

seriously endangered by superstition, and New Testament theology shrinks to a doctrine of faith. There the decisive category is inevitably 'individualization' (Conzelmann, 'Rechtfertigungslehre', pp. 401ff.; G. Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 11). I, too, have maintained that God's righteousness and grace are verified in the individual. If this destroys 'the objectivity of salvation history' (Conzelmann, 'Rechtfertigungslehre', p. 402), that may have its uses polemically speaking, if we are once again forced into the alternative of contrasting universal history and the individual. That God's grace and righteousness relate to the world and intend a new creation, not merely a number of believing individuals, seems to me an irrelinquishable truth if the Christian proclamation is to be the foundation of anything more than merely private piety. I must therefore once more replace the alternatives by a dialectic. The justification of the ungodly certainly in the first place affects, in concrete terms, myself. But the phrase is robbed of its full significance if it does not mean salvation for everyman and for the whole world. For even the ungodly only exist, in a remarkably transsubjective way, in the entanglement of all earthly things in sin and death. Adam takes on concrete form in the individual life. But every individual life, with all its possible differentiations, is, conversely, the representation of Adam and of the individual's world. In the struggle with superstition, faith experiences that righteousness of God which was part of the design before faith arrived at its self-understanding and which does not stop there, because it forces faith to go out in service to the world. Salvation reaches out beyond our experience, which is always incomplete and often enough deceptive. Salvation lies in the fact that Christ becomes our lord; and Christ becomes a god of the mysteries when this lordship is restricted to the individual sphere. I did not talk about the gift in isolation for the sake of using abstract terminology or making a perverse distinction (contrary to G. Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 11). I was deeply aware that in the whole of theological history down to the present day the gift has always been isolated from its giver; and that in the gift the Lord who gives himself to us and who reaches out towards us in that gift is pushed into the background. If that is the effect of the Pauline doctrine of justification – and it was already so with the Corinthians and remains so wherever ecclesiology or anthropology move into the centre of theology and obscure the primacy of Christology – then this doctrine is, according to my understanding of it, being deeply misunderstood, both theologically and in its philological and historical sense. For the doctrine is concerned with the one who sets up his kingdom on earth, thereby becoming salvation for all who receive him in faith.<sup>28</sup> It is the theological summing-up of a Christological interpretation: Christ rules over his enemies throughout the world and, as the one who was crucified, gives his grace to the ungodly.

<sup>28</sup> This is why I do not understand G. Bornkamm's criticism, (*Paulus*, p. 156) that the co-ordinate relation of God's righteousness and faith recedes curiously into the background in my writings. The following essay will, I hope, refute this judgment.

## IV

### THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM IN ROMANS 4

Romans 4 holds a key place in the epistle. Here the scriptural evidence is marshalled for the theme of the righteousness of faith which has been expounded in 3.21–31.<sup>1</sup> This only has a point if the faith of Abraham in some respects anticipates Christian faith and was, ultimately speaking, even identical with it.<sup>2</sup> This has now to be proved. The question then inevitably arises how far Paul could establish the existence of Christian faith in the pre-Christian era, and how he was able to get over the apparent contradictions involved.<sup>3</sup> Everything which is irrelevant to this point will be left on one side, since it is not our intention to offer a detailed exegesis of the chapter.

Philo also already depicted Abraham as the prototype of 'faith', thus taking over the Jewish tradition which calls the patriarch 'our father'. Paul's argument, therefore, belongs within a firm traditional context. At the same time, it moves out of that context when it makes Abraham the prototype of Christian faith. By so doing, Paul does not merely demonstrate a different understanding of faith. The polemic which runs through the whole chapter shows that we are dealing here not with an extension or modification of the Jewish view but with its contrast. But this means that in fact the ground is cut away from under

<sup>1</sup> For another view see, for example, A. Schlatter, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 1935, pp. 158f.; T. Hoppe, *Die Idee der Heilsgeschichte*, 1926, p. 65. But this involves the structural division which links ch. 4 with chs. 5–8.

<sup>2</sup> For another view see V. Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 1948, pp. 47f. Taylor does not think that the centre of Paul's teaching is touched on here, and he distinguishes the content of Abraham's faith from the justifying faith of the Christian because it is related to the promise, not to redemption.

<sup>3</sup> For the same question cf. P. Vielhauer, 'Paulus und das Alte Testament' (*Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie der Reformation, Festschrift für E. Bizer*, 1969, pp. 33–62), pp. 43f.

the feet of the Jewish tradition and the Jewish interpretation of the scriptures, and that the patriarch himself is removed from its context. With unbelievable boldness, the apostle always attacked his opponents at the point where they themselves felt most unassailable. Nowhere does this come out more strongly than when he unfolds and defends his doctrine of justification. The point at issue here is the centre of his theology. That is why he shrinks from none of its consequences, however radical. In harsh antitheses he confirms the sovereign freedom of the Christian out of which, in I Cor. 3.21, he cries to his people, 'all things are yours'. The same applies to the patriarch, the tradition based on him and the interpretation of the Old Testament from which Judaism derived its exclusive claim. We must remember that with this a controversy flared up about the true interpretation of scripture, and that for the first time the problem of a Christian hermeneutic became a theological theme.

But it must also be remembered that although Paul occasionally mentions other models of Christian faith out of the Old Testament as well, he sets Abraham apart from them all as prototype. It is only Abraham who is talked about in this way throughout the whole of our chapter. For Paul's remarks about David in v.6 also have provocative force: together with the patriarch, Israel is also deprived of the crown witness of the Messianic king – the second dominating figure of Jewish history as regards its expectations of the future. With the saying from the Psalms ascribed to David, Paul underpins the Christian interpretation of Gen. 15.6 according to the rabbinic rule which demanded two witnesses for every dispute. With this David's function is exhausted, for it is not equal to Abraham's. Finally, it must be noted that no comparison is made between the patriarch and Christ. Liturgical fragments, which Paul puts to paraenetic use, show that the apostle was familiar<sup>4</sup> with the view of Christ as prototype, a view which finds expression in Heb. 12.2, where Christ is described as the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith'. But the notion that this view had a decisive Christological relevance for Paul must be disputed. Whereas through Jesus the lost divine image is manifest once more and is conferred on Christians as their share in the Son, so Christ appears as the second Adam, who ushers in the eschatological creation and thereby remains, as the 'first born', incomparable with his brethren. He is not, like Abraham, the prototype of faith; he is the

<sup>4</sup> E. Larsson's book, *Christus als Vorbild*, 1962, calls for a thorough critical examination.

