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CHRISTIAN
ORIGINS

THE SETTING AND
CHARACTER OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT MESSIANIC
SECT OF JUDAISM

CHRISTOPHER
ROWLAND

SECOND EDITION

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Christian Origins

By the same author:

The Open Heaven (SPCK 1982)

(with Mark Corner)

Liberating Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies
(SPCK 1990)

Christopher Rowland

Christian Origins

An Account of the Setting and Character
of the most Important Messianic
Sect of Judaism

SECOND EDITION



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For
John O'Neill
and
Ed Sanders
and members of the
New Testament Graduate Seminar, Oxford,
1991–2001

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None of my friends or advisers should be held responsible for the eccen-

tric positions adopted here or the mistakes which remain. One thing is certain: it would have been a much worse book without their help. I trust that what remains may be of some help to those studying the rise of Christianity and also those who still look to it as a resource for understanding the nature of Christian discipleship in the modern world.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Students in universities and colleges are nowadays being introduced to early Christianity via courses which seek to examine the New Testament documents in the much broader framework of first-century Judaism and the Hellenistic world. It is in order to help the student embarking upon such courses that I have written this book. It is introductory in the sense that it does not include a large amount of technical discussion and exegetical detail but is on a much larger scale than a general introduction to Judaism and early Christianity, because I feel that students need something more substantial than a general introduction, which glances cursorily at a number of topics in a relatively small space. While I make no pretensions to exhaustive coverage, I have attempted to go beyond the passing reference to explore early Christianity and its world in some depth while avoiding detailed exegesis.

Those who set out to write an account of Christian origins face a daunting task. In order to keep such a study within reasonable bounds the presentation inevitably has to cut corners, both in the unravelling of various strands which led to the emergence of Christianity as a dominant religious movement in the later Roman Empire, and in the treatment of the enormous amount of secondary literature which has emerged on the subject in the last century.

I am painfully aware of my own shortcomings as I embark on such an exercise. The perceptive reader will be able to note that my research interests have given a distinct slant to my approach, though I hope they have not distorted it. I have assumed in my presentation that it was the Jewish world which gave Christianity its essential outlines. In saying this, I do not want to suggest for one moment that early Christianity was insulated from Hellenistic culture (how could it have been?), but that its assimilation of Hellenistic ideas and outlook came via Judaism which has to varying extents itself been profoundly influenced by Hellenism. Perhaps if my knowledge of the Roman world were greater, my vision would not have appeared so restricted, but I suspect that my approach would not be significantly different: to understand early Christianity is, first of all, to understand first-century Judaism in all its complexity.

There are two approaches that I could have taken in this study. It would have been possible to offer a student a bird's eye view of scholarship on ancient Judaism and early Christianity, to introduce him or her to the various opinions about the subjects treated here. Such an approach has the merit of giving a degree of objectivity in seeking to present as fairly as possible all

sides of the argument and weighing the various possibilities. The other approach is more controversial, though possibly, for the writer, much more interesting; that is, to present a picture of the rise of Christianity, which certainly takes into account the variety of scholarly opinions, but which seeks to test a hypothesis. I have rejected the first approach for several reasons.

First, it would have been difficult to keep a book of this kind within reasonable bounds if I had attempted to offer a history of scholarship on Judaism and Christianity during the last twenty, never mind fifty, years. Secondly, it has become much easier for students to lay their hands on concise summaries of particular approaches, without having to rely on condensations of particular standpoints in student manuals. Thirdly, there is a case to be made for outlining a hypothesis which does not have detailed exegetical support while, of course, seeking to do justice to the main thrust of the early Christian literature. It is often easy to miss the wood for the trees. Fourthly, I have to confess my own reservations about embarking upon a project which seeks, in the main, to offer a history of scholarship. It is not that I think that it is unimportant for a student text-book to introduce the gamut of scholarship; of course, that is most necessary. But what is equally important is for a student to learn to read critically and to be aware of the need to assess interpretations of ancient history and ideas which are offered. While I hope that what is written here will enable the reader to gain some insight into the Jewish world of the first century CE and the messianic movement which emerged from it, I would like to think that the book will serve not so much as an authoritative source-book, either of material about the ancient world or of modern opinions of it, but more as a stimulus which provokes both disagreement and further research on the primary sources and the writings of those whose opinions differ from my own. The interpreter of ancient texts acknowledges the very profound limitations of ancient historiography and the restrictions caused by his own interpretative setting. The sooner a student apprehends these very real barriers, the better. Accordingly, I have not set out to write the definitive study of Christian origins; it is a work which arises from a particular exegetical tradition in Europe and evinces certain clear assumptions about the character of Christianity in both its ancient and modern manifestations. This is not to suggest that what is written here stands apart from the mainstream of contemporary scholarship. In its two major theses (the centrality of eschatology and the crucial importance of the Jewish world for the understanding of the New Testament) this book is set very firmly within the mainstream of contemporary scholarly trends. In this sense, the book does not aim to break new ground, though, by going over old ground, it is hoped that it may bring to light matters which have been neglected in the past.

New Testament scholarship is going through a period of transition at present. It is now a little over a decade since James Robinson and Helmut

Koester called for new approaches to the study of early Christian literature.¹ Looking back at their attempt to offer a new approach, it is apparent that what they had to offer did not differ markedly from the well-established methods of New Testament research. In the light of such an assessment, it may be rather premature to speak of another new approach as if it marked a breakthrough, but the growing interest in the socio-economic dimension of religious groups in antiquity promises to introduce us to new insights and to remind us of neglected aspects of scholarly research from the past.

