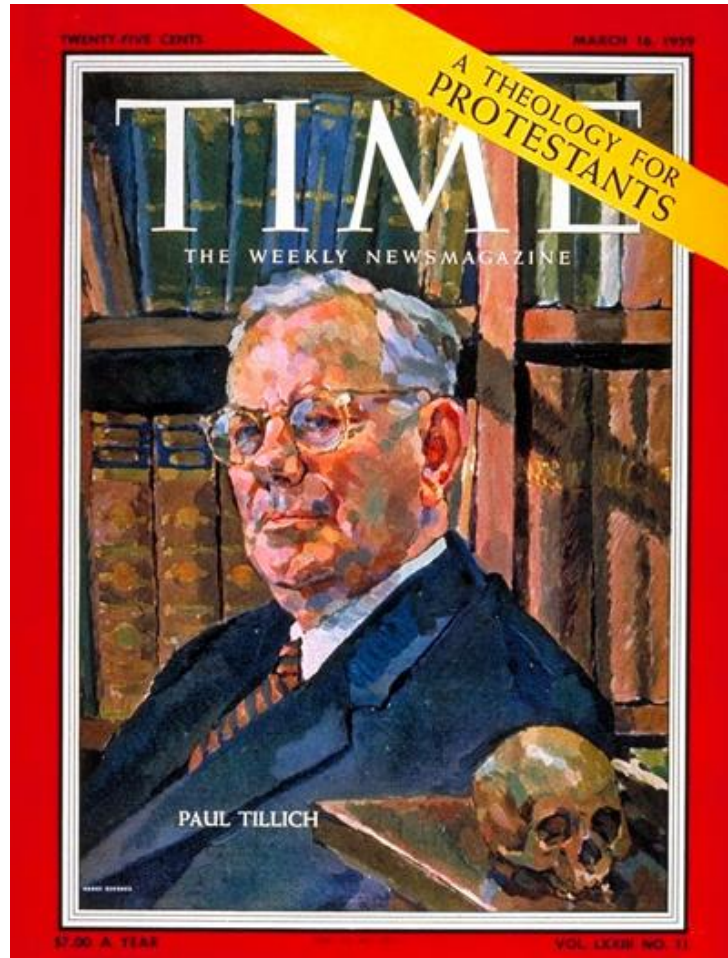
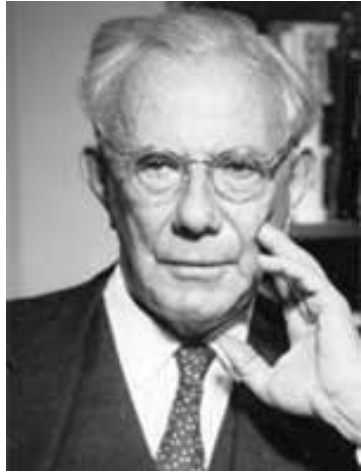


# Paul Tillich: 1886-1985



1933 Dismissed from his position as Prof. of Theology, University of Frankfurt

1933-1955 Professor of Philosophical Theology, Union Theological Seminary, New York

1955-1962 Professor of Theology, Harvard Divinity School

1962-1965 Professor of Theology, University of Chicago



# Paul Tillich: Selected Works

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The Interpretation of History, 1936

The Protestant Era, 1948

The Shaking of the Foundations (sermon collection),  
1948

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The Courage to Be, 1952.

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Ethical Applications, 1954.

Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality,  
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The New Being (sermons), 1955.

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On Tillich:

Wilhelm Pauck, Paul Tillich, His Life and Thought,  
1976.

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# Paul Tillich

*(Sentences in [brackets] are paraphrases or my explanatory additions.)*

*Tillich's main work, the three volumes of Systematic Theology, was originally published: 1951 (vol. 1), 1953 (vol. 3), and 1963 (vol. 2)*

**1) [According to Tillich there are two kinds of knowledge: (1) objective, which stands apart from its object and observes it, as in the knowledge of science; (2) subjective or receptive, which is joined with its object, as in religious faith. Objective knowledge is “safe but not ultimately significant,” while subjective, receptive knowledge “can be ultimately significant, but it cannot give certainty.” Tillich seeks the union of both kinds of knowledge in the “quest for revelation,” which “claims to give a truth which is both certain and of ultimate concern.” (1,105)**



2) [Being or “being-itself” (or also “the divine Spirit” and “the divine life”) is eternal. Nonbeing belongs to Being as that which makes finite beings out of Being.] Being, limited by nonbeing, is finitude. ... Selfhood, individuality include definiteness, differentiation, and limitation. ... To be something is to be finite. (Vol. 1,189f)