Lord of his church and the predestined cosmocrator. It is only through this differentiation that the patriarch acquires his proper place in salvation history. He belongs to the old covenant, but unlike Moses he does not mark the antithesis to the proclamation of the gospel, but rather the point at which the old covenant points beyond itself to the new; that is to say, he represents the promise.

After these preliminary remarks let us consider what each of the sections 1–8, 9–12, 13–22, 23–25 have to say about Abraham's faith. If my opening thesis is correct, the nature of the Christian faith according to Paul's understanding of it must here also be summed up in its essentials. According to Rom. 3.21–31 this centre is belief in justification. But Paul was not content to derive this assertion from the scriptures as a necessary conclusion, important though the appeal to divine documentation was for him. The unusually careful and detailed argument has evidently a particular trend which leads from belief in justification to belief in the resurrection, its point lying in the fact that the two are identical. The thesis of 3.21 ff. takes on a sharper emphasis and a clearer significance from the context of scriptural proof. Our analysis must show whether this last assumption holds water – whether, that is, we are confronted with a self-contained argument without significant deviations. First, admittedly, Paul's dominating concern is to give 3.21 ff. scriptural support as a firm legal basis, which would also be binding on his Jewish opponents, and to screen it against possible objections.

As in Gal. 3.6, Paul draws on Gen. 15.6 for support. From I Macc. 2.52 onwards, rabbinic reflections on this passage<sup>5</sup> (which are still reflected in James 2.23) allowed faith as trust in the divine promise (and especially the monotheistic confession as the sum of faith) to be itself a work; and the divine acceptance was hence considered as a juridical ratification of an existing piety. Philo was thus able to talk about the specific work of righteousness.<sup>6</sup> The apostle does not avoid the arena prescribed by his opponents, but he enters it under the pre-suppositions of his own theology. For Paul, faith does not mean, as it does for Philo, that a devout disposition of the soul builds character in the storms of life and proves itself in faithfulness. Like Palestinian Judaism, the aspect of faith he stressed was action; that is why he talked about the obedience of faith. This was admittedly somewhat dangerous because of the possible misunderstanding that what is

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Billerbeck on the passage; Heidland, *TWNT* IV, p. 292.

<sup>6</sup> *Quis rer. div. her.*, 95.

aimed at here is a life lived in increasing holiness. This would be to give increased countenance to the notion of 'works', which Paul wants fundamentally to exclude. The lack of clarity was increased by the long and bitter dispute about whether the apostle preached a forensic-imputative or an effective righteousness. The alternative is a false one, because it is directed against two opposing modern misinterpretations. Of course, the apostle did not interpret the divine promise in the sense that it sets us under an 'as if' as recipients of a righteousness which has no earthly equivalent. Nor, on the other hand, did he permit righteousness to be considered as a gift which could be detached from the giver and transferred to our possession. God's Word is for him, as it is for the Old Testament and for Judaism, creative power; but for that very reason it is incalculable; it is not at our disposal or demonstrable to human controls. We remain constantly dependent on it afresh, and we possess it only so long as it possesses us. It sets us in the kingdom of Christ and deprives us of our autonomy. Thus the obedience of faith means essentially the existence and the abiding under the promise which we have heard, and which must prove itself in the Christian life. The missionary situation, in which faith was in the first place acceptance of the Christian message, has kept alive this understanding.<sup>7</sup> Old Testament passages such as Gen. 15.6, which stress the aspect of trust in the divine promise, see to it that the 'forensic' relation of the declaration of righteousness as being a free pardon (a relation which also dominates the verb 'to justify') cannot be forgotten.

Faith therefore does not take on independent existence as a religious attitude or Christian virtue. It is not *fides historica* or *fides implicita*, i.e., the acceptance as true of certain facts of sacred history or an assent to an acknowledged ecclesiastical dogmatic. In so far as he accepts both, the believer does so in order to characterize his Lord, not in order to establish a certain *Weltanschauung* or theological system. Otherwise he would simply be ceasing to remain in the obedience of constant listening, which also makes him critical towards any existing historical or dogmatic tradition which takes on an independent existence. The Lord who speaks to him cannot be replaced by institutions, theologies and convictions, even when these interpret themselves as being the documentations of that Lord. Of course we must now be equally vigilant towards the opposite danger: faith must be rescued from the dimension of recurrent religious experience.

<sup>7</sup> Bultmann, *TWNT* VI, p. 209.

Demons also produce overpowering events; so ecstasies, visions, miracles and experiences determined by these things can by no means count as a specifically Christian characteristic.<sup>8</sup> According to Paul's view, faith is not yet in a position to see directly; it is bound to preaching's power of revelation, which we cannot perceive once and for all. The Lord remains the one who acts towards us in his Word, and he remains this only when the message about him reveals the unmistakable features of the Nazarene and moulds us accordingly.

To talk about the 'object' and 'content' of faith is completely inadequate and highly confusing, because the Lord who acts is here forced into a neutral category and thus into the dimension of what is at our disposal and can be replaced by something else. This is not avoided even when, as in recent times, faith is made 'primarily God's decision'.<sup>9</sup> It is true that Gal. 3.23ff. talks about the manifestation of faith in personified form, which would seem to lend support to this way of looking at things. But this is a description of the earthly effect – almost the objectification – of the gospel which replaces the power and human representation of the law; and that fits into the wider context of those passages in which a pale version of faith in faded form is identified with Christianity or, as *fides quae creditur*, means the crystallization of the gospel in the creed. These definitions are designed to bring out the fact that faith must not be turned into a hypostasis which can be separated from the believing person.

In view of certain tendencies which are again common today, we must put this point more precisely: as the acceptance of the divine address, faith in Paul remains primarily a decision of the individual person, and its importance must not therefore be shifted away from anthropology to ecclesiology.<sup>10</sup> It is true that a man never believes in isolation; but he is none the less irreplaceable in himself, and the Christian community is the company of those who have personally turned away from superstition and cannot be dispensed from this by anything or anybody. In so far as the renunciation of the superstition which is a constant threat and temptation even to Christians is a

<sup>8</sup> That is why it is so open to misunderstanding and so problematical when O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 1967, p. 323, says that salvation history overwhelms us and that we are included in it in such a way that faith involves both the facts communicated and the interpretative revelation about these facts.

