OUT OF MY LIFE AND THOUGHT

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

NEWLY TRANSLATED BY
A. B. LEMKE
PREFACE BY RHENA
SCHWEITZER
MILLER AND A. B. LEMKE

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Preface

"I want to be the pioneer of a new Renaissance. I want to throw faith in a new humanity like a burning torch into our dark times." So Albert Schweitzer proclaimed in the preface to his book *Civilization and Ethics* in 1923.

Out of My Life and Thought, the book he considered his most important, provides the key to understanding the man, his thought, and his work. It is the testimony of this pioneer whose philosophy of respect for all life is essential if we are to succeed in moving from the dark ages of religious and political strife toward a new Renaissance embracing the recognition of human rights, of environmental responsibilities, and of political interdependence.

In this book he describes how he became Schweitzer the theologian, the philosopher, the musician, and the medical doctor. The many facets of his personality, his abundance of knowledge in such different fields made him the active and spiritual center of his hospital in Lambaréné and a figure of worldwide influence and recognition.

As to the origin of his autobiography, he told the readers of the first edition of 1931: "In 1925 I wrote a forty-two-page account for the seventh volume of the scholarly series *Contemporary Philosophy in Self-Portraits,* published by Felix Meiner in Leipzig.… When this treatise was published as a separate book, many readers took it to be an account of my whole life and thought. To remedy this misconception

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I decided to complete the initial study in such a way that it would tell not only about my scholarly work but also about my life and thought in general."

Out of My Life and Thought is the only book Schweitzer completed in Africa, and thirty years later he wrote to a friend in Paris: "That I was able to write this book I owe to the two physicians who assisted me in Lambaréné. When they heard about the publisher's interest, they offered to take over some of my work so I could be at the hospital only in the morning. By writing every afternoon and until midnight, I was able to complete the manuscript in five months. Later on I could never have taken so much time off to concentrate on my writing. It gave me the opportunity to express my thoughts on religion, on philosophy and the arts, and to pave the way for my reflections on the principle of Reverence for Life, which can motivate us to return to a civilization that is determined by humanism."

The first English edition of 1931 was translated by Schweitzer's friend C. T. Campion and published in 1933 by Allen & Unwin in London and by Henry Holt in New York. Other translations followed, and at last count there were nineteen, from Chinese and Czech to Tamil and Tulegu. Some translations, for example that of 1959 in Oriyan, an Indian language, include prefatory letters by Hermann Hesse and Père Dominique Pire.

According to the notes in Schweitzer's personal German copy, a French translation was intended as early as 1932. Yet, as with several unfinished manuscripts, he did not find the time to devote to this project.

In 1953 another attempt at a French edition was made, when Madeleine France translated the German original. Schweitzer wanted to review the manuscript before its publication but he had other priorities. With his acceptance

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of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954, his eightieth birthday in 1955, and his appeal in 1957 for a nuclear test ban, his days and nights were filled with correspondence and preparation of lectures, which were of pressing concern to him.

Finally, in 1959, during his last sojourn in Europe, Schweitzer spent three weeks in Paris. With his friend and collaborator Robert Minder he edited the French translation, which was published in 1960 by Albin Michel in Paris. When Schweitzer received the first copy in Lambaréné in January 1960 he immediately wrote to the publisher, pleading for removal of the wrapper that read: “Le grand docteur vous parle.” This statement, “The great doctor speaks to you,” reminded Schweitzer of Hitler’s announcement “Le Führer vous parle,” to which the French had been exposed two decades earlier.

The French edition contains several changes from the German original, especially the deletion of passages Schweitzer considered either too technical—such as some of his reflections on theological subjects—or displeasing to the French reader. This edition has been most helpful in the preparation of the new English translation, since many convoluted German sentences and long paragraphs were rephrased and broken up. Some phrases have been replaced by precise, more assertive statements.

In addition to the French version, the new English translation is based on a copy of the German edition in the Archives Centrales Albert Schweitzer at Günsbach, which contains Schweitzer’s own corrections, made between 1930 and 1960.

Cognizant of the fact that it is impossible to give an identical rendering of any literary text in a second language, this translation aims to be as faithful as possible to the

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author's own style. No attempt has been made to change Schweitzer's expressions, to "degenderize" or otherwise adjust the language in accordance with current trends. Special care has been taken with Schweitzer's explication of his philosophy and theology. Where the earlier version freely substituted *reason* for *spirit, scientific* for *scholarly, dogmatic* for *orthodox,* the original meaning of the German expression has been chosen. An *Evangelische Gemeinde* is a "Protestant parish" and not a group of Evangelical believers, and when Schweitzer speaks about *die Welt* he intends to include the whole world and not only mankind. Thus, the new translation hopes to clarify ambiguities and to come as close as possible to Schweitzer's language, his intentions, and his philosophy.

