1934, reflected Harnack’s. In these brief criticisms,¹⁴⁶ Schweitzer emphasized what appeared to be Barth’s creation of a vision of Christianity cut off from the world,¹⁴⁷ and a view of man and God as antithetical,¹⁴⁸ his related opposition to human ration-

¹⁴¹ See his letter to Rade, dated 15th September, 1928 (Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 55, 837ff.]): “Aber wie schwach ist sie als Wissenschaft, wie eng u[nd] sektiererisch ist ihr Horizont [...]”

¹⁴² See his words to Rade dated April 1927 (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 824f.): “Die Sonne, welche dieses Meer beglänzte, war die evangelische Botschaft [...]. Das Schiff war die strenge geschichtliche Wissenschaft, der wir uns bedingungslos anvertrauen, der Kurs ging aus dem Verworrenen zum Einfachen, aus dem Mystischen zum Logos.”

¹⁴³ These had first appeared in written form in *Die Christliche Welt* 40 (1926), 778–787; 834–842; 882–890; 938–948; 986–993.

¹⁴⁴ Letter dated 27th April 1930, and reported in Nottmeier, Harnack (cf. fn. 73), 489f.

¹⁴⁵ Martin Werner, *Das Weltanschauungsproblem bei Karl Barth und Albert Schweitzer. Eine Auseinandersetzung*, Bern 1924. In a letter to Werner dated 1st November 1924 (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 761), Schweitzer comments: “Daß in den fundamentalen Erwägungen Barth und ich so uns berühren, ist mir etwas ganz Neues. Aber es ist so, und macht mir den Kerl fast lieb.” Barth, in a letter to Schweitzer, dated 3rd February 1965 (Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn.2], 69), notes that he and Schweitzer were closer than either their contemporaries or they ever realised.

¹⁴⁶ It is difficult to know with how much of Barth’s oeuvre Schweitzer was acquainted. He had read Römerbrief, and at least the first two volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* (see letter to Werner, dated 22/23 December, 1930, in Schweitzer, Briefwechsel [cf. fn. 2], 785), and Martin Werner, who was a strong opponent of Barth, was constantly updating Schweitzer in their correspondence with news about the former.

¹⁴⁷ “Die Religion ist von der Welt abgekehrt.” (Schweitzer, *Weltreligionen* [cf. fn. 93], 416).

¹⁴⁸ “Der Mensch [kann] das Göttliche nicht verstehen, sondern [er] muss sich erst selber ganz aufgeben und sich ihm unterwerfen.” (Schweitzer, *Weltreligionen* [cf. fn. 93], 251).

alism,¹⁴⁹ bolstered by a fideist's reliance upon the concept of revelation and traditional forms of Christian dogma,¹⁵⁰ his exaggerated anti-historicism,¹⁵¹ and his diminution of the importance of ethics.¹⁵² Much of what Schweitzer took to be the dissonant tone of this theology, reflected the turbulent times of its genesis,¹⁵³ and Schweitzer hoped that Barth's thought would not influence "the spiritual life of our time." It is unsurprising that when they met for the only time in 1928, they appeared to find little in common.¹⁵⁴

Can we discern an element of anti-Barthianism in *Mystik*? Here we have to be cautious. *Mystik* was almost complete by the time Schweitzer went to Africa in 1913, and he had already tried twice to complete it before he managed the feat in 1930.¹⁵⁵ There must, therefore, be a sense that insofar as the work is anti-Barthian, it is that by default, because it emerged from a different time.¹⁵⁶ For instance, Schweitzer's emphasis upon the concept of mysticism contradicts dialectical theology's negative attitude to the same concept,¹⁵⁷ a point of which Schweitzer was aware,¹⁵⁸ and yet his use of this term predates publication of *Forschung* in 1911. It is also true that in *Mystik* Schweitzer never takes issue with any aspect of Barth's *Römerbrief*, a book with which he was clearly familiar, not least through Martin Werner's own comparison of Barth with Schweitzer, published in 1924, in which analysis of Barth's thought is based almost exclusively on that work. Nevertheless, there appears to be more than

¹⁴⁹ "Hier wird die [...] Grenze zwischen Religion und Denken viel schärfer festgelegt als im Mittelalter [...]. Das Denken hat die Voraussetzungen der Religion gar nicht zu prüfen." (Schweitzer, *Weltreligionen* [cf. fn. 93], 251).

¹⁵⁰ See Erich Grässer, *Albert Schweitzer als Theologe*, Tübingen 1979, 247f.

¹⁵¹ Note his letter to Werner, dated 30th October, 1956: "Mein Widerspruch gegen Barth: dass er sich nicht mit der historischen Wahrheit auseinandersetzt, sondern sie einfach zu ignorieren können glaubt [...]."

¹⁵² "Alle Werke: Pharisäismus." (Schweitzer, *Weltreligionen* [cf. fn. 93], 252). "Es ist etwas Furchtbares um die Behauptung, Religion sei nicht ethisch." (ibid., 416).