<sup>9</sup> F. Neugebauer, *In Christus*, 1961, p. 165ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167ff.; E. Jünger, 'Theologische Wissenschaft und Glaube im Blick auf die Armut Jesu', *EvTh* 24, 1964, p. 430; P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus*, 1966, p. 81.

characteristic of faith, it can be described as a movement between 'no longer' and 'not yet'.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, this pattern characterizes the whole of life and hence is not sufficient for a precise definition. The real point is the constantly new hearing of, and holding fast to, the divine Word, which drives us to constant exodus and always strains forward to what lies ahead, that is to say to God's future. The essential thing is still that we do not set ourselves in motion, but that we are called out of ourselves through God's Word and miracle. We cannot therefore interpret our faith as our own work, but only as grace, which is conferred on us, in the face of the world, without our deserts and in the midst of unavoidable temptation. Faith is brought about by the creator by means of his mighty Word.

These are the theological premises which lie behind Paul's reading and interpretation of Gen. 15.6. Abraham submitted without reservation to the divine promise and was therefore 'righteous'. Righteousness before God and righteousness received from God cannot be achieved in any other way. The apostle draws a conclusion from this which shocked both friend and foe during his own lifetime and has remained a stumbling block to the devout ever since. He proclaims the justification of the ungodly and thereby gives his theology its sharpest spear-head. Admittedly this is only explicitly stated in this one passage. But that does not mean that we are at liberty to brush aside the statement as a rhetorical exaggeration. Statistics cause just as much confusion and have just as many unfortunate results in theology as they do elsewhere. It is important to see that it is only the formulation used here which makes the whole of the rest of the chapter's argument possible, and that it yields up the indispensable key to Paul's doctrine of justification. We are not taking it seriously if we explain it psychologically in terms of the apostle's strong ethical self-criticism, in which the distinction between the 'righteous' and sinners becomes first relative and then irrelevant.<sup>12</sup> It is equally inadmissible to use the formula which is apparently based on the divine predicates of the liturgy (and which is consequently a fundamental characterization of the divine action) in order to deduce a process of development from it: before justification man was certainly ungodly – Israel and all the 'godly' would bitterly oppose this! – but he ceased to be so when once he was set upon the

<sup>11</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theology I*, p. 322.

<sup>12</sup> The view taken, for example, by T. Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, 31925, p. 223; E. Köhl, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, 1913, p. 135.

path of sanctification.<sup>13</sup> Finally, it shows a complete misunderstanding of the statement if we translate it into moral terms and talk about the justification of the wicked.<sup>14</sup>

Because he lays claim to no religious achievements and merits, and precisely because he is *not* to be viewed as 'an example of an outstanding religious personality',<sup>15</sup> Abraham is ungodly, in so far as he cannot be called 'good', measured against the standards of the Jewish<sup>16</sup> and Greek worlds. He does not deal in works. For that very reason he is, on the other hand, the prototype of faith,<sup>17</sup> which always has to be viewed in antithesis to a piety of works. Thus he receives the blessing spoken to David in vv. 7f.: forgiveness inevitably only falls to the lot of the man who is not 'good' in the usual sense of performing good works, i.e., the man who is ungodly. On the other hand, God shows his divinity in that he acts forgivingly, i.e., turns towards the ungodly. The present tense in v. 5 shows clearly that he always behaves in this way, just as according to v. 17 he is always the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. The centre of our passage is to be found in Paul's separation between faith and what is generally called goodness; and he can only bring this out, as he does in 3.29f., when he gives a challengingly new definition, contrary to the prevailing view, of what the nature and work of the true God really is.

Verses 9–12 assume that the blessing which we have quoted applied to Israel. It must then be asked whether the righteousness of faith does not also remain confined to the sphere of the circumcision. The apostle, following the official view of the synagogue, argues that Gen. 15.6 precedes the demand for circumcision in Gen. 17.10f. by twenty-nine years.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, circumcision cannot have been the presupposition; it must have been the 'seal' (i.e., the documentation and legitimation) of Abraham's justification. Since the meaning of circumcision is discussed in this way, the problem of the righteousness of faith enters the sphere of salvation history, and we make things too easy for ourselves if we brush that aside out of our historical knowledge as being the abstruse reasoning of Jewish scriptural exegesis and

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, *Forgiveness*, pp. 57f.

<sup>14</sup> H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer*, 41933, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 81941, p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Stuhlmacher, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>17</sup> G. Bornkamm, *Paulus*, 1969, p. 152, : 'man's prototype'.

<sup>18</sup> P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch III*, 1926, p. 203.

as having no importance for ourselves. Even if we no longer accept Paul's argument, we have by no means finished factually with the link between justification and salvation history. Behind it lurks the problem of the relationship between faith and the world, which the Christian simply dare not avoid. Moreover, not to take it into account is to miss the path of access into the third section of the chapter, as we shall see.

For Judaism, Abraham counted as the father of all proselytes.<sup>19</sup> The apostle does not dispute this view in principle. But it would be too little if we see what he says simply as an expansion of the notion. For, practically speaking, he reverses its intention. The proselyte receives a share in the divine covenant and its righteousness. But Abraham received this share before his circumcision, and is hence the father of all believers who are not proselytes. Verse 12 seems to limit this statement. A permanent relationship between the patriarch and the circumcision is in fact preserved, in order not to rob Israel of its right of succession, in salvation history, to the promise.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, to concede the text merely a co-ordinating 'both . . . and' sense is to miss its tendency. For the Jews it was already unendurable that the circumcision should only be mentioned second. And Paul goes even further when, as in 2.25ff., the circumcision of the heart is made the decisive thing. The promise to Abraham then really only applies to the group of the circumcised who have become Christians.

These insights make it necessary to take up a double front in the present discussion about Pauline salvation history. The choice of the patriarch as example and prototype would be absurd if we were meant to confine the possibility of experiencing the divine righteousness to the period *post Christum crucifixum*.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the appeal to the Old Testament so characteristic of Paul would then lose all positive theological significance, so that, following Marcion's footsteps, we should also have to draw the necessary conclusions as regards the canon. The slogan 'no theological differentiation of Jews and Gentiles'<sup>22</sup> does not commend itself as the bearing either of this passage or of 3.29f., because it formalizes the idea of the *justificatio impii* and at most describes its highly problematical effect in Gentile

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>20</sup> U. Wilckens, 'Zu Römer 3, 21-4, 25', *EvTh* 24, 1964, pp. 599ff.