**3) If God is a being, he is subject to finitude. ... [Rather] God is being-itself or the ground of being. (I, 235)**

**[Ground = that from which all things finite come to be, their origin, something like the source of a spring.]**

**God does not exist. He is being-itself beyond existence. (I, 205)**



**God cannot be called a self, because the concept “self” implies [finite] separation from and contrast to everything which is not self. “Personal God” [rightly understood] does not mean that God is a person. It means that God is the ground of everything personal. ... Ordinary theism has made God a heavenly, completely perfect person who resides above the world and human being. There is no evidence for his existence. “Personal God” is a confusing symbol. (1, 245)**

**Only the statement that God is being-itself is non-symbolic, it does not point beyond itself. ...nothing else can be said about God which is not symbolic. (1, 238f)**



4) If we call God the “living God” [= Being, which Tillich also calls the divine life or Spirit, the Holy]... we assert that he is the eternal process by which separation is posited [made to happen] and is overcome by reunion. In this sense, God lives. (1, 241)

God is love, and since God is being-itself, being-itself is love. ... The process of divine life has the character of love. ...every life process unites a trend toward separation with a trend toward reunion. The unbroken unity of these two trends is the ontological nature of love. (1, 279) [ontological = philosophy of “being.”]



5) An original revelation is a revelation which occurs in a constellation that did not exist before [as in the revelation of Christ].  
... A dependent revelatory situation exists in every moment in which the divine Spirit grasps, shakes and moves the human spirit.

Every prayer, if it fulfills its meaning, namely to reunite the creature with its creative ground, is revelatory in this sense. (2,10)





6) Revelation...is the ecstatic manifestation of the Ground of Being in events, persons and things. Such manifestations have shaking, transforming, and healing power. They are saving events in which the power of the New Being is present. On these healing forces the life of mankind always depends; they prevent the self-destructive structures of existence from plunging mankind into complete annihilation. (2,167)

Ecstasy: the mind is grasped by the ground of being [= by Being]. There is no revelation without ecstasy. (1, 112)



7) [Human being is finite, and for this reason it experiences estrangement from other finite beings. But it always also participates in Being, its eternal origin and ground.] (1, 235ff)

Finitude in awareness is anxiety. (Vol. 1, 189, 191) [Anxiety drives human being to question the meaning of life, especially the answers of religion.]

Finitude includes doubt. ... Doubt...makes it possible for human being to analyze and control reality to the extent that it is willing to use it honestly... But finitude also includes uncertainty in every other respect; it is an expression of the general insecurity of finite being... In the state of estrangement the dimension of the ultimate is shut off... Insecurity becomes absolute and drives toward despair... (2, 72f.)



8) [As the ground and unity of all things, Being is love, but the finite nature of human beings leads them into estrangement and anxiety. Christ is “The New Being”: He points beyond himself to the highest reality, Being, when his words about God (the Father) are understood as symbols of the love of the divine life.] (1, 279ff.)

Union [with the New Being] answers the general question implied in all ambiguities of life. It appears...as the ecstatic movement which from one point of view is called “faith,” from another, “love.” (2,129)



9) The Resurrection of Jesus: ...the power of his being had impressed itself indelibly upon the disciples as the power of the New Being. In this tension something unique happened. In an ecstatic experience the concrete picture of Jesus became indissolubly united with the reality of the New Being. He is present wherever the New Being is present. But this presence does not have the character of a revived (and transmuted) body...; it has the character of spiritual presence. In this way the concrete individual life of the man Jesus of Nazareth is raised above the transitory into the eternal presence of God as Spirit. (2,157)



**10) [The participation of the human self in the Eternal Life of Being] is not the endless continuation of particular stream of consciousness in memory and anticipation. Self-consciousness, in our experience, depends on temporal changes [in time]. But eternity transcends temporality and with it the experienced character of self-consciousness. ...the self-conscious self in Eternal Life is not what it is in temporal life.**

**[Tillich's only answer to the question about what the state of the self in eternity is, is that it joins with all other selves in a community of participation in the divine life.] (3, 413f)**



**11) ...the end of history is ever present as the permanent elevation of history into eternity. ...ultimate judgment [is] the permanent transition to of the temporal to the eternal, the negative [of finite separation and anxiety] is defeated... Nothing that is...can be excluded from eternity. (3, 398f)**

**I would suggest a curve which comes from above, moves down as well as ahead, reaches the deepest point which is the “existential now,” and returns in an analogous way to that from which it came, going ahead as well as up. This curve can be drawn in every moment of experienced time, and it can also be seen as the diagram for temporality as a whole. ... Beginning from and ending in the eternal are not matters of a determinable moment physical time but rather a process going on in every moment, as does the divine creation. There is always creation and consummation, beginning and end. (3, 420)**