¹⁵³ "Modern ist diese Religion, weil sie den Zug zum Unharmonischen und Gewalttätigen in sich hat, [der] zum Wesen des Modernen gehört. [Es] gehört [zu diesem Wesen] das Wohlgefallen an den Dissonanzen [...] and den Dissonanzen der Töne, der Linien und Gedanken." (Schweitzer, *Weltreligionen* [cf. fn. 93], 251f.). See also ibid., 416: "Karl Barth ist der moderne Theologe, weil er am meisten im Geiste unserer Zeit lebt und mehr als irgendein anderer eine Verachtung für das Denken hat, die charakteristisch für unsere Zeit [...]. *Er höhnt über den sogenannten Kulturprotestantismus* (these italicized words [my own] might reflect Barth's attack upon Harnack in particular)" See also ibid., 416: "Er liebt das Gewaltsame. Darum kann der Zeitgeist Karl Barth und Nietzsche gleichzeitig lieben." Both quotations come from the Hibbert lectures of 1934.

¹⁵⁴ The meeting is described in a letter of Barth to Thurneysen, dated 15th November, 1928. Barth characterizes Schweitzer as a man of the Enlightenment who preaches crude 'works-righteousness.' See Karl Barth – Eduard Thurneysen, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 2, 1921–1930, ed. by Eduard Thurneysen, Zurich 1974, 628.

¹⁵⁵ See Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 105), 7.

¹⁵⁶ See Maurice Goguel, *La mystique paulinienne d'après Albert Schweitzer*, in: *RHPhR* 11 (1931), 185–210.

¹⁵⁷ Jaroslav Pelikan in his 'Foreword' to Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, Baltimore–London 1998, xiv–xv, highlights the anti-mystical tones of Brunner, but only to indicate that it was an inauspicious time for Schweitzer to write *Mystik*, not to suggest a concealed attack upon dialectical theology.

¹⁵⁸ See his comments in his Hibbert lectures, where he notes: "Alle Mystik ist Barth und Brunner, den modernen Kirchenvätern, ein Greuel." (Schweitzer, *Weltreligionen* [cf. fn. 93], 252).

a hint of anti-Barthianism in parts of the book which were probably additions to anything Schweitzer had written before he came to finishing it between 1927 and 1930.¹⁵⁹ For instance, in his preface, Schweitzer writes: “My methods have remained old-fashioned,¹⁶⁰ in that I am setting forth the ideas of Paul in their historically conditioned form. *I believe that the mingling of our ways of regarding religion with those of former historical periods, which is now so much practised, often with dazzling cleverness, is of no use as an aid to historical comprehension, and of not much use in the end for our religious life*” (italics my own),¹⁶¹ words which seem to have Barth in their sights. One also wonders to what extent Schweitzer’s insistence in the last chapter of the book on Paul’s identity as a thinker, interacting critically with the Christian tradition, could be similarly construed. What is clear is that, however intentionally anti-Barthian some of the tendencies in *Mystik* were, Harnack would certainly have found the appearance of Schweitzer’s book, with its particular emphases, a tonic, and could have seen it as a potential bulwark against Barth’s own interpretation of Paul, as found in *Römerbrief*.

VIII. Conclusion

Adolf von Harnack and Albert Schweitzer did not play significant parts in each other’s lives. They only met twice, in 1899 and 1929; and their correspondence, though stretching over nearly 20 years, was sporadic. Given this, it is unsurprising that those who have written on either of the two have rarely commented on their relationship.

In many ways they present a study in contrasts. One was a career academic apparently at the centre of German society, the embodiment of German ‘Bildungskultur’, deaf to aspects of the *fin de siècle*. The other ill-at-ease with his fellow academics, in some ways an intellectual outsider scornful of prevailing academic methodologies, and sometimes contemptuous of the academy, intrigued by elements of the *avant-garde*, such as the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, iconoclastic by temperament, not least of elements of the liberal tradition from which Harnack hailed, and in search of a type of moral adventure which would lead him beyond the realms of an academic career. One a man who identified himself as a theologian,¹⁶² wedded to a form of historicism, and suspicious of speculative thought. The other a man, who eschewed the term theologian, preferring to be thought of as a ‘philoso-

¹⁵⁹ This can be asserted because we have a copy of lectures Schweitzer gave, with the title ‘Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus’, in 1911 (see Schweitzer, *Vorlesungen* [cf. fn. 15], 543–691).

¹⁶⁰ Note his characterization of Barth’s work as ‘modern’ in n. 153 above.

¹⁶¹ Schweitzer, *Mysticism* (cf. fn. 157), ix. These words reflect comments in Harnack, *Entstehung*, published in 1927: “In einer Zeit, die, von Lebensfragen beherrscht, in Gefahr sieht, die kritische Wahrheitsfrage gering zu schätzen und sich damit von der streng methodischen Arbeit zu dispensieren, ja sie unter dem Titel ‚Historismus‘ abzulehnen.” (Harnack, *Entstehung* [cf. fn. 92], 1).