It is a measure of the neglect of this approach that we are still at a very preliminary stage in the utilization of it. This means that we still run the risk of rash generalizations and overenthusiastic use of tools not adequately fitted to the specific task facing the historian of the early Christian religion. Mistakes in this area have been, and will continue to be, made. Two things are certain. First of all, this dimension of scholarly research has been sadly neglected and this has led to certain distortions in the study of Christianity, for example, the preoccupation with the history of ideas, with little or no concern for the social setting of those ideas. Secondly, the inherited wisdom of biblical scholarship is not to be thrown overboard as irrelevant to this approach. Indeed, it may be that some of the more persistent log-jams in scholarly research can be resolved by the introduction of such a different perspective.

I have profited greatly from the studies which have already been written on the social world of the first Christians, and some attempt has been made to take account of it in this study. Nevertheless the indebtedness to this approach has not led me to abandon a traditional method which attributes to certain figures and their lives as much, if not more, importance than the wider religious movements. Thus I have not hesitated to include large sections on Jesus and Paul, though I recognize that the groups which were inheritors of their method and message may have made more impact *in the long run* inside and outside the churches than these two men. Both were part of a much wider complex of social, economic and religious realities, but I do not consider that the new directions which did emerge in the thought and practice of the early Christian groups can be adequately explained by socio-economic forces and group-movements only. The exploration of the contribution of the charismatic leader, in other words, still has its part to play in the portrayal of religious movements. In this respect this study will be regarded by some as being very much in an old-fashioned mould.

I realize that in raising the question of the cultural setting of primitive Christianity, I shall at once provoke expectations which I cannot at present satisfy and as a result disappoint many readers by failing to answer questions such as: what kind of socio-political world produced charismatic figures like Jesus and Paul; what specific features can be gleaned about their social settings from their religious beliefs? That these questions must be asked I

have no doubt, but I am also aware that they are not susceptible of easy answers. We cannot glibly assume that utopianism, for example, is the prerogative of the marginalized only. The social context of religious language is a subject which demands detailed examination in the future. To embark upon such an ambitious project in a book of this kind would have needed much more painstaking research than was possible at this stage. I am certain that it is a subject to which I must return in due course.

Let me make some further comments about other assumptions in this study: first, Judaism. It is rare to pick up a textbook on ancient Judaism these days without finding expressed there the conviction that after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE significant changes took place in the character of Judaism. Up to that date, it is suggested, there was no such thing as orthodox Judaism (if by that is meant a system of belief and practice to which the majority of Jews subscribed) but a multiplicity of interpretations some of which were mutually exclusive in their understanding of the common traditions. After 70 we find the gradual emergence of a type of Judaism, with links with Pharisaism, as the dominant expression of Jewish piety. That assumption underlies the whole of this study and makes me cagey about the use of anachronistic terms like Judaism and Christianity as recognizable entities when speaking about pre-70 Judaism.

Secondly, it will be apparent that, like many other students of the New Testament, I have been profoundly influenced by the work of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, so that to understand eschatology is to understand early Christianity and its ideology. Few today would dissent from the view that eschatology was central to the earliest Christian proclamation. The earliest Christian literature has an eschatological foundation not apparent in later manifestations of mainstream Christian belief, and this change requires explanation. Contemporary scholarship has followed the trend of much early Christian doctrinal thinking by concentrating on Christology as the central issue in the earliest phase of Christian theology (as the proliferation of books and articles on this theme makes clear); books on 'the Eschatology of the New Testament' are nothing like as numerous as those on 'the Christology of the New Testament'. We are not often told why it was that the New Testament writers were notably reluctant to engage in christological exposition, despite the attempts of modern interpreters to make them do just that. In addition, the factors which led to the focus of attention becoming the Proclaimer rather than the message he proclaimed continues to be a matter of some importance. Our tendency to offer facile suggestions and the paucity of evidence should not stop us exploring this important ideological development and its related social setting.

Thirdly (and this relates to the two previous considerations), I have assumed that, in early Christianity, we are dealing with a Jewish messianic movement, which continued to be this throughout the bulk of the period we

are considering. In making this assumption I cannot agree that there was, from the very start, something entirely novel at the level of ideas, which decisively separated the Christians from other Jews (except that is for the personnel involved and the peculiar contributions their stories made to the emergence of a separate religion). The conviction that the shared Jewish hopes were being fulfilled was not in itself unique, nor was the attempt to interpret Scripture in the light of that conviction. Even if we possess few details of their practice and beliefs, there were individuals and movements who held views similar to those held by many of the early Christians. There is no evidence that there was anything completely novel in its eschatological doctrine, and there are no grounds for seeking to separate it or the study of it from first-century Judaism as a whole. Opposition to it there clearly was, but as is apparent from a study of our sources, there was nothing unusual in that. To explore the factors which led a Jewish messianic group to develop into a religion separate from Judaism it is necessary to look at what happened to Judaism. In this exploration I acknowledge that the thesis that Christianity started life as a Jewish 'sect' and finished as a separate institution, the catholic church, is one that has been given an airing many times before. But the fact that the thesis (and its supporters) are tainted with suspicion of Protestant sympathies and a suspicion of hierarchies should make the thesis none the worse for that!

Finally, I recognize that in my approach to early Christianity I have not only indicated preferences for certain settings and interpretations but have utilized one interpretative method. One of the things that biblical interpreters must face is the complexity of the interpretative task; the historical-critical method which is the method used in this book represents one (albeit dominant) approach to Christian literature. Those of us who use this method need to recognize how easy it is to be trapped into thinking of it as a normative guide to the interpretation of texts. What I have written here does not, of course, imply that the variety of hermeneutical tools used at present (and for that matter throughout history) should be set aside by biblical students. The greater use of such methods in the future can only be of benefit to biblical interpretation.