A chronology of the life of Albert Schweitzer, which follows the text, gives a quick overview of major events and completes the autobiography for the period until his death in 1965. For readers interested in other books by and about Schweitzer, a bibliography of selected titles in English has been included.

We want to express our deep gratitude to Gustav Woytt, a nephew of Schweitzer, who had worked for him for many years. He was familiar with the development and different translations of this book and graciously shared his knowledge. We owe to him and to the generous cooperation of the Archives Centrales Albert Schweitzer in Günsbach, France, that we have a broader knowledge of the genesis of this book.

Our warmest thanks go to Miss Elizabeth Gempp, who has encouraged and generously supported the preparation of this new edition. For the typing and editing we would like to express our gratitude to Eileen Snyder and Margaret Sevcenko.

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Last but not least we would like to thank the members of Henry Holt and Company, especially Mr. John Macrae for the enthusiasm with which he received the manuscript, and his advice throughout the publishing process, and Amy Robbins for her perceptive suggestions and expert copy editing.

For the photographs we are indebted to the Archives Centrales Albert Schweitzer in Günsbach, France, the Albert Schweitzer Center in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship in New York.

As we move toward a new century it is amazing to see how the spirit of Albert Schweitzer has retained its freshness and authenticity. His life and thought, nurtured by German and French culture and by the philosophies of East and West, and forged by human service in Europe and Africa, can point the way toward a global society.

Rhena Schweitzer Miller
Antje Bultmann Lemke

DECEMBER 1989

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Childhood, School, and University

I was born on January 14, 1875, at Kaysersberg in Upper Alsace, the second child of Louis Schweitzer, who at that time served as minister for the little flock of Protestants in that Catholic place. My paternal grandfather was schoolmaster and organist at Pfaffenhofen in Lower Alsace, and three of his brothers occupied similar posts. My mother, Adele, née Schillinger, was a daughter of the pastor of Mühlbach in the Münster Valley, Upper Alsace.

A few weeks after my birth my father moved to Günsbach in the Münster Valley. Here with my three sisters and one brother I spent a happy childhood overshadowed only by my father's frequent illnesses. His health improved later on, however, and as a sturdy septuagenarian he looked after his parish during the war under the fire of the French guns that swept the valley from the heights of the Vosges mountains, destroying many a house and killing many an inhabitant of Günsbach. He died at a ripe old age in 1925. My mother had been run over and killed by cavalry horses on the road between Günsbach and Weier-im-Tal in 1916.

When I was five years old my father began giving me music lessons on the old square piano that we had inherited from grandfather Schillinger. He had no great technical skill but improvised charmingly. When I was seven I surprised our teacher by playing hymn tunes on the

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harmonium with harmonies I supplied myself. At eight, when my legs were hardly long enough to reach the pedals, I began to play the organ. My passion for that instrument was inherited from my grandfather Schillinger, who had been much interested in organs and organ building, and, as my mother told me, had a reputation for improvising magnificently. In every town he visited, he made a point of getting to know its organs. When the famous organ was installed in the Stiftskirche at Lucerne he journeyed there to see its builder at work.

I was nine years old when I was permitted for the first time to substitute for the organist at a service at Günsbach.

Till the autumn of 1884 I went to the Günsbach village school. After that, for a year I was at the Realschule (which is a secondary school giving no instruction in classical languages) at Münster, and there I had private lessons in Latin to prepare me for entering the fifth class in the Gymnasium. In the autumn of 1885 I entered the Gymnasium at Mülhausen in Alsace. My godfather, Louis Schweitzer, my grandfather's half brother, who was director of the primary schools in that town, was kind enough to take me to live with him. Otherwise my father, who had nothing beyond his slender stipend on which to bring up his large family, could hardly have afforded to send me to a Gymnasium.

The strict discipline to which I was subjected in the house of my great-uncle and his wife, who had no children of their own, was very good for me. It is with deep gratitude that I always think of all the kindness I received from them.

Although it had cost me some trouble to learn to read and write, I had got on fairly well in school at Günsbach and Münster. At the Gymnasium, however, I was at first a poor scholar. This was owing not solely to my being slack and

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dreamy but partly also to the fact that my private lessons in Latin had not prepared me sufficiently for the fifth class, in which I entered the school. It was only when my teacher in the fourth, Dr. Wehmann, showed me how to study properly and gave me some self-confidence that things went better. But Dr. Wehmann's influence over me was due above all to the fact, of which I became aware during my first days in his class, that he prepared every lesson he gave very carefully in advance. He became a model of fulfillment of duty for me. I visited him many times in later life. When, toward the end of the war, I went to Strasbourg, where he lived during the latter part of his life, I at once inquired after him. I learned, however, that starvation had ruined his nervous system and that he had taken his own life.