<sup>21</sup> G. Klein, 'Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte' (now in the collection of essays, *Rekonstruktion und Interpretation*, 1969, pp. 145-79), p. 148.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Christendom, a point which Paul himself considers in Rom. 11.15ff. The view that the history of Israel is 'radically profaned and paganized'<sup>23</sup> demonstrates precisely the arrogance against which we are warned in 11.20. No one can be forbidden to go beyond the apostle if his own theology forces him to do so. But to do this in the name of the apostle and of our chapter is simply unjustifiable, because that is to do violence to both. On the other hand, it is completely true that here not only is a particular understanding of salvation history being expounded - another one is being simultaneously destroyed;<sup>24</sup> and 'that the category of a salvation history running its course in chronological continuity is inappropriate as a hermeneutical principle for the illumination of Paul's picture of Abraham'.<sup>25</sup> It is not by chance that the idea of the holy remnant (which was so important to Jewish Christianity, providing a verifiable transition from Israel according to the flesh to Christianity) plays no part in Paul's writings except for Rom. 9.27ff.; 11.4f., 13ff. But there it is offered as a highly paradoxical indication, contrary to all appearances, of a divine mystery and a miracle which is only credible in the light of the divine promise. What Paul is *not* doing is guarding a perceptible and in the earthly sense unbroken continuity between Abraham and Christ, which could fit into the theological formula of promise and fulfilment. After all, it is a pure postulate that Abraham was bound to believe in the eschatological ratification of the promise.<sup>26</sup> In reality he would then, stripped of his historicity, be nothing more than a mysterious cypher in a plan of salvation reconstructed by the Gnostics.

In the face of both viewpoints we must cling to the fact that the apostle did not detach faith from world history. Nevertheless, it shows a gross misunderstanding when on the one hand the decisions of faith are belittled and the problem of Israel, with which Paul wrestled so hard, is got out of the way by means of a theological amputation; or when, on the other hand,<sup>27</sup> faith is defined as being fundamentally faith in history and history as being faith's primary foundation. Whereas in the first case the divine Word becomes a promise to curiously isolated individuals, in the second it becomes an interpretation of history which merely satisfies speculation. In vv. 9-12 the privileges claimed by Israel are demolished. God's righteous-

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158 and passim.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>26</sup> U. Wilckens, 'Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams nach Römer 4', *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen*, pp. 111-27; p. 125.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 127.

ness cannot be limited to the realm of the circumcision, which even Abraham entered as one already justified and which is not able to guarantee true faith. Abraham is not to be interpreted through Moses or determined by him. For then, according to 3.29, God would become the private idol of the Jews instead of the creator. On the other hand, there is the Abraham who believed, and who was justified by his faith, and there are his successors in the form of those Jewish Christians who have undergone the circumcision of the heart. Salvation does not belong merely to the Gentiles who have believed. There is an Israel under the promise which can only be denied if, like Marcion, we replace creation by Christology. For the abolition of the privileges claimed by the Jews does not mean the abolition of the *protevangelium* in the promise, which was bound to Israel. Justification does not set aside salvation history, but it removes its barriers by tearing down the fence of the law and refusing to leave salvation in a private reserve. It shows that God deals with the world, not merely with the godly. Israel can only follow Abraham's footsteps through faith, i.e., it is saved not through its piety and its tradition, but through the *justificatio impii*. Salvation history is the history of the divine Word, which finds out faith and makes superstition possible; it is, therefore, not marked by a visible earthly continuity but by interruptions and paradoxes; again and again its path leads over the grave out of which it brings the dead to life. We must not deny salvation history, however, because God's Word in its activity permeates the world in its breadth and depth.

This is the only key to the theme of the third section of the chapter, which is determined by the catchword of Abraham as 'heir of all things' and weaves unwearying variations on this theme in unmistakably polemical tones. That is why Paul talks in v. 16 about 'all his descendants' and 'the father of us all', and this is taken up in v. 17f. in the biblical predicate, 'the father of many (Gentile) nations'. The promise of Israel's occupation of the promised land was extended as in Eccles. 44.21: 'He promised him . . . to cause them to inherit from sea to sea, and from the River (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth.' Matt. 5.5 and I Cor. 6.2 show that the promise could be transposed into the eschatological sphere. Applied to the bearers of the promise, it is summed up in the technical formula, 'heir of all things', which in Heb. 1.2, in accordance with the apocalyptic tradition, also characterizes the Messiah. The Pauline polemic which is associated with these statements brings out the point that the

universalism of such assertions of salvation cannot be attained via the law.<sup>28</sup> This universalism expresses itself most sharply in the fact that the apostle undoubtedly understands by the nations mentioned in Gen. 17.5 the Gentiles who have become Christian. Again the promise to Israel, which is valid and has been fulfilled through the Jewish Christians, is not abrogated. But the stress lies unmistakably on the point that the promise bursts apart this circle of receivers. To be the child of Abraham is no longer the privilege of Judaism; it is not even the mark of Jewish Christians alone. The patriarch is the heir of all things in that the Gentiles, too, are his children, in the form of those of them who are Christians; they are his 'seed', and not merely if they are proselytes. Abraham, who was himself justified before his circumcision simply on the basis of his faith, not his works, is the prototype of the justification of the ungodly and, as the Gentile Christians prove, is thus also the father of the justified ungodly. The theological formula found in v.5 has therefore now been historically illustrated and interpreted, and the thesis of 3.21ff. is thereby confirmed at the same time.

Meanwhile, however, the horizon of these statements has broadened out to universal dimensions. The faith which accepts God's promise, and is thereby justifying faith, lays claim to that participation in the universal kingdom of its Lord which was already promised to the prototype of this faith. The hearing of the promise does not end with the listener, but sends him out to be tested in the world and in history. If we are separated from the world and history by the cross, then what belongs to the world cannot become the content and foundation of our faith, even in the form of salvation history. But the world remains faith's battleground and the horizon of the divine grace which reaches out to the world and history in the divine Word. Faith only lives from hearing, not from seeing miraculous events. But it does not remain mere hearing to the extent that it does not have to prove itself, or as if hearing were the final goal of the promise. In order to prevent a common misunderstanding, it must, on the other hand, be stressed that faith is not identical with love. Hearing has a primacy which cannot be replaced by anything else. Faith is not *fides caritate* but *verbo formata*, so arriving, nevertheless, at the universality of being open for everything and everyone and of breaking out of an isolable and abstract *punctum mathematicum* into the sphere of love which stands the test.

<sup>28</sup> J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 1967, p. 146.