One of the great difficulties I have found in writing this book has been the need to make a series of judgements about ancient Judaism and early Christianity without detailed argument, particularly where I feel my competence to make those judgements is not what it should be. I am painfully aware of the exegetical shortcomings; detailed discussion of the ancient texts has frequently had to be set on one side. For many readers the way in which assertion has taken the place of reasoned argument and attention to the minutiae of exegesis will be a fatal flaw. In writing of the ministry of Jesus, for example, I recognize that nearly every statement I make could be challenged, and that I have opted for a more positive view of the historicity of the

tradition than many would consider appropriate. It is not always possible to appeal to the assured results of scholarship because of the divergence of opinion which exists. I only hope that in avoiding the detailed study I have been able to sketch an outline of Christian origins which reflects the insights offered by modern scholarship, while at the same time being accessible in its scope and treatment to the inquirer into the beginnings of Christianity.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The justification for the publication of a second edition of this book is that there is an ongoing need for the material it covers and the approach taken. It is now nearly twenty years since some of these chapters were first penned. Research and writing have continued in this period: arguably, at a pace and in a quantity greater than at any time in history. The reasons for this are manifold and have as much to do with the peculiar demands on the modern academy as any groundbreaking new research (though there are exceptions, particularly in the area of the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls).

The basic thesis of the book was messianism as the motor of early Christian life and thought. I have become more convinced that understanding the dynamics and development of a messianic movement which persisted through time is one of the keys which unlocks the various developments of Christianity as reflected in the extant sources. I can see more clearly now that the effects of apocalypticism and messianism on the emerging Christian movement pushed it further from mainstream Jewish practice. It is not only because I feel more confident in dealing with apocalypticism and messianism that they take up a disproportionate amount of space in Part II: these provided the main catalyst for so many ideas in early Christianity, even if specific circumstances led to subtle developments and variations in formulation. If I have changed my mind on anything, it is to recognize that the nature of Christianity as a religion meant that it rapidly found separate identities for its various articulations. Just as in the sixteenth century, within a comparatively short period, late medieval catholicism fragmented and became altogether different in the protestant, anabaptist, Lutheran and reformed churches, so the religion of Second Temple Judaism, shaped by the circumstances of a failed revolt and internal division, became in Christianity and rabbinic Judaism very different religions: a process which, in the case of Christianity, had gathered momentum before 70 CE.

The approach taken in the second part of the first edition of this book had a long pedigree within the study of Judaism and Christianity. If I were setting about the task now, I would treat differently the antecedents, and wider context of emerging Christianity. Over the last twenty years there has been a growing unease with the concept of Judaism as an undifferentiated historical and religious entity, with which Christianity may be compared. The Dead

Sea Scrolls, the increasing sophistication in the discussion of the development of rabbinic literature and the more realistic assessment of the implications of heterogeneity among Jews in the Second Temple period have cast a rather different light on the way in which the Jewish context of Christian origins has been treated. The publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls in their entirety has continued to provoke questions about the religious world of which they were a part, and in this edition my sketch of Second Temple Judaism is deliberately more cautious and more explicitly related to the concerns of the pursuit of Christian origins. It reflects my recognition that in several areas I do not possess the requisite expertise and knowledge to make the confident statements, particularly with regard to the Pharisees, that are found in the first edition. There are excellent introductions to the various aspects of Second Temple Judaism which treat at much greater length the matters alluded to all too briefly in this book, with the level of detail and sophistication which these texts deserve.

If I were starting this section afresh, my sketch of Second Temple Judaism would be less synthetic. The latter is the perspective of an outsider as opposed to the insider. The difference can best be highlighted by reference to a story in the Acts of the Apostles where the proconsul Gallio comes face to face with the nascent Christian movement. As a Roman confronted by Jews disturbed by the Christians in their midst he considers that he is being confronted by different sorts of Jews nit-picking about the details of their religion. To him, what they have in common is more similar than what separates them. But to the adversaries before Gallio's tribunal, things look very different: those niceties, which seemed of little significance to the Roman governor, are matters of life and death to the competing advocates. Too often in the past, interpreters of Jewish texts have regarded Judaism as a monolithic whole. Even when lip-service is paid to the diversity of Second Temple Judaism, the synthetic and homogenizing approach tends to dominate: an approach which would disregard those apparent 'niceties' which caused the rifts that irritated Gallio and which re-emerge again in Acts 23 over the discussion of the resurrection from the dead. Here, a constellation of differences is reported to have emerged among the various groups within the Second Temple period. Without completely unravelling all the material and writing a different book, however, there was little that could be done with the synthetic approach taken in the first edition, save to say that while it suggests a way into the consideration of Second Temple Judaism, it does require a 'health warning'. What is offered is an approach, a perspective, a way into, the material – but one which needs to be complemented by less homogenous approaches which respect the differences among the various texts and recognize that Judaism cannot be reduced to key principles.

I have a more chastened attitude towards the study of Christian origins also. While the importance of messianism remains, other neat interpreta-

tive solutions seem less convincing. For example, over the last two decades or so, it has become more difficult to explain the origin of key Christian texts, like the Gospels of Matthew and John, by reference to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the supposed deliberations, which took place in the aftermath of defeat and destruction among teachers at Yavneh or Jamnia. One of the outcomes of these discussions, it was supposed, was the reformulation of the synagogue liturgy with the result (among many other things) that Jewish Christians were excluded from the liturgy as the result of the *birkath ha-minim* (a version of the twelfth blessing involving a curse on Jewish Christians). There has been growing doubt whether there was in fact a neat severance between Jews and Christians at this stage. Some Christians, particularly under the influence of the Pauline mission, probably had very little to do with Jews, whereas others may have had close contact with Jews for centuries. Thus it has become more difficult to suppose that the *birkath ha-minim* was the catalyst for separation and that key documents like the Gospel of John are to be understood in the light of it.