My music teacher at Mülhausen was Eugène Münch, the young organist at the Reformed Church of St. Stephen. This was his first post after leaving the Academy of Music at Berlin, where he had been seized by the then reawakening enthusiasm for Bach. I owe it to him that I became acquainted in my early years with the works of the cantor of St. Thomas and from my fifteenth year onward enjoyed the privilege of sound instruction on the organ. When, in the autumn of 1898, he died of typhoid fever in the flower of his age, I perpetuated his memory in a booklet written in French. It was published in Mülhausen, and was the first product of my pen to appear in print.

At the Gymnasium I was chiefly interested in history and natural science. In languages and mathematics it took a great deal of effort for me to accomplish anything. But after a time I felt a certain fascination in mastering subjects for which I had no special talent. Consequently, in the upper classes I was considered one of the better students, though not one of the best. With essays, however, if I remember

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rightly, I was usually the first.

In the first class we were taught Latin and Greek by the distinguished director of the Gymnasium, Wilhelm Deecke of Lübeck. His lessons were not the dry instruction of a mere linguist; they introduced us to ancient philosophy while giving us glimpses into contemporary thought. He was an enthusiastic follower of Schopenhauer.

On June 18, 1893, I passed my final examinations. In the written papers I did not do very well, not even in the essay. In the oral examination, however, I attracted the attention of the chairman of the board of examiners—Dr. Albrecht of Strasbourg—with my knowledge of history and my historical judgment. A “very good” in history, substantiated by some words of praise, adorned my diploma, which otherwise was quite mediocre.

In October of the same year, the generosity of my father’s elder brother, a businessman in Paris, secured for me the privilege of organ instruction from the Parisian organist Charles-Marie Widor. My teacher at Mülhausen had taught me so well that Widor, after hearing me play, took me as a pupil, although he normally confined his instruction to members of the organ class at the Conservatory. This instruction was for me an event of decisive importance. Widor presided over a fundamental improvement in my technique and made me strive to attain perfect plasticity in playing. At the same time, thanks to him, the meaning of the architectonic in music became clear to me.

My first lesson with Widor happened to be on the sunny October day when the Russian sailors under Admiral Avellan arrived in Paris for the visit that was the first manifestation of the Franco-Russian friendship then beginning. I was delayed by the closely packed, expectant

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crowds that filled the boulevards and the central streets, and was very late in reaching the master's house.

* * *

At the end of October 1893, I entered the University of Strasbourg. I lived in the theological seminary of St. Thomas (the Collegium Wilhelmitanum), the principal of which was the learned Reverend Alfred Erichson. Just at that time he was occupied with the completion of his great edition of the works of Calvin.

The University of Strasbourg, recently founded, already had a fine reputation. Unhampered by tradition, teachers and students alike strove to realize the ideal of a modern university. There were hardly any older professors among the faculty. A fresh breeze of youthfulness animated the whole university.

I took the two subjects of theology and philosophy together. As I had learned only the elements of Hebrew in the Gymnasium, my first term was spoiled by work for the "Hebraicum" (the preliminary examination in Hebrew), which I passed with much effort on February 17, 1894. Later, spurred on again by the effort to master what did not come easily to me, I acquired a sound knowledge of that language.

Anxiety about the Hebraicum did not prevent me from eagerly attending the lectures by Heinrich Julius Holtzmann on the Synoptics—that is to say, the three first Gospels—and others by Wilhelm Windelband and Theobald Ziegler on the history of philosophy.

On April 1, 1894, I began my year of military service, but the kindness of my captain, Krull by name, made it possible for me to be at the university by eleven o'clock almost every day, and so to attend Windelband's lectures.

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When in the autumn of 1894 we went on maneuvers in the neighborhood of Hochfelden (Lower Alsace), I put my Greek Testament in my knapsack. I should explain that at the beginning of the winter term, those theological students who wished to compete for a scholarship had to pass an examination in three subjects. Those, however, who were then doing their military service had only to take one. I chose the synoptic Gospels.

I took my Greek New Testament with me to maneuvers so I would not disgrace myself with a poor performance before Holtzmann, whom I admired very much. At that time I was robust and did not know fatigue, so I could study in the evenings and on holidays. During the summer I had gone through Holtzmann's commentary. Now I wanted to get to know the text and see how much I remembered of his commentary and his lectures. This produced an amazing discovery. Holtzmann had gained recognition in scholarly circles for his hypothesis that the Gospel of Mark is the oldest, and that its plan serves as the basis for Matthew and Luke. That seemed to justify the conclusion that the public activities of Jesus can only be understood through Mark's Gospel. This conclusion puzzled me deeply. On one of the rest days, which we spent in the village of Guggenheim, I concentrated on the tenth and eleventh chapters of Matthew, and became aware of the significance of what is narrated in those two chapters by him alone, and not by Mark as well.