The New Being (1952, edition 2005)

**12) When Christ sacrificed Himself, the disciples looked away in despair... But he was too strong, he drew their eyes back to Him, but now to him crucified. And they could stand it, for they saw with Him and through Him the God who is really God. (133)**



**13) In Christ we look at a human life that maintained the union [with God] in spite of everything that drove him into separation. He represents and mediates the power of the New Being because he represents and mediates the power of an uninterrupted union. Where the New Reality appears, one feels united with God, the ground and meaning of one's existence. One has what has been called the love of one's destiny, and what, today, we might call the courage to take upon ourselves our own anxiety. Then one has the astonishing experience of feeling reunited with oneself, not in pride and self-satisfaction, but in a deep self-acceptance. (22)**





14) ...we feel that we cannot escape God even by making Him an object of skeptical arguments... We realize that in our uncertainty there is one fixed point of certainty, however we may name it and describe it and explain it. We may not comprehend, but we are comprehended. We may not grasp anything in the depth of our uncertainty, but that we are grasped by something ultimate, which keeps us in its grasp, and from which we may strive in vain to escape, remains absolutely certain. (77)



## The Shaking of the Foundations, 163

**15) You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything, do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!” (163)**



The Courage to Be (1952) [quotations from pp. 171-190]

**16) Courage needs the power of being, a power transcending the nonbeing which is experienced in the anxiety of fate and death...**

**Faith is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself.**



**17) The absolute faith which creates the courage to take doubt and meaninglessness into itself has no special content. It is simply faith, undirected, absolute. It is undefinable, since everything defined is dissolved by doubt and meaninglessness.**

**An analysis of the nature of absolute faith reveals the following elements in it. The first is the experience of the power of being which is present even in the face of the most radical manifestation of nonbeing. ... The second element in absolute faith is the dependence of the experience of nonbeing on the experience of being and the dependence of the experience of meaninglessness on the experience of meaning. ...**



**18) Absolute faith transcends the divine-human encounter [in which God is objective for the human subject]. [For in this case] the attack of doubt undercuts the subject-object structure. ...the divine-human encounter [is thus] prevented by radical doubt and nothing is left but absolute faith.**

**If we speak of the power of being-itself we indicate that being affirms itself against nonbeing. ... [But] nonbeing belongs to being, being would not be the ground of life without nonbeing. Nothing would be manifest, nothing expressed...**



19) The content of absolute faith is the “God above God.” Absolute faith and its consequence, the courage that takes the...doubt about God into itself, transcends the theistic idea of God. ...

The God of theological theism is a being beside others... He is seen as a self..., as an ego which is related to a thou, as a cause which is separated from its effect... He is a being, not being-itself. As such...he is an object for us as subjects. At the same time we are objects for him as subjects. For God as subject makes me into an object which is nothing more than an object. He deprives me of my subjectivity because he is all-powerful and all-knowing. ... God appears as the invincible tyrant. .... Theism in all its forms is transcended in the experience we have called absolute faith. ...

The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.



Systematic Theology, II

**20) The justice of God is not a special act of punishment calculated according to the guilt of the sinner. But the justice of God is the act through which he lets the self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement go their way. He cannot remove them because they belong to the structure of being itself [i.e. finitude and its consequences in human life]... ...justice is the structural form of love... The exercise of justice is the working of his love, resisting and breaking what is against love. (174)**

**The principles of justice imply ultimacy and universality. (227)**

**[In his short work, Love, Power and Justice (1954), Tillich gives “principles” of justice that should be applied in any situation: dignity, equality, and adequacy. Adequate action is action that attains creative results. All humans are creatures of Being and encompassed by its love. Love’s vision is the perfect healing of the estrangements of existence.**



## The Protestant Principle

Systematic Theology, I, 227

**21) The Protestant principle is the restatement of the prophetic principle as an attack against the self-absolutizing and, consequently, demonically distorted church. (Syst. Theol. I, 227)**





## Philosophy and Theology

Systematic Theology, I, 22, 230

**22) Philosophy and theology ask the question of being. But they ask it from different perspectives. Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us.**

**Religion deals existentially with the meaning of being; philosophy deals theoretically with the structure of being.**



## Method of Correlation

Systematic Theology I, 62, 13

**26) In using the method of correlation, systematic theology...makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions.**

**Man is the question ... Christ, the New Being, is the answer.**



Dynamics of Faith (1956), 1

**24) Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned.**