¹⁶² See Harnack’s letter to Rade, dated 18th September 1929 (Harnack, *Briefwechsel* [cf. fn. 55], 842): “Für mich selbst bin ich nach wir (sic) vor nur *theologus*, u[nd] meine abgesparten Stunden gehören wie von Jugend auf unserer theol[ogischen] Wissenschaft.”

pher', advocating a view which promoted the strong complementarity of philosophy and religion, and consistently emphasized the priority of thought over the limitations, as he saw them, of historicism. One a Balt, born at the eastern limits of German influence, and, though an internationalist, a strong patriot. The other, born at the western limits of the German Empire, who avoided any form of national allegiance, and was hostile to nationalism. Predictably, then, differences, reflective of these contrasts, have been the subject of this essay.

Less predictably, an attempt has been made to highlight the bond between these two individuals, possibly created at the time of their first meeting in 1899, but stretching back substantively to 1913, when Harnack wrote to Schweitzer praising his second edition of *Die Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, and moving forward to Harnack's warm reception of *Mystik* at the end of the 1920s. This can partly be accounted for by reference to Schweitzer's growing reputation as a medical missionary. But that is only a partial explanation. Other factors were significant. Both shared liberal theological presuppositions, if in distinctive and contrasting ways. Though perceiving the significance of history differently, they were clear that it was important; and they were at one, in broad terms, on the overarching significance of ethics in any assessment of the Christian message, and the corresponding secondary role of dogma, which led both of them to be critical of the institutional churches of their time, with both moving towards non-denominational views of Christianity. Both also shared a typically liberal Jesus-piety, again differently expressed. Moreover, though their views of the central concerns of Jesus' ministry were different, Schweitzer, in his hermeneutical reflections on what Jesus might mean for today, came close, especially in later years, to adopting an opinion which reflected aspects of Harnack's nut and husk approach to the subject, a tendency in his work which would become more emphatic as time went on.

After the First World War, a period marked by a growing cultural pessimism and a sometimes savage discontent with the perceived rationalism of the pre-war period, deriving from the Enlightenment, the two probably considered themselves allies, as they saw much of what they believed under sharp attack. The rise of dialectical theology distressed Harnack in particular, who became the bogeyman of the movement. In the face of such cultural shifts, for which he, a theologian of the 19th, not the 20th century, as one sympathetic obituarist described him,¹⁶³ Schweitzer must have appeared as an ally and an authoritative bulwark against the trends of the time. Harnack's warm reception of Schweitzer's *Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, with its emphasis on the importance of history, its advocacy of Paul as the first great Christian thinker, and the beginning point of a movement towards a theology, based upon Jesus, but thoroughly ethical, must have seemed melodious, not least in its contrast to Barth's *Römerbrief*. True, much that Schweitzer wrote on Paul was not so distant from Harnack's own opinions on the Apostle, and the latter's warm-hearted endorsement of Schweitzer's book seems, from a technical and scholarly point of view, believable. But in the end the bond between these ostensibly very different figures, both of whom viewed themselves as public intellectuals, resulted from a shared set of

¹⁶³ Maurice Goguel, Adolf von Harnack. 7 Mai 1851 – 10 Juin 1930, in: RSR 102 (1930), 123–128.

values, held in sometimes very different ways, but reflecting a ‘world of yesterday’, which Schweitzer would go on representing well after Harnack had died.

Abstract

Adolf von Harnack und Albert Schweitzer sind sich in ihrem Leben nur zweimal, im Jahre 1899 und 1930, begegnet. Während dieser Zeit, vor allem nach dem ersten Weltkrieg, lässt sich ein lebhafter schriftlicher Austausch nachweisen. Unter Heranziehung erst kürzlich veröffentlichter Briefe und anderer relativ unbekannter Dokumente, einschließlich der Bücher aus Schweitzers Nachlass, lotet der Aufsatz Berührungspunkte und die Beziehung der beiden Wissenschaftler zueinander aus. Trotz ihrer verschiedenen theologischen und philosophischen Meinungen, schätzten sich Schweitzer und Harnack gegenseitig und standen sich intellektuell näher, als die Forschung bis jetzt vermutet hat. Diese Hypothese wird besonders durch Harnacks begeisterte Reaktion anlässlich des Erscheinens von Schweitzers im Jahre 1930 veröffentlichten Buches, “Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus” belegt. In ihr hat Harnack nicht nur seine Ansichten über Paulus reflektiert und überdacht, sie kann darüber hinaus auch als Kritik an der vorherrschenden theologischen Atmosphäre der Zeit verstanden werden, die von Karl Barth und anderen inspiriert war. Harnack und Schweitzer waren freilich liberale Theologen unterschiedlicher Art, dennoch setzten sich beide vehement mit den Annahmen der dialektischen Theologie auseinander und von ihr ab.