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In the tenth chapter of Matthew the mission of the twelve disciples is narrated. As Jesus sends them out He tells them that they will almost immediately suffer severe persecution. But nothing of the kind happens.

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He tells them also that the appearance of the Son of Man will take place before they have gone through the cities of Israel, which can only mean that the heavenly Messianic Kingdom is dawning. He has therefore no expectation of seeing them return.

How is it possible that Jesus leads His disciples to expect events that do not take place?

I was dissatisfied with Holtzmann's explanation that we are dealing not with a historical discourse about Jesus but with one made up at a later date, after His death, out of various "Sayings of Jesus." A later generation would never have gone so far as to put into His mouth words that were belied by the subsequent course of events.

The bare text compelled me to assume that Jesus was really announcing the persecution of the disciples, which would then be followed by the appearance of the supernatural Son of Man. This announcement, however, was proven wrong by subsequent events.

But how did He come to entertain such an expectation, and what must His feelings have been when events turned out otherwise than He had assumed they would?

Matthew 11 records the Baptist's question to Jesus, and the answer Jesus gave him. Here too it seemed to me that Holtzmann and the commentators in general do not sufficiently appreciate the riddles of the text. Whom does the Baptist mean when he asks Jesus whether He is "the one who is to come"? Is it then quite certain, I asked myself, that by the Coming One no one can be meant except the Messiah? According to late Jewish Messianic beliefs, the coming of the Messiah is to be preceded by that of his Forerunner, Elijah, risen from the dead, and to this previously expected Elijah Jesus applies the expression "the Coming One," when He tells the people around Him

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(Matthew 11:14) that the Baptist himself is Elijah who is to come. Therefore, I concluded, the Baptist in his question used the expression with that same meaning. He did not send his disciples to Jesus to ask Him whether He was the Messiah; he wanted to learn from Him, strange as it may seem to us, whether He was the expected Forerunner of the Messiah, Elijah.

But why does Jesus not give him a clear answer to his question? To say that He gave an evasive answer in order to test the Baptist's faith avoids the issue and has been the source of many a poor sermon. It is much simpler to assume that Jesus avoided saying either yes or no because He was not yet ready to make public who He believed Himself to be. From every point of view the account of the Baptist's question proves that at that time none of those who believed in Jesus held Him to be the Messiah. Had He already been accepted in any way as the Messiah, the Baptist would have indicated this in his question.

Another reason for finding a new interpretation came from the words of Jesus, addressed to the crowd after the departure of the Baptist's messengers. "Among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11).

The usual explanation—that in these words Jesus expressed a criticism of the Baptist and placed him at a level below that of the believers assembled round Him as adherents of the Kingdom of God—seemed to me both unsatisfying and simplistic, for these believers were also born of women. By giving up this explanation I was forced into the supposition that, in contrasting the Baptist with members of the Kingdom of God, Jesus was taking into

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account the difference between the natural world and the supernatural Messianic world. As a man in the condition into which all men enter at birth, the Baptist is the greatest of all who have ever lived. But members of the Kingdom of Heaven are no longer natural men; through the dawning of the Messianic Kingdom they have experienced a change that has raised them to a supernatural condition akin to that of the angels. Because they are now supernatural beings, the least among them is greater than the greatest man who has ever appeared in the natural world of the age that is now passing away. John the Baptist does, indeed, belong to this Kingdom either as a great or a humble member of it. Yet his greatness, unique and surpassing that of all other humans, lies in the fact that he became incarnate in this natural world.

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Thus, at the end of my first year at the university, I was troubled by the explanation then accepted as historically correct of the words and actions of Jesus when He sent the disciples out on their mission. As a consequence of this, I also questioned the interpretation that viewed the whole life of Jesus as historical.

When I reached home after maneuvers, entirely new horizons had opened up for me. Of this I was certain: that Jesus had annouced not a kingdom that was to be founded and realized in the natural world by Himself and the believers, but one that was to be expected as coming with the approaching dawn of a supernatural age.

I would of course have considered it presumptuous to hint to Holtzmann in my examination, which I took shortly afterward, that I distrusted his conception of the life of Jesus, which was universally shared by the critical school

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of that time. In any case, I had no opportunity to do so. With his well-known kindness he treated me, a young student hindered in my studies by military service, so gently that in the twenty-minute interview he demanded from me nothing beyond a summary comparison of the contents of the first three Gospels.

In my remaining years at the university I pursued, often to the neglect of my other subjects, independent research on the Gospels and on the problems of the life of Jesus. Through these studies I became increasingly convinced that the key to the riddles awaiting solution is to be looked for in the explanation of the words of Jesus when He sent the disciples out on their mission, in the question sent by the Baptist from his prison, and, finally, in the way Jesus acts upon the return of the disciples.