At this point, in order to make the boldness of the following statements comprehensible, we must briefly consider the relationship of promise and gospel. Here it is all important to avoid that formalization of the concepts used which the idea of development, and especially the scheme of promise and fulfilment, suggests. The point in Paul is that the promise, according to Gal. 3.8 for example, is to be understood as the anticipation or complement<sup>29</sup> of the gospel, is substantially identical with it, and is termed only another aspect of the revelation in the Word.<sup>30</sup> It is the gospel pre-given in salvation history, its historical concealment, whereas the gospel itself is the promise eschatologically revealed and open to the day. The gospel replaces the law but not the promise; indeed it has itself the character of promise in that it does not free us from temptation and gives us, with the gift of the spirit, expectation of final redemption. The co-ordination of promise and gospel brings out the fact that eschatological happening breaks into real history, thus designating the latter as the sphere in which the divine creativity and providence have always ruled. The distinction makes it clear that history and eschatology do not coincide, but are united merely through the Word of the divine self-promise. The promise entered history by concealing itself in the scriptures. The gospel, with its universal proclamation and revelation of the depths of history, liberated the promise from this concealment.<sup>31</sup>

It is essential to recognize this substantial identity of promise and gospel if we are to understand why, in a difficult transition, the faith of Abraham is depicted from 4.17b onwards as faith in God's power of resurrection. As in II Cor. 1.9, Paul here picks up the divine predicate out of the second of the Eighteen Benedictions of the Jewish liturgy: 'Yahweh, who givest life to the dead'.<sup>32</sup> That explains his unusual use of the verb 'give life to' instead of 'raise'. Another common Jewish formula is linked with it and (at least here) is also adapted to the liturgical style. This proclaims that God's sovereign creativity takes the form of the Word, that the call of the creator constantly issues forth and that the raising of the dead must be shifted into this context. For the point of the resurrection is not survival beyond the grave but an eschatological *creatio ex nihilo*, since it has

<sup>29</sup> J. Schniewind, *TWNT* II, p. 575.

<sup>30</sup> Moltmann, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> As against this, H. Ulonska's remarks in *Paulus und das Alte Testament*, diss. Münster 1964, pp. 207f., 216, seems grotesque.

<sup>32</sup> Billerbeck III, p. 212.

been from the beginning of the world the work of the creator who acts through his Word.

The theologoumenon of the *creatio ex nihilo* has been disputed as regards Jewish tradition.<sup>33</sup> This is correct, in that it is not, as in a certain Greek philosophy,<sup>34</sup> thought of as a principle or in the abstract. 'Formless matter' is the presupposition for creation in Wisdom 11.17, for example, and II Macc. 7.28 states polemically and contrary to Greek speculation that God 'did not make them out of the things that existed'. Interest is directed, not towards the origin of matter, but towards the almighty power of the creator, whose Word breaks through all resistance. But this is the starting point for liturgical addresses such as that in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (II Baruch) 21.4: 'O Thou . . . that hast called from the beginning of the world that which did not yet exist.' 48.8 is especially impressive: 'With a word Thou quickenest that which was not.' Philo is also familiar with this tradition (whether Greek material also influenced him need not concern us here). In *De specialibus legibus* IV, 187, he writes: 'He called the things that are not into being', and in *De opificio mundi*, 81: 'He brought the things that were not into being.' We need not follow up other parallels and their survival, for example in Hermas, *Mandates* I; II Clement 1.8; *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII, 12.7. But it is important that in 1QH 3.11ff.; 11.10ff., entry into the community is viewed as a new creation.<sup>35</sup> Finally, we cannot dispense with *Joseph and Asenath* 8.9: 'Thou who givest life to the universe and callest it out of darkness into light and out of terror into truth and out of death into life.' For here, as in the two strophes of Col. 1.15ff., we find a link between the creation of the world and redemption, interpreted as the resurrection of the dead; and this also explains the connection of the liturgical formulae in Rom. 4.17b. According to *Barnabas* VI. 13, the primal period and the end-time correspond, so that the resurrection of the dead appears as the eschatological new creation. But that must be termed *creatio ex nihilo*. If it were not so, the whole association of ideas would lose its point: the resurrection of the dead is, as is nothing else, creation out of nothing. But if it points back to the first creation, that means that God's action in history is always brought to bear, from the beginning to the end, on what is in

<sup>33</sup> A. Ehrhardt, 'Creatio ex nihilo', *The Framework of the New Testament Stories*, 1964, pp. 200-34: pp. 210ff.

<sup>34</sup> W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1958, col. 442.

<sup>35</sup> E. Sjöberg, 'Neuschöpfung in den Toten-Meer-Rollen', *St.Th.* 9, 1955, pp. 131ff.

itself nothing; this is what the apostle expressly states in II Cor. 3.5f. in reference to service in the proclamation of the gospel as well. II Cor. 4.7ff.; 12.9; 13.4 are variations on this idea, which is constitutive for Pauline theology, while I Cor. 1.26ff. formulates it with an eye to the make-up of the church. It is not a theology of revolution which finds its expression here, but a radicalized doctrine of God and creation, acquired in the light of the cross of Christ. Unlike the idols, the Father of Jesus works with poor, fundamentally perishable material, and always most profoundly for and with the dead.

The point of such statements lies in the fact that justification is part of this context. It is the *creatio ex nihilo* which takes place in the eschatological era; it is an anticipation of the resurrection of the dead in the midst of still-existing earthly temptation. As such it must necessarily be, and is bound to remain, *justificatio impii*. It does not base salvation on what we are capable of and what we do; consequently it shatters every human (and more especially every religious) self-sufficiency and self-security. We remain at the point where the justification of the ungodly is valid, in the condition of those who are incapable of self-praise and who have to live from faith alone. To this extent the reverse side of true faith is always the *redigi ad nihilum*, as is made plain from the example of Abraham in vv. 19–21. It is grotesque if the theme of these verses is clouded by the assumption that the patriarch's generative powers were miraculously preserved.<sup>36</sup> But it is not doing justice to the text, either, to follow the *koine* reading in v. 19, according to which Abraham 'paid no regard' to the death of his own powers and Sarah's. This destroys the paradox that (as is expressly stated in verse 18) the believing man hopes at the very point where there is, in the earthly sense, nothing more to hope for. He does not by-pass realities, but is aware of them and holds his ground notwithstanding. He does not escape into illusion, not even in the name of piety and edification. He sees himself confronted with death and nothingness on earth, both in himself and in what he sees in the world surrounding him. Thus far it is not the *credo quia absurdum* that describes man but, in the judgment of human reason, the *credo absurdum*. He dares to trust the divine promise, contrary to every earthly reality, and to rely on him who raises the dead.<sup>37</sup> For this he

<sup>36</sup> O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief*, 1957, p. 192. For the opposing view, cf. Bornkamm, *Paulus*, p. 153.