There is a second way in which I would do things differently if I were starting from scratch. This book, like much modern historical scholarship, is an exercise in synchronic conceptualization – finding parallels to the New Testament from antiquity. This has now reached encyclopaedic proportions, with considerable pay-off for historical study. As a component of interpretation, such an exercise will always have its part to play. Nevertheless there is a nagging doubt: why should a text, merely because it is contemporary with the New Testament, be more illuminating than a piece from centuries later whose underlying religion and ethos is more akin to what we find in the New Testament?

In two classic studies of later periods, Gershom Scholem on Sabbatai Sevi and Norman Cohn on medieval millenarianism demonstrate the possibility of a *diachronic* perspective with benefits for a comparative biblical study. In his study of seventeenth-century Jewish messianism Scholem explicitly draws parallels with early Christianity. Although there is less evidence of such a retroactive comparison in Cohn's book, his treatment of millenarian ideas in the late medieval and early modern period offers another graphic portrait of the origins and consequences of messianism. This is crucially important for the study of Christian origins. One of the prime reasons for distinguishing the early Christian literature from all the extant literature known to us is that this material, at least in its earliest phase, represents the ideology of a group which had ceased merely to express certain beliefs as articles of faith but also now asserted that some of the apparatus of Jewish eschatology was in the process of fulfilment. The fact that the early Christians believed that either they were actually living in the eschatological age or were very close to it meant that their focus of attention and their way of

handling those common features of the tradition were different. So the investigation of similar messianic movements is crucial.

The later messianic radicals in Judaism and Christianity provide material for the kind of comparative study I have in mind. Messianism and apocalypticism have a long history within the Church, and the development and problems initiated by such groups not only within their own organization and practice but also in relation to the parent body is a study which presents many typological similarities to early Christian messianism. This underlines the centrality of a diachronic perspective to our biblical interpretation which may be as important as, if not more important than, the synchronic perspective which dominates contemporary historical scholarship.

Modern New Testament study is characterized by a sophisticated and minutely detailed scrutiny of what is in fact a tiny corpus of literature, yet I am convinced that there is room for an approach to these texts which does not necessarily depend on a minutely detailed exegesis. There is a hermeneutical reason for this. All the New Testament texts are highly allusive and frequently resist being confined to one meaning. William Blake's view of the best of ancient literature is worth quoting:

You say that I want somebody to elucidate my ideas. But you ought to know that what is grand is necessarily obscure to weak men. That which can be made explicit to the idiot is not worth my care. The wisest of the ancients consider'd what is not too explicit as the fittest for instruction, because it rouses the faculties to act. I name Moses, Solomon, Esop, Homer, Plato . . . Why is the Bible more Entertaining & Instructive than any other book? Is it not because they are addressed to the Imagination, which is Spiritual Sensation and but mediately to the understanding or reason. (Letter to Trusler Keynes' edition of Blake's works, 793-4)

He could well have included the Gospels, epistles and apocalypse of the New Testament in his list. The second-century writer, Papias, might not have been typical of all early Christian readers of the words of Jesus, but he seems to have recognized the quality alluded to by Blake when he called the Jesus tradition 'oracles'. Allusive texts cannot be easily pinned down, and so there is room in scholarly debate for less precise attention to the interpretation of the detail than has become the norm in much biblical exegesis. The close reading of texts is only one interpretative option and, when looked at in the context of Christian reading of Scripture, has no normative position.

I have returned to the issues raised in this book after two decades exploring different issues – liberation theology and its relationship to the Bible, radical Christian movements and the history of apocalypticism. These subjects are the context in which I have set out on this revision, rather than an intimate knowledge of all the scholarly discussion in the intervening

period. If I have any contribution to make to the study of Christian origins, it is the result of the detour through the study of other debates and centuries. As I have suggested, I am convinced that the comparison with other periods and movements, not least those with a radical commitment and messianic character, has an important part to play in helping us to find some different perspectives on well-known texts. I believe that such comparisons have become more and more necessary when there is little more to be gained from squeezing texts, already over-interpreted for decades, in the hope that they will yield something fresh for historical interpretation. The New Testament texts are a rich religious resource, but there may be little more of *historical* relevance to extract from them. The questions raised by analogous situations and movements in other periods of history, therefore, may point us in new and fruitful directions.

I have changed much from when I embarked on this project twenty years ago. Some technical alterations to the text have been necessary: the removal of gender-specific references to God; and the change to a language which is more inclusive of women. I apologize for any instances I may have missed. The problems of updating a bibliography and footnotes are complex. In the end, I decided to add a supplementary bibliography and to include suggestions for additional reading as appropriate in a footnote at the end of each section. The outline of the first edition and its contents remain largely the same. Minor changes have been made throughout, and there has been an extensive rewriting of the section on 'Jewish sectarianism', now entitled 'Schools of Thought'.