How grateful I was that the German university does not supervise the student too closely in his studies, nor keep him breathless through constant examinations, as is the case in other countries, but offers him the opportunity for independent scholarly work!

The Strasbourg theological faculty of that day had a distinctly liberal character. Aside from Holtzmann there was Karl Budde, the Old Testament specialist, who had recently come to Strasbourg and was my favorite theology teacher. What especially pleased me about him was his simple yet graceful presentation of his scholarly research. I found his lectures an aesthetic delight.

Along with the lectures in theology I regularly attended those in philosophy.

I studied music theory under Jacobsthal, a pupil of Bellermann, who in his one-sidedness refused to acknowledge as art any music after Beethoven's. Pure counterpoint, however, one could learn thoroughly from

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him, and I have much to thank him for.

In my musical development I owed much to Ernest Münch, a brother of my Mülhausen teacher, who was organist of St. Wilhelm's in Strasbourg and conductor at the Bach concerts he started with the choir of St. Wilhelm's. He entrusted to me the organ accompaniment of the cantatas and the Passion music. At first I played only at the rehearsals, in place of his Mülhausen brother, who then took my place at the actual performances. Before long, however, I also played at the performances if his brother could not come. In this way, while I was still a young student, I became familiar with the work of Bach and had an opportunity to deal with the practical problems of producing the master's cantatas and Passion music.

St. Wilhelm's Church in Strasbourg ranked at that time as one of the most important centers of the Bach renaissance that was beginning to emerge at the end of the century. Ernest Münch had an extraordinary knowledge of the works of the cantor of St. Thomas. He was one of the first to abandon the modernized rendering of the cantatas and the Passion music that had become universal at the end of the nineteenth century, and he strove for performances in a purer style, with his small choir accompanied by the famous Strasbourg orchestra. Many an evening we sat with the scores of the cantatas and the Passion music and discussed the correct method of rendering them. Ernest Münch's successor as conductor at these concerts was his son Fritz Münch, the director of the Strasbourg Conservatory.

My veneration for Bach was matched by the same feeling for Richard Wagner. When I was a schoolboy at Mülhausen, at the age of sixteen I was allowed for the first time to go to the theater, and there I heard Wagner's

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Tannhäuser. This music overpowered me to such an extent that it was days before I was capable of giving proper attention to my lessons in school.

In Strasbourg, where the operatic performances conducted by Otto Lohse were outstanding, I had the opportunity of becoming thoroughly familiar with the whole of Wagner's works, except, of course, *Parsifal,* which at that time could only be performed at Bayreuth. It was a great experience for me to be present in Bayreuth in 1896, at the memorable new performance of the tetralogy, the first since the original in 1876. Parisian friends had given me tickets. To pay for the journey I had to content myself with one meal a day.

Today, if I experience a Wagner performance with all sorts of stage effects clamoring for attention alongside the music, as though it were a film show, I cannot help thinking with regret of the earlier mise-en-scène of the tetralogy at Bayreuth, the very simplicity of which made it so marvelously effective. Not only the staging but the whole performance was in the spirit of the departed master.

Both as singer and actor Vogl, as Loge, made the deepest impression on me. From the moment of his appearance he dominated the stage without perceptibly having to do anything to draw attention to himself. He did not wear the harlequin dress of modern players, nor did he dance round the stage to the rhythm of the Loge motif, as is the fashion today. The only thing about him that was striking was his red cloak. The only movements he executed to the rhythm of the music were those with which, as if acting under some compulsion, he threw his cloak now over one shoulder, now over the other, his gaze fixed on what was happening around him, yet himself quite indifferent to it all. Thus he plainly stood for the restless

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force of destruction among the gods, who were marching forward, blindly, to their doom.

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My student years at Strasbourg passed quickly. At the end of the summer of 1897 I presented myself for the first theological examination. As the topic for the so-called thesis we were given: “A comparison of Schleiermacher’s concept of the Last Supper with that of the New Testament and the professions of faith of the Reformers.” The thesis was an exercise assigned to all candidates alike and had to be finished within eight weeks. It determined whether one would be admitted to the examination.

This task led me back again to the problem of the Gospels and the life of Jesus. All dogmatic and historical interpretations of the Last Supper, which I had to review for my final examination, seemed unsatisfactory. None addressed the significance of the historical celebration of Jesus with His disciples and of the origin of the primitive Christian ceremony of the Communion. A remark of Schleiermacher in the section of his famous *Dogmatics* in which he treats the Last Supper gave me much to think about. He points out that according to the accounts of the Last Supper in Matthew and Mark, Jesus did not charge the disciples to repeat the meal. We must therefore familiarize ourselves as well as we can with the thought that the repetition of the celebration in the primitive community goes back only to the disciples and not to Jesus Himself. This thought, which Schleiermacher presented in a brilliant piece of reasoning but did not pursue to the limit of its possible historical consequences, preoccupied me even after I had completed the thesis for my candidature.