<sup>37</sup> Conzelmann, *Outline*, p. 171: the object of faith is not the man who is delivered, but the delivering Word of God. O. Cullmann's opposing view in *Salvation in History*, pp. 70f., 120, is problematical, and probably not merely in its formulation.

has no pledge except the promise; and he has experienced no miracle; no redemptive history taking place before him, on his behalf or after him, frees him from the necessity of living every day anew, simply from the promise of the God who has given that promise to him. That is what the justification of the ungodly means: where it is a question of salvation or disaster the believer does not look to any verifiable, already existing facts – either to facts of world history, or the facts of his own moral and religious existence, or to pious traditions. He stands fast at the point where *creatio ex nihilo* has to take place and man's becoming man has always to begin anew, i.e., at the point where God in his sole efficacy and grace remain the first Word and the last. Even the sanctification of the Christian life does not change this. It does not remove us from the place where God's Word has to create us afresh every day, has to call us anew from nothingness into being, has to bring us out of death into life. It is constantly *reditus ad baptismum*, a lived hearing of the Word of creation which proves itself in the response of our acting. Without this Word we are and remain ungodly, even in our 'goodness'. That God has spoken to us, and does not cease to speak to us, is our only salvation; that we allow this Word to be spoken to us and dare to live by it is our sanctification and justification. No achievement of our own annuls our ungodliness, which can always only be ended through the divine promise given to us, hence only in faith as the state of being *coram deo*. We do not transcend ourselves. God comes to us in his promise and makes us righteous – righteous in that we, as the receivers, allow him to come to us.

Verses 23–25 do not add any new argument to the scriptural proof but appeal to the reader from the liturgical tradition: *tua res agitur*. The relation of the scriptures to the present is brought out, as vv. 23f. expressly stress. This does not mean that the historical events, as Paul was capable of seeing them, lost their independent significance, as would have been the case if they had been pure illustrations and more or less arbitrarily chosen examples.<sup>38</sup> Admission into the scriptures undoubtedly gave the apostle access to the historical dimension and the course of history, although he did not, of course, share our modern way of thinking. The antithesis between historical

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He talks about the 'aligning' of oneself in the sequence of events presented by salvation history.

<sup>38</sup> Against Conzelmann, *Outline*, pp. 169f.

and eschatological was once a great help in critical research. As a principle it can hardly be maintained anywhere at all in the New Testament. The two are joined together through a singular dialectic in which the eschatological view first encroaches on mere history and what it understands as such, and turns the past into eschatology's dimension in depth; whereas later (in a change which introduces a new theological phase) eschatology is increasingly historicized, i.e., is incorporated into a process of development. Paul did not yet use the Old Testament as a book of images and a collection of examples, like I Clement. For he was not yet interested in an ecclesiastical morality and in the divine *paideia* as education in Christian character. As is clear from our text as well as from Rom. 15.4; I Cor. 9.10; 10.11, he related all history, in so far as it was preserved in the scriptures, to the end-time, finding in it the harbinger of what was to come and the criterion for a proper understanding of the present. He holds fast to the identity of the God who reveals himself in history, because not to do so would be to lose the creator, as was the case with Marcion. Historical interpretation as a whole is alien to Paul. He refuses to surrender the documentation of the divine will towards salvation throughout all history. It is deposited in the scriptures, but is also concealed in them, because these scriptures were only available to Israel. It was only the inspiration which came about with the proclamation of the gospel that brought out of its historical concealment this documentation of the divine will towards salvation and its eschatological relationship, revealing it to the whole world as the now open secret of the eternal faithfulness of God.

This eternally faithful God had always brought about and had always intended the justification of the ungodly. Verse 24 describes this as the insight of the man who believes in Jesus as the Lord who has been raised from the dead. It stands in the clarity and openness which was denied to Abraham. Abraham's faith as paradoxical trust in the mere divine promise which contradicted every human expectation was not an act of perversity and despair which for some incomprehensible reason had a happy ending. In the light of Christ its rightness and its necessity is proved. This is what always happens when faith encounters the true God and surrenders to him. Abraham is the prototype of Christian faith which reads the justification of the ungodly, unmistakably and scandalously, in the message of the cross. Christ was put to death for our trespasses. But, as always in Paul, the cross and the resurrection count as a single event. The two are co-

ordinated in v.25, to begin with rhetorically and liturgically. But as in v.17b, the justification is obviously and markedly aligned to the proclamation of the resurrection. What was once and for all substantiated through the death of Jesus happens afresh wherever faith in the one who is risen is present. The reign of the risen Christ is the sphere of revealed righteousness. This statement offers the transition to chs. 5-8, which have to deal with justification as the reality of new life under the sign of our own coming resurrection.

Belief in God's power of resurrection is identical with belief in justification, in so far as the justification of the ungodly must not only be experienced once and for all, but must be clung to as constitutive of the whole Christian life and the constant action of the creator. Here we are not only dealing with a beginning, but with the central theme of salvation history in general and hence also with the central theme of our own future. Since it is the activity of the creator directed towards nothingness, the resurrection of the dead is the presupposition for the justification of the ungodly; and, as our hope, it is the ultimately unassailable ratification of justification. Abraham reached out for it merely on the strength of God's promise. Anyone who reads the scriptures in the light of the eschatological event understands that in so doing he was reaching out towards the reality of Christ, which was still hidden from him.

We have now, finally, to make clear to ourselves what intellectual premises allowed Paul to depict the patriarch as the prototype of Christian faith, thus bridging the temporal gap with unusual boldness. This question inevitably brings us to the problem of typology, which is factually and conceptually hotly disputed but is still ultimately unresolved. It has even been denied that typology is present at all in Rom. 4, because the apostle's scriptural proof does not draw on the aspect of repetition.<sup>39</sup> This view is undoubtedly mistaken. We have been ceaselessly concerned to show that Abraham prefigures Christian faith; and v.24 presents him expressly as what Neugebauer calls, with epigrammatic terseness, 'the type of the new people of God' and 'pre-existent member of the *ekklesia*'.<sup>40</sup> Yet the dispute remains hopeless as long as people continue to discuss the general nature and structure of typology or its individual characteristics

<sup>39</sup> R. Bultmann, 'Ursprung und Sinn der Typologie als hermeneutischer Methode' (now in *Exegetica*, 1967, pp.369-80), p.377; H. Conzelmann, *Outline*, p.170; K. Kertelge, *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*, 1967, pp.185,193; U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 1968, p.179ff.; Vielhauer, *op. cit.*, p.41.