I am particularly indebted to two graduate students from Oxford, Helenann Francis and Stuart Chepey, whose knowledge of the current debates has been invaluable; to my daughter, Rebekah, who assisted with the preparation of the new edition; and Betsy Grey, whose advice on form and style have added greatly to the book. Other graduate students will see from the revision how much I owe to the weekly seminar which I have convened in Oxford over the last ten years, and which has broadened my intellectual horizons as I have listened to, and learnt from, the commitment and exchanges of intelligent and warm-hearted people. I am grateful to them all and gratefully add them to the two distinguished dedicatees to whom the first edition of this book was dedicated.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Apoc. Abr.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i>
<i>Abr.</i>	<i>On Abraham</i> (Philo)
<i>AH</i>	<i>Adversus Haereses</i> (Irenaeus)
<i>ANRW</i>	W. Haase ed., <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquities of the Jews</i> (Josephus)
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apology</i> (Tertullian)
<i>Apology</i>	<i>Apology</i> (Justin)
<i>Apost. Trad.</i>	<i>Apostolic Tradition</i> (Hippolytus)
<i>ARN</i>	<i>Aboth de Rabbi Nathan</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
<i>Bets.</i>	<i>Betzab</i>
<i>BjRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>C. Ap.</i>	<i>Contra Apionem: Against Apion</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CD</i>	<i>Damascus Document</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>Cherubim</i> (Philo)
<i>Confus. Ling.</i>	<i>Confusion of Tongues</i> (Philo)
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>On Preliminary Studies</i> (Philo)
<i>Creation</i>	<i>Creation of the World</i> (Philo)
<i>De Praescript. Haer.</i>	<i>De Praescriptione Haereticorum</i> (Tertullian)
<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>Dialogue</i> (Justin)
<i>EH</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (Eusebius)
<i>Ej</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>Embassy</i>	<i>Embassy to Gaius</i> (Philo)
<i>Enc. Jud.</i>	<i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i>
<i>Eng. Hist. Rev</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Excerpta Theod.</i>	<i>Excerpta ex Theodoto</i> (Clement of Alexandria)
<i>Exp. T</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>On Flight and Finding</i> (Philo)
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>On the Giants</i> (Philo)
<i>Hag.</i>	<i>Hagigah</i>
<i>Histories</i>	<i>Histories</i> (Tacitus)
<i>History</i>	<i>History</i> (Dio Cassius)
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>j</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JE</i>	<i>Jewish Encyclopaedia</i>

JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Jub.	<i>Jubilees</i>
Leg. Alleg.	<i>Legum Allegoriae: Allegorical Interpretation of the Laws (Philo)</i>
Letters	<i>Letters (Pliny)</i>
Life	<i>Life (Josephus)</i>
m	<i>Mishnah</i>
Mart. Polycarp	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>
Mekilta Shabb.	<i>Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael Shabbata</i>
Men.	<i>Menahoth</i>
Migr.	<i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>
Nov. T	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTT	<i>J.J. Jeremias, New Testament Theology</i>
Opif. Mundi	<i>Creation of the World (Philo)</i>
Post.	<i>On the Posterity and Exile of Cain (Philo)</i>
Praem.	<i>De Praemiis et Poenis: On Rewards and Punishments (Philo)</i>
Quest. Ex.	<i>Questions and Answers on Exodus (Philo)</i>
Quis rer.	<i>Who is the Heir? (Philo)</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
Ref.	<i>Refutations (Hippolytus)</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
Script. Hieros	<i>Scripta Hierosolymitana (Periodical)</i>
Sib. Or.	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
Sifre Deut.	<i>Sifre on Deuteronomy</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
Spec. Laws	<i>Special Laws (Philo)</i>
SVM	<i>E. Schürer, ed. G. Vermes & F. Miller, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ</i>
Syr. Baruch	<i>Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch</i>
t	<i>Tosefta</i>
Targum Ps. Jon.	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
Test. Abr.	<i>Testament of Abraham</i>
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TU	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen</i>
Vig. Chr.	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
War	<i>Jewish War (Josephus)</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZRGG	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>

PART I

Introduction

The Rock Whence Ye Were Hewn

After nearly two millennia of conflict and persecution, particularly of Jews by Christians, it has become very difficult for adherents of the two religions to acknowledge their common heritage. Particularly on the Christian side there has in the past been antagonism of a most vitriolic kind. A glance at some of the Jewish traditions concerning Jesus reveals the depth of hostility to this wayward offshoot from Judaism.¹ On the other side, the charge of deicide laid against Jews and the curse hinted at in Matthew 27.25 have been the cause of appalling violence and cruelty against Jews by Christians. However strongly early Christians felt about the tradition of Jewish involvement in the death of Jesus, the Gospel of Matthew stresses that such responsibility was confined to a generation long past (Matt. 23.36) and the events surrounding the death of Jesus of Nazareth incur no blame whatsoever on succeeding generations of Jews. Although the horror of the Nazi persecution of the Jews properly shocked Christians into new assessments of the Churches' relations to Judaism,² it should be a matter of considerable concern to Christians that anti-Semitic currents are still prevalent in Europe. Stemming this tide will depend a great deal on the willingness of both Christians and Jews to admit the shame and horror of past treatment (and the spirit of repentance is needed particularly on the Christian side) and to set out to examine the origins of these two outstanding attempts to understand the religious traditions in what Jews call the Tenach, the Hebrew Bible comprising the Torah, Nebiim (Prophets) and Kethubim (Writings), and Christians the Old Testament.

The liturgy and outlook of most Christians seem to be far removed from Judaism.³ The most obvious difference, of course, is the fact that the Torah, the Law of Moses, *as a whole*, has little or no part to play in the ordering of the everyday lives of Christians. Despite the wish of some to see a return to the practice of, say, the Decalogue, the detailed observance which characterizes the Jewish sabbath is foreign to most Christians. Likewise the concern with purity and clean and unclean food is alien to the dominant concerns of Christian practice. It appears that the rift has grown so wide, as one might expect after such a long period of separation and hostility, that Christianity has almost completely cut loose from its Jewish moorings.