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If, I said to myself, the command to repeat the meal is absent from the two oldest Gospels, that means that the disciples did in fact repeat it, with the body of believers, on their own initiative and authority. That, however, they could do only if there was something in the nature of this last meal that made it significant apart from the words and actions of Jesus. But, since no past or current explanations of the Last Supper have made intelligible how it was adopted in the primitive community without a command from Jesus, I had to conclude that the problem of the Last Supper was unresolved. Thus, I went on to investigate the question of whether the significance of the meal for Jesus and His disciples was not connected with the expectation of the Messianic feast to be celebrated in the Kingdom of God, which was soon to appear.

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Paris and Berlin, 1898–1899

On May 6, 1898, I passed the first theological examination, the official state examination, and then spent the whole of the summer in Strasbourg to devote myself entirely to philosophy. During this time I lived in the house at the Old Fish Market (No. 36) in which Goethe had lived while he was a student at Strasbourg.

Windelband and Ziegler were eminent teachers in their subjects. Windelband's strength lay in ancient philosophy, and his seminars on Plato and Aristotle are among the best memories of my student days. Ziegler's domain was ethics and the philosophy of religion. For the latter he was especially well prepared through his earlier studies in theology at the "Stift," the Protestant seminary at Tübingen.

After my examination, at the request of Holtzmann I was given the Goll scholarship, which was administered by the St. Thomas Chapter and the theological faculty jointly. Its value was twelve hundred marks (six hundred dollars) annually, and it was awarded for six-year periods. The recipient was under an obligation either to take, in six years at the most, the degree of licentiate in theology at Strasbourg or to repay the money he had received.

On the advice of Theobald Ziegler, I determined that I would work first on a dissertation toward the doctoral degree in philosophy. At the end of the term, he suggested, in a conversation held on the steps of the University of

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Strasbourg under his umbrella, that my subject should be the religious philosophy of Kant, a suggestion I found most attractive. Toward the end of October 1898, I went to Paris to study philosophy at the Sorbonne, and to continue my organ lessons under Widor.

I did not attend many lectures in Paris. To begin with, the unceremonious way in which the matriculation was conducted annoyed me. The antiquated method of instruction, which made it impossible for the faculty, however outstanding in quality, to give their best, also contributed to making the Sorbonne disappointing. There were no comprehensive courses such as I had been accustomed to at Strasbourg. Either the professors gave lectures that bore solely on the examination syllabus or they lectured on special subjects.

At the Protestant theological faculty (on the Boulevard Arago), I sometimes heard lectures on doctrine by Louis Auguste Sabatier and others by the New Testament scholar Louis Eugène Ménégoz. I felt great esteem for them both. But on the whole that winter in Paris was devoted to music and to my dissertation for the doctorate.

With Widor—who now gave me lessons without charge —I worked at the organ, and under Isidore Philipp, who a little later became a teacher at the Conservatory, at the piano. At the same time I was a pupil of Franz Liszt's talented pupil and friend Marie Jaëll-Trautmann, an Alsatian by birth. She had already retired from a life of public piano recitals, at which, for a short time, she shone as a star of the first magnitude. She now dedicated herself to the study of the physiological aspects of piano playing. I was the guinea pig on which she tried her experiments, which were made in cooperation with the physiologist Féré, so I participated in them. How much I owe to this gifted woman!

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The finger—so her theory goes—must be as fully conscious as possible of its relationship to the keys. The player must be conscious of the tension and of the relaxation of the muscles from the shoulder down to the fingertips. He must learn to prevent all involuntary and all unconscious movements. Finger exercises that aim merely at rapidity must be renounced. As the finger prepares for a motion, it must always try to project the desired sound. A resonant touch is realized by the quickest and lightest possible depression of the keys. But the finger must also be conscious of the way it lets the depressed key rise again. In the depression and releasing of the keys the finger finds itself in an imperceptibly rolling movement, either inward (toward the thumb) or outward (toward the little finger). When several keys are depressed one after another, with movements rolling in the same direction, the corresponding tones and chords are organically linked.

Tones produced by movements that roll in different directions stay apart by their very nature. Through thoughtfully differentiated movements of the fingers and of the hand, one can attain both differentiation of sonority and sensitivity to phrasing. To achieve an ever more conscious and ever closer relationship with the keys, the finger must cultivate to the utmost its sensitivity to their touch. With the perfecting of this sensitivity the player will become at the same time more responsive both to tone color and to color in general.