<sup>40</sup> *In Christus*, p.168.

instead of first confining the problem to Paul and working out the basic nature of typology from there.

It is superficial to talk about a unique form of comparison<sup>41</sup> or analogy,<sup>42</sup> because the borders between typology and imagery, symbol or allegory then become fluid.<sup>43</sup> It is still only a short step from this, if we set Pauline typology in the framework of the difference between the provisional and the final,<sup>44</sup> or, more concretely, in the framework of salvation history, so far as this is determined by analogy and climax, repetition and consummation.<sup>45</sup> Whatever may be correct about this, an exact clarification is not to be achieved along these lines. On the other hand, this desired precision is not achieved either if typology is traced back in religio-historical terms to the context of a cyclical thinking, and is ordered under the heading of repetition.<sup>46</sup> If that is correct, it certainly does not take us any further in Paul. For him, history is directed towards a fixed goal, and the background is no longer a cyclic view of history but the doctrine of the two aeons. From the starting point of this presupposition, the existence of typology in its original sense in Paul must be denied, or it must be seen as being the remains of an earlier view which was no longer of decisive importance for him. In either case it must be subordinated to his prophetic argument. From the perspective of radical historical criticism, however, the opposite attempt is also somewhat improbable, if not impossible: this traces back New Testament typology essentially to Jesus and calls its Pauline variation the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, which it considers the constitutive interpretation for Paul.<sup>47</sup> For though it cannot be denied that this use of the Old Testament has its importance, it is parallel to the argument from prophecy, to allegory and to paraenetic application, and is by no means paramount.<sup>48</sup>

If we try to distinguish Pauline typology from other kinds of interpretation, we must first be clear that, like the rest, the Pauline method is bound to the scriptures and therefore does not apply to non-biblical events and figures. That at least already distinguishes it from

<sup>41</sup> K. Galley, *Altes und neues Heilsgeschehen bei Paulus*, 1965, pp. 161ff.

<sup>42</sup> H. Müller, *Die Auslegung alttestamentlichen Geschichtsstoffes bei Paulus*, Dissertation, Halle, 1960, pp. 93ff.

<sup>43</sup> Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, pp. 133f.

<sup>44</sup> W. Huber, *Passa und Ostern*, 1969, p. 90.

<sup>45</sup> Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 132f., 146.

<sup>46</sup> The view taken by Bultmann in the essay mentioned above.

<sup>47</sup> L. Goppelt's view in *Typos*, 1939.

<sup>48</sup> Contrary to Goppelt, *Typos*, p. 154.

cyclical thinking in general. It differs from prophecy and allegory in that, though it certainly implies a biblical text, it views it as the tradition of an event;<sup>49</sup> the exegesis of details is only of secondary importance. Prophecy and allegory basically maintain the fulfilment of a particular text and the relevance of its details. Moreover, prophecy appears as applying directly to the future event of its eschatological fulfilment. It has an exclusively forward-pointing significance. For typology and allegory, this application to the future is at least not direct or exclusive; it at most arises out of the subsequent comparison of a present situation with a historically veiled past. Here correspondences or antitheses are brought out. Moreover, in allegory the historical event counts as the shroud for a veiled allusion to the future, which is the sole point. In typology, however, the historical has its own reality and importance. Its relation to the future belongs to a deep-lying stratum which has first to be laid bare – laid bare not as the hidden meaning of a text, but as the correlation of events which either correspond or stand in defiant contrast to one another.

In the light of all this, current categories associated with typology lose much of their value. That is true, for example, of the catchword 'prefiguration',<sup>50</sup> because in Rom. 5.12ff., for example, type and antitype are seen antithetically and in counter-movement. The same passage shows that no decisive weight, at least, is assigned to the aspects of climax or repetition. We must firmly lay aside the perspectives of promise and fulfilment. The relation of the bearers of curse and blessing is based on the fact that both are bearers of the world's destiny. If the blessing proves itself mightier than the curse, that is not substantiated in the typology as such.

For Pauline typology, the correspondence of primeval history (to which, in the Jewish view, the Exodus tradition also belongs) with the end-time is constitutive; here repetition and climax may play their part. It is the events which are important, not the individual words. The development from type to antitype is normal because the end-time will be more glorious than the primeval period. But it can be omitted for the sake of contrast. The repetition, as we find it in exemplary fashion in Rom. 4, is now no longer to be explained on the basis of a cyclical course of events; it represents the unique correspondence of the primeval era and the end-time. Consequently

<sup>49</sup> L. Goppelt, 'Apokalyptik und Typologie bei Paulus', *TLZ* 89, 1964, cols. 329f.

<sup>50</sup> cf. Goppelt and also E. Fuchs, *Hermeneutik*, 1954, p. 192.

typology is in fact well suited to minister to the outlook based on salvation history. At the same time, it is not the continuity of a development which it brings out but, through the correspondence or antithesis of beginning and end, the pivot of history. Here attention is not directed towards the individual as example but towards whatever is pregnant with destiny, which spreads over into individual existence. Typology has a cosmic dimension and to that degree belongs to the sphere of Pauline apocalyptic.<sup>51</sup> Because this is so, it modifies the pattern of the two aeons, which either follow one another in time or, as the heavenly and the earthly, are contrasted with one another in space. Typology can take up both variations, i.e., the prefigurations and antitheses of the eschatological event in the primeval period, as well as the reflections and contrasts of the heavenly in the earthly. The New Testament's merging of the temporal sequence and the spatial gradation is shown more especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but also in Gal. 4.25f.