Such a view has received support from many who have written about the emergence of Christianity over the last hundred years or so. While it is admitted that Jesus of Nazareth preached an essentially Jewish message about God and his kingdom,⁴ very rapidly, it is argued, the Church turned

the one who had proclaimed that message into the central feature of its own proclamation; the Jewish prophet of God's kingdom became the universal saviour.⁵ While few today would subscribe in their entirety to the views of those like Ferdinand Christian Baur and his disciples (the Tübingen school), who affirmed the radical separation between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, elements of this view have not totally vanished from the perspective of many who write on Christian origins.⁶ Dominant in the story of the transformation of Judaism into a new religion, it is argued, was Paul. He in particular loosed the bands, which tied the message about Christ, from Judaism and changed it into a religion, which affected the destiny of the whole of humanity, thus initiating a hostile attitude to Judaism. This role for Paul is given at least superficial support by the often vehement denunciations of the Law of Moses in his own letters (e.g., Gal. 3.10ff.). At his conversion (if that is the right way of describing what happened to Paul on the Damascus road), Paul turned his back on one version of his Jewish religion in favour of a new way of understanding God.⁷ The dominant place which Paul has within the Protestant tradition has accentuated the dichotomy between the religion of Law and the religion of grace, and as a result has extended the tension between Judaism and Christianity. Whatever Paul himself may have believed about the relationship of the Christian gospel to the Jewish tradition, it has all too frequently been the case that his interpreters have understood him to imply a *complete* dichotomy between his life as a Pharisee and his life as an apostle of Jesus Christ, a view we shall want to question later.

There are enormous problems confronting Jews and Christians, as they seek to accept their common heritage and their differing interpretations of that heritage. The time has come to get behind the rigid boundaries imposed by the past, and the bitter controversies which have marked Jewish and Christian relations, to ask what it was that led to that separation and that bitterness. The lines were not so clearly drawn in the second century, even in the midst of so much mutual recrimination and bitterness. We know from early Christian writings that there was a small, though significant, intercourse between Jews and Christians for a considerable period.⁸ Despite all its contempt for Judaism, the *Dialogue* of Justin (a Christian who lived in the middle of the second century CE) with the Jew Trypho exhibits a continuing concern among early Christians to justify their interpretation of the Bible as the authentic one. There is regret that Christians are excluded from Jewish synagogues (chapters 16, 47f., 93, 95f., 108, 117, 133 and 137), though Justin does not spare his venom on those who have acted in this way, a foretaste of bitter disputes to come.⁹ Nevertheless what comes across in the *Dialogue* is the conviction on Justin's part that what the Christians believed was entirely consistent with the Scriptures, which both Jews and Christians shared. The whole of his argument depends on the assumption that belief in Jesus was not an eccentric departure from the traditions but

was at least as valid an interpretation as the understanding of those same texts held by Jews.¹⁰

However much we may cringe at some of Justin's remarks about Judaism and its 'blindness', it is a fundamental strand in the New Testament that the convictions about Jesus were the authentic fulfilment of the promises of the Jewish Scriptures, the Christian Old Testament. Refusal to accept this fact meant that persistence in an old pattern of religion was tantamount to disobedience to the Most High (e.g., John 14.6; Acts 4.12; Rom. 10.7ff.). Christian writers cannot deny that this is at the heart of the tradition with which they have to deal, however much they might today want to avoid some of the more excessive interpretations and be more tentative. But to assert the messiahship of Jesus is not to concede that we must simply remain behind battle-lines drawn long ago and the ideologies of centuries' duration. We must cross the divide and attempt to look at the world out of which two conflicting interpretations of the Jewish Scriptures emerged. It may well be that the results of our quest will bring us no nearer to a solution and that the factors which make the two religions what they are prohibit any significant *rapprochement*. But much groundwork needs to be done and dialogue entered into before we can say that we are in a position to understand the factors which led to the separation and the establishment of the ideological divide and mutual hostility. Repentance of the misdeeds of the past requires knowledge instead of ignorance of our common origins as a preliminary to greater mutual understanding.

At first glance, the emphasis on messianism and fulfilment with which early Christian writings are replete suggests the inferiority of Judaism.¹¹ Nevertheless, the pattern of religion that emerges suggests also a degree of openness and incompleteness, a looking forward to a future fulfilment. In this respect Christianity shares with Judaism a future expectation of a messiah even if it claims to be able to discern his character. In addition, there is a sense in which this messianic identity is surprising in that in the present age it is more likely to be found beyond the gathered community of Christians and among those who are needy, Jews, unbelievers as well as Christians (Matt. 25.31–45): 'where mercy, pity, peace dwell, there God is dwelling too' (to quote the words of William Blake). Such openness has to be set alongside passages of greater confidence in the rectitude of Christian belief, but the latter cannot and should not have the last word.

Two of the issues separating Judaism and Christianity are the claims made by Christians for Jesus of Nazareth (together with the inevitable consequences of such claims in doctrinal formulation) and the consciousness of being a separate religion. The New Testament material seems to initiate the move to separation and exclusiveness. The problem is, of course, that what we have in the New Testament is a selection of documents, which the Christian Church over the years considered authoritative.¹² The concept of

the canon of the New Testament alongside and superior to the Hebrew Bible is one which bears all the hallmarks of a later self-consciously separate religion.