Marie Jaëll pushed this theory to the extreme by proclaiming that through the appropriate development of the hand nonmusical people could become musical. Starting from the physiology of the piano touch, she wanted

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to advance a theory about the nature of art in general. She thus obscured her correct and forceful observations about the essence of artful touch with deep, often baroque-sounding observations and deprived herself of the recognition her research deserved.

* * *

Under Marie Jaëll's guidance I completely transformed my hand. I owe it to her that by well-directed, time-saving practice I became increasingly master of my fingers to the great benefit of my organ playing.

The more traditional piano instruction I received from Philipp was also extraordinarily valuable and protected me from what was one-sided in the Jaell method. As my two teachers had a poor opinion of each other, I had to keep each from knowing that I was a pupil of the other. What trouble it cost me to play with Marie Jaëll in the morning à la Jaëll and with Philipp in the afternoon à la Philipp!

With Philipp and Widor I am still united in a firm bond of friendship; Marie Jaëll died in 1925. Through Widor I met many interesting personalities in the Paris of that day. He was also concerned about my material welfare. Many a time, if he had the impression that my slender purse did not provide me with enough to eat adequately, he took me after my lesson to his regular haunt, the Restaurant Foyot near the Luxembourg, so I might have a satisfying meal.

My father's two brothers and their wives, who had settled in Paris, also showed me much kindness. The younger one, Charles, who had made a name for himself as a linguist through his efforts to improve the teaching of modern languages, put me in touch with people at the university. Thus I was able to feel at home in Paris.

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My thesis for the doctorate suffered in no way from the demands made on me, either by my art or by my social life, for my good health allowed me to be prodigal with nocturnal labor. It happened sometimes that I played for Widor in the morning without having been to bed at all.

To consult the literature on Kant's philosophy of religion in the Bibliothèque Nationale proved to be impracticable because of the cumbersome regulations in the reading room. I therefore resolved without further ado to write the thesis without troubling about the literature, and to see what results I could obtain by burying myself in the Kantian writings themselves.

* * *

As I studied these texts, I noticed variations in his use of language; for example, in several passages on religious issues in his *Critique of Pure Reason* the word *intelligible,* which corresponds to Kant's basic criticism, is replaced by the more naive term *transcendental.* I then traced all expressions of significance throughout his works on the philosophy of religion in order to find the context in which they appear, and to see whether they had undergone some change in meaning. This enabled me to prove that the long section on the "Canon of Pure Reason" is not a part of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* but actually an earlier work of Kant that he included there, although it does not agree with what came later. The earlier study he called "A Sketch of the Philosophy of Religion."

Another discovery was that Kant never developed any further the religiophilosophical scheme of transcendental dialectic found in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* His religious

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not to be found in contemporary Paris, which was then being torn apart by the Dreyfus case. Thus I came to know and love Berlin during the finest period of its existence. I was especially impressed by the simple life-style of Berlin society and the ease with which one was admitted to its families.

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service, and the confirmation classes.

The tasks given to me were a constant source of joy. At the afternoon service, with only a small group of worshipers present, I could use the intimate style of preaching I had inherited from my father and in which I could express myself better than at the morning service. Even today I am never quite free from shyness before a large audience. As the years passed, the two old gentlemen had to spare themselves more and more, and I frequently had to preach in the morning as well. I used to write my sermons out in full, often making two or three drafts before I had the final version. When delivering the sermons, however, I did not tie myself to this text, which I had carefully memorized, but often departed from it considerably.

My afternoon sermons, which I looked upon as simple devotional meditations rather than sermons, were so short that on one occasion certain circles of the congregation complained. Pastor Knittel, who also held the office of “Inspector of Spiritual Matters,” had to call me before him, and when I appeared he was as embarrassed as I was.

To his question as to how he should respond to the aggrieved members of the congregation, I answered that he might reply that I was only a poor curate who stopped speaking when he found he had nothing more to say about the text. Thereupon he dismissed me with a mild reprimand and an admonition not to preach for less than twenty minutes.

Pastor Knittel represented orthodoxy softened by pietism; Pastor Gerold was a liberal. But they fulfilled the duties of their office together in a truly brotherly spirit. Everything was carried out in perfect harmony. The work accomplished at this unpretentious church, opposite the St. Thomas seminary, was remarkable.

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belonging to the Chapter of St. Thomas. Friedrich Curtius, first district superintendent of Colmar and then chosen, at the request of the whole body of Alsatian clergy, to be president of the Lutheran Church of Alsace, had taken possession of a large official residence in the chapter's big house. In it he offered me four small rooms in a top-floor apartment. Thus I was able to continue living under the shadow of St. Thomas. On the rainy Shrove Tuesday of 1906 the students carried my belongings out through one door of the house on the St. Thomas embankment and brought them back in through another.