Let us now revert to our theme. In Rom. 4 the scriptural evidence is marshalled in different ways. Reflection on particular passages of scripture (Gen. 15.6; 17.11) serves a methodical argument from prophecy: God's will is unambiguous and finally laid down in the Old Testament. It demands the righteousness of faith which was revealed in Christ. This argument, however, is fitted into the wider framework of the whole story of Abraham, which typologically anticipates the story of Christ. That comes out clearly in vv. 17ff. The text used there is interpreted as a pointer to the Christian belief in the resurrection. With this the patriarch no longer counts merely as an example of the believing person; he has the Jewish meaning of being the bearer of the promise *per se*, who is replaceable by no other figure. The whole chapter has previously worked towards this theme, in that Abraham is removed from the sphere of the circumcision, unless circumcision follows on the faith that was his. He has not merely representative significance but, since he is the ancestor of the believing Gentiles as well, universal significance also. Like Moses in Rom. 5.12ff., he is the bearer of destiny, though not in antithesis to eschatological reality but in anticipation of it. Typology made possible the Pauline statement about the identity between the faith of Abraham and that of Christianity, faith which interprets the justification of the ungodly as a

<sup>51</sup> A partial approach to this view, at least, may be found in H. J. Schoeps, *Paulus*, 1959, p. 246; K. Kertelge, *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*, 1967, p. 140; U. Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, pp. 56, 60.

*creatio ex nihilo* and an anticipation of the raising of the dead. For typology allows the primeval period and end-time to correspond and the promise hidden in the scriptures to be revealed by the gospel.

This analysis has tried to show how the apostle arrived at his train of thought and the ideas inherent in it. The question remains, in what way can we listen to his message, not only grasping its content but continuing to think systematically along the same lines. We can only indicate the direction in which an answer lies. Still, we are in a position to say that the problem of Pauline typology and the problem of the meaning of the equally controversial formula 'in Christ' touch nearly upon one another. Here, too, the faith of the individual becomes part of an all-embracing context. Scholars have expended much energy on making this context comprehensible. For a long time, interpretation was dominated by the mystical view, which attempted to understand the formula in the light of devotional experience,<sup>52</sup> or of the sacramentally founded, eschatological community of Christ.<sup>53</sup> The preposition was here mainly understood in the sense of locality. It was entirely logical that a generation for which the catchword 'mysticism' had become, for various reasons, suspect, should interpret the formula in an ecclesiological sense, in so far as it thought itself forced to hold fast to this 'local' meaning for the preposition, at least largely speaking: a person is in Christ when that person is in his body, that is to say, the church.<sup>54</sup> We are indebted to Neugebauer<sup>55</sup> for raising the question anew. He understands the preposition almost exclusively as instrumental, which is not only linguistically possible but is undoubtedly justifiable in many cases. But it is unfortunate that a consistent historical interpretation, based on salvation history, is not only sweeping away mysticism but also, ultimately, the eschatological point of view. What Christ once did has continuing efficacy and gives us a part in him, so that 'in Christ' means belonging to the historical extension of the saving event which once took place in the past and the sphere which is indicated by that event.<sup>56</sup> Eschatology is talked about here in order to bring out the

<sup>52</sup> Fundamentally in A. Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'*, 1892.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, 1931.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. my dissertation, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 1933, p. 183; Bultmann, *Theology I*, p. 31. The view is a common one among Roman Catholic and English-speaking writers.

<sup>55</sup> *In Christus*, 1961, with an extensive account of the research up to date on pp. 18-33.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. pp. 84f.

salvation-historical character of the redeeming event in past and present. This means, practically speaking, that what was begun through Christ is continued in the church.

We shall not enter into detailed exegesis in order to show that the 'local' sense of the preposition simply cannot be argued away in many places.<sup>57</sup> We must, however, be aware of the theological implications of this historicizing interpretation. Jesus becomes in this way again the author of our faith. He appears as Lord largely in that his demands retain their validity for us.<sup>58</sup> The gospel inevitably changes into the communication of ecclesiastical tradition. The presence of salvation resides in the remembrance of what has happened and in appropriate conduct. The sacraments then serve the same purpose. The fact is completely overlooked that the so-called saving events have determined not only believers but also the enemies of Christ, and have kindled not only faith but superstition as well as dubious piety and theology. The sphere of influence of a historical event comprehends many potentialities; and the history of the church proves that Christianity and its traditions are not capable of providing and guaranteeing clarity about the meaning of the saving event. With this in mind, the rights and wrongs of the interpretation presented above should at least be examined once more.

At the same time, Neugebauer's outline is important. He does not only do much to correct a questionable exegesis. He attacks in his own way the same problem which also faces us in Pauline typology. Here the individual person is similarly moved into a context which is wider, spatially and temporally, than himself and which makes him the member of a world-wide event and the successor and exponent of one who has gone before him. Not even the believer lives in isolation, or in an association of many individuals. 'In Christ', as under Adam, Moses and Abraham, we stand in an already-existing world and history, which we ratify in faith or superstition. Our essence does not lie in free decision but in our affirmation or denial of an event which confronts us from outside ourselves. What was called Pauline mysticism points most sharply to the fact which the Reformed *extra se* was designed to characterize. Man never belongs to himself; he always has a lord whose power is manifested through him. We might

<sup>57</sup> Cf. the recent criticism made by E. Brandenburger, *Fleisch und Geist*, 1968, pp. 20, 26ff., 54.

<sup>58</sup> Neugebauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 137ff., 148f. See also E. Lohse's criticism in *TLZ* 87, 1962, cols. 843f.

also put it as follows: we live in and from spheres of power. If one interprets the 'in Christ' simply in the light of the 'through Christ', one certainly arrives at a supra-individual event, but still only at the context of a tradition. To attach the name salvation history suggests that another causality than the causality of, for example, the history of ideas is intended and that the ultimate salvation or disaster of man is seen as being already inherent in it. Basically, however, our relationship to Christ remains thereby that of a historical development stamped by ecclesiastical tradition, a development whose initiator was Jesus. Here Christ himself becomes the cypher for a movement which he started: *Christus prolongatus* can be preached even by Protestants and even in the sense of salvation history.

As against this, Rom. 4 reminds us that Christology and the doctrine of justification mutually interpret one another. It tells us that Christ is always drawing us afresh even out of our inner-ecclesiastical traditional associations and that his sphere of power is that of the gospel of the justification of the ungodly. We do not simply enter into this. We must be called to it afresh every day. 'In Christ' is really not primarily an ecclesiological formula at all. To see it as such is to endanger and obscure the primacy of Christology over ecclesiology. 'In Christ' is the state of those who through the gospel are called out of the old world and who only belong to the new creation in so far as they continue to be confronted with the Lord who justifies the ungodly. His sphere of power has, however, for the sake of the gospel, a universal breadth and also, as the promise to Abraham shows, the depths of salvation history. For both in the primeval period and in the end-time the point at issue is more than individual salvation or disaster; what is at stake is the destiny of the world.