The problem remains with us: how are we to treat the New Testament writings? They do offer a distinctive view among the Jewish texts of antiquity; hence their preservation. This distinctive perspective does compel us to attempt to consider early Christianity in some isolation. One of the depressing facts of life for ancient historians is the paucity of sources available. This may seem a strange assertion to the reader bewildered by the array of Jewish documents described at the end of this book. Yet the fact remains that today we are confronted in the main with literature which bears witness to what in due course became two mutually exclusive interpretations of Jewish tradition, namely rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. But their perspectives form only part of the rich fabric of Jewish life and thought in the first century CE as the non-rabbinic literature indicates. The Dead Sea Scrolls,¹³ for example, have allowed us to glimpse the outlook of another perspective at the time, with many surprising ideas and differences from what had hitherto been supposed to be typical of Judaism.¹⁴ But whatever affinities of outlook we may detect between the early Christian material and the extant ancient Jewish sources, what distinguishes the Christian sources from the non-Christian Jewish sources is the conviction that something of ultimate importance had taken place in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the experience of the first Christians which justified the emergence of a related but different practice and outlook on life as compared with that found in the majority of witnesses to Second Temple Judaism. To put it in theological terms, the Messiah had come and the new age had dawned; the Holy Spirit had been poured out on all flesh and the events had been set in motion for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Thus what many of the early Christian texts portray is a movement, which asserted the *fulfilment* of the promises of Israel and the consequences of such a conviction in human existence. It is in this regard that it is surely appropriate to view the Christian sources in some isolation, for by and large they bear witness to the convictions of groups which maintained that the Messiah had come. I do not want to suggest that the early Christians were the only group to have held such beliefs in the first century CE. Messianic renewal movements were common at the time (e.g., *Ant.* 17.254ff.; *War* 2.43ff.). What we are left with in our extant Jewish sources, however, tells us little about the beliefs and practices of such movements in first-century Palestine. The one example that we do have (apart from the sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls) is the early Christian movement, the bulk of whose earliest extant literature is to be found in the New Testament. The documents in the New Testament deserve to be considered as evidence of the beliefs and practices of a Jewish messianic

movement which moved out from its Palestinian origins to many parts of the Roman world. It deserves to be examined as such, not because it was to form the basis of a separate religion, but because, like the community whose views are reflected in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it had a high degree of self-awareness from the very beginning, with its own distinctive interpretation of the Bible. But devoting a separate treatment to the nascent Christian movement is not the same as asserting that we are dealing with an outlook which was not very much part of first-century Judaism, at least in Palestine and before 70 CE.

To avoid giving the impression that there was a separation between Judaism on the one hand and the Christian movement on the other, some consideration will be given throughout the first part of this study, which offers an outline of Jewish beliefs and practices, to the early Christian texts also as evidence of first-century Jewish outlooks. While these may not always be typical of the totality of Jewish belief and practice, the same may also be said of many rabbinic sources, which in all likelihood represent the views of a small minority within Jewish society; we know precious little about popular belief and practice.

In discussing Christian origins, we must always bear in mind that we should not be concerned to contrast Christianity with Judaism, as if the latter were a uniform body of doctrine and practice. Christianity never conflicted with Judaism as such until well into the second century CE, and for a significant amount of time the stories of the two religions were bound together. For the whole of its formative period the hostility which existed between Jews (and others), who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and those who did not, was spasmodic and lacking in any uniformity.¹⁵ What we may be able to speak of in the first century is a conflict between groups of Jews who rejected Jesus' messiahship and groups which accepted it. We cannot assume that all Jews who did not accept Jesus as such were ranged against Christianity from the very start.

We shall never completely ascertain how the Christian movement adapted to the Roman world, and why it survived the débâcle of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE to become (with nascent rabbinic Judaism) the standard-bearer of the Jewish tradition in antiquity. A glance at the pages of the New Testament indicates that the kind of Christianity which the later Church regarded as authoritative for its belief and practice¹⁶ differed markedly from the type of Judaism which in due course came to be regarded as authoritative.¹⁷ It is in this respect that the distinctive eschatological outlook of the early Christians and their (often radical) approach to the Jewish tradition provoked new questions and asserted new priorities. Messianic and other eschatological convictions presented it with problems, which, while not different in kind from those confronting other Jews in the ancient world, were sufficiently different in degree to elicit unusual answers: for example, the issue of table-

fellowship and the problem of circumcision of those Gentiles who confessed Jesus as Messiah.

For all Jews living in the midst of pagans the conflict of two world-views was awkward and difficult. Practices like circumcision and sabbath were often viewed with suspicion by pagans,¹⁸ and the observance of the regulations of the Torah, especially those relating to food and idolatry, regularly presented problems of social differentiation. A similar conflict of ideals confronted the early Christians. They too inherited the Bible, and we may suppose that it was some considerable time before all scruples had disappeared, with regard to the observance of food-laws, sabbath and the like (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8; 10). In addition to this, early Christianity had at its heart a messianism, which led its adherents to espouse counter-cultural views. How was it to cope with its convictions about the unity of all believers in Christ when it had to live in a world of class and massive discrimination on the grounds of gender and race? How was it to put into practice its convictions that it represented a new humanity in the midst of an old and fallen order thereby indicating dissatisfaction with political arrangements as they were and posing as an alternative polity in practice?

An issue which we shall examine in due course is the way in which this messianic movement came to terms with the world in which it lived. It will be suggested that it so adjusted its messianism and came to an accommodation with society that the latter's existence would not be threatened too greatly. It did not manage to do this successfully all the time. Pagan critics of Christianity were fond of pointing to the subversive nature of the religion and its effects on the Roman order.¹⁹

Thus the issues which this study sets out to explore are as follows:

- 1 Some features of ancient Judaism before the fall of the Second Temple in CE 70, its practices and beliefs;
- 2 The character of the early Christian movement, its distinctive approach to the Jewish traditions influenced by the peaceful dynamics of messianism;
- 3 How early Christianity accommodated its distinctive beliefs to a world whose outlook was almost completely incongruous with it.

An Approach to Ancient Judaism

The last hundred years have seen dramatic steps forward in our understanding of Second Temple Judaism, as the result of the growing availability of Jewish sources to Christian scholars and the emergence of Jewish studies as a discipline of importance in its own right. One of the problems for any writer on ancient Judaism is to attempt to do justice to the nature of this religion in a short space. To answer the question, what did it mean to be a Jew in the first century CE, means consulting various sources; but as we are now well aware, our sources only give us a glimpse of Judaism. They give us some indication of the way in which some Jews handled their traditions, but we have to be mindful of the fact that they may not enable us to see how all Jews, even a significant minority of Jews, sought to practise their religion. The historian, particularly of the ancient world, is prevented from getting to the core of 'ordinary' people, those who were not literate and who had no ability or special reason for writing. Indeed, it is possible that parts of the New Testament may get as close to the ordinary lives of people of Judaea and Galilee as any extant sources. We must beware, above all, either of assuming that one group should be regarded as typifying 'normative Judaism' or of supposing that the extant sources represent more than a fraction of the Jewish outlook of the first century.

Normative Judaism has been identified with the pharisaic tradition, due in no small part to the substantial contribution this made to the Judaism of the rabbis.¹ The dominance of the corpus of rabbinic literature among the literary remains of ancient Judaism should not, however, lead to the conclusion that the outlook represented in this corpus is either monolithic in itself or representative of a majority view in Judaism before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. On the other hand, the view which relegates the Judaism of the rabbis to the margins as a source for our understanding of the character of first-century Judaism has rightly been rejected.² The tendency evident in some writing on Judaism to polarize the religion of the pharisaic rabbinic tradition and that reflected in the non-rabbinic Jewish writings should be questioned (if indeed it is possible to reduce to any kind of system the disparate ideas contained in the non-rabbinic literature). The fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE had the effect of precipitating a change in Judaism which led to the emergence of what we know as rabbinic Judaism.³ Much of it was in continuity with religious attitudes and practices prevalent during the period of the Second Temple, but its normative character did not apply then but results from its emerging dominance in the late first and early second centuries.

Nor are we in a position to suppose that the pseudepigrapha are the literary products of the mass of the population.⁴ Several of the texts exhibit a sophistication, which suggests a link with the scribal tradition.⁵ It is dangerous to elevate any part of our literature to the position of normative guide to first-century Judaism. All that we can say is that it offers evidence of the differing currents flowing throughout Jewish life and thought in our period.

We cannot pierce the veil which shrouds the practice and the belief of those who left us no literary memorial. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that common to the piety of all Jews was the Torah and, for most, the writings of the Prophets. The obligations laid upon the people of God in the Torah were the common property of all, whatever the level of enthusiasm of the individual or group may have been in the fulfilment of every detail. The Bible's legal provisions for civil life, diet, cult and family are the basic framework for Jewish existence. The knowledge of the Torah, particularly its legal and cultic provisions, is the beginning of the understanding of Judaism. What we have in the rabbinic literature is the exposition of the ramifications of these biblical provisions more or less closely related to the written text of Scripture. Judaism in the first or any other century means reading the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Leviticus. The weekly sabbath gave a distinctive character to Jewish existence, as did those food laws enunciated in Scripture (e.g., Deut. 14).⁶ Also looming large on the horizon of the first-century Jew was the Temple.⁷ The bulk of the legislation in the Torah focuses on it and the conduct of its liturgy. As far as most Jews were concerned, laws concerning tithing and sacrifice necessarily impinged upon them.⁸ What is more, Scripture laid down the observance of certain key festivals necessitating pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Lev. 23; Exod. 23.14ff.; Deut. 16).⁹

Such festivals made Jerusalem an important focus of religious and national attention throughout our period. It was the sole cultic centre (with the exception of the Samaritan shrine on Mount Gerizim and the Temple at Leontopolis in Egypt).¹⁰ It had a supremely important place in the affections of Jews, not only as a focus of their religion but also as a centre of religious activity and control which affected every practising Jew (as is evident in Philo's *Embassy to Gaius*).¹¹

Torah and Temple together gave that pattern of existence which distinguished the Jew from pagan neighbours. The Torah offered a vision of the society and the world which God wanted for the people. Even if we leave on one side the writings of the Prophets, the Torah itself inspires hope and offers a pattern of existence which contrasted with the actual experience of most Jews: it promises a land flowing with milk and honey (Deut. 8.7), from which God would clear out all the foreign nations (Deut. 7.22). That was not the situation of those who lived in Judaea in the first century CE. Also the Torah itself reflects the messianic hope which looms so large elsewhere in

the Bible.¹² The prophet like Moses (Deut. 18.15), the promises concerning the descendant of Jacob in Numbers 24.17, the laws concerning the king in Deuteronomy 17.14ff. and the blessing of Jacob in Genesis 49.9ff. all indicate that God had something more in store for the people than the round of obedience to the laws in the Torah.

Thus alongside the land, Torah and the Temple we have to set the emerging eschatological hope of Judaism as it is in Scripture. We might say that on these three foundations the ancient Jewish experience was erected.¹³ The superstructure built upon them was by no means monolithic, and varied from group to group. But we shall not be far from the mark if we assume that to belong to the covenant people involved the acceptance of these three elements with different emphases and in various guises. We shall see evidence of intensifications of obedience, practice and hope in different circles, but the inspiration derives from these three crucial features of the first-century Jewish outlook.

3

*The Jews After the Exile*¹

The situation of the Jews changed with the destruction of Solomon's Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE and the exile of leading Judaeans which followed it. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem some fifty or so years later there began a new era of the Jewish religion. The Exile in Babylon had been one of the most productive theological and literary periods in the history of the Jewish nation; the opportunity had been taken to reflect on the ancestral traditions in the light of the experience of destruction and exile. Gone were the days when a king reigned over both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The hopes of the advent of a king like David remained to kindle the embers of religious expectation (cf. Matt. 2), but the Jewish people had once again to come to terms with foreign nations.² Babylon, then Persia, Greece and Rome all imposed their lordship on the Jews and impressed themselves on the visionary imagination as is evident in passages like Daniel 2 and 7, and 4 Ezra 11–13. Such an imposition was not in every case a threat to the heart of the Jewish religion. Indeed, with the rise of the Persian dynasty Jews found an upsurge of religious tolerance which allowed them to practise their religion under Persian suzerainty (Ezra 6.1ff.;

Neh. 2). Persian