With the Curtiuses I could come and go as if I were a member of the family, and that was most fortunate for me. Friedrich Curtius, who as we have said was a son of the well-known Greek scholar of Berlin, had married Countess Louisa von Erlach, the daughter of the governess of the Grand Duchess Louisa von Baden, who was a sister of the emperor Frederick. In this family, traditions of the aristocracy of learning were united with those of the aristocracy of birth. The spiritual center of the household was the aged Countess von Erlach—born Countess de May from the area of Neuchâtel. Her health now prevented her from going out of doors, so in order to some extent to make up for her loss of concerts, which she felt very deeply for she was passionately fond of music, I used to play the piano to her for an hour every evening, and in that way I got to know her better; otherwise she scarcely saw anybody. This distinguished noblewoman gradually acquired a great influence over me, and I owe it to her that I have smoothed many rough edges off my personality.

On May 3, 1910, a pilot named Wincziers quite unexpectedly made the first flight over Strasbourg, from the parade grounds at Strasbourg-Neudorf. I happened to be in

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the countess's room at the time, and led her—for she could no longer move about alone—to the window. When the airplane, which had flown quite low past the house, had disappeared in the distance, she said to me in French, "Combien curieuse est ma vie! J'ai discuté les règles du participe passé avec Alexander von Humboldt, et voici que je suis témoin de la conquête de l'air par les hommes!" (How amazing is my life! I have discussed the rules of the past participle with Alexander von Humboldt, and here I am witnessing the conquest of the air by humans!")

Her two unmarried daughters, Ada and Greda von Erlach, who lived with her, had inherited from her a talent for painting, and while I was still director of the college I had given over to Ada, who was a pupil of Henner, a room with a northern exposure in my official residence to use as a studio. At her mother's request, I also sat for her as a model, since it was hoped that taking up painting again would help her recover from a severe operation, which had brought her temporary relief from an incurable and painful disease. She completed this picture of me on my thirtieth birthday, without any suspicion of anything that was stirring in my mind during that last sitting.

An uncle of the old Countess von Erlach had been for years an officer in the Dutch colonial service without suffering from fever, and he attributed this to his never having gone out of doors in the tropics bareheaded after sunset. I was made to promise that in her memory I would follow the same rule. So for her sake I now renounce the pleasure of letting the evening breeze play upon my head after a hot day on the Equator. Keeping my promise, however, has agreed with me. I have never had an attack of malaria, although of course the disease does not result from going out with an uncovered head in the tropics after

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sundown!

* * *

It was only from the spring of 1906 onward, when I had finished *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* and had given up the directorship of the seminary, that I could give to my new course of study the time it required. But then I worked with great zeal at the natural sciences. Now at last I was able to devote myself to what had attracted me most when I was at the Gymnasium: I was at last in a position to acquire the knowledge I needed in order to feel on firm ground in philosophy!

But the study of the natural sciences profited me even beyond the increase in knowledge I had longed for. It was an intellectual experience. All along I had felt it to be a danger that in the so-called humanities, with which I had hitherto been concerned, there is no truth that affirms itself as self-evident, but that a mere hypothesis can, by the way in which it is presented, be recognized as truth. The search for truth in the domain of the philosophy of history, for example, is an interminable sequence of duels between the sense of reality and creative power. Arguing from facts never wins a definitive victory against skillfully presented opinion. How often does what is perceived as progress consist in a skillfully formulated opinion that puts real insight out of action for a long time!

Having to watch this drama go on and on and having to deal in such different ways with men who had lost all feeling for reality had depressed me. Now I was suddenly in another land. I dealt with truths that embodied realities based on facts, and found myself among men who took it as a matter of course that they had to provide evidence before they made a statement. It was an experience I felt

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was needed for my own intellectual development.

Intoxicated as I was with the delight of dealing with realities that could be determined with exactitude, I was far from any inclination to undervalue the humanities, as others in a similar position often did. On the contrary. Through my study of chemistry, physics, zoology, botany, and physiology, I became aware more than ever of the extent to which truth in thought is justified and necessary, side by side with the truth that is established by facts. No doubt something subjective clings to the knowledge that results from the creative act of the mind. But at the same time such knowledge is on a higher plane than the knowledge based on facts alone.

The knowledge that results from the observation of diverse manifestations of being will always remain incomplete and unsatisfying because we cannot give a definite answer to the main question of what we are in the universe and to what purpose we exist in it. We can find our place in the existence that envelops us only if we experience in our individual lives the universal life that wills and rules within it. I can understand the nature of the living being outside of myself only through the living being within me. It is to this reflective knowledge of the universal being and of the relation to it of the individual human being that the humanities are devoted. The conclusions at which they arrive are determined by the sense of reality within the creative mind. Knowledge of reality must pass through a phase of thinking about the nature of being.

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On May 13, 1908—the rainy day on which the famous Hohkönigsburg in Lower Alsace was ceremonially opened after its restoration—I took the examination in anatomy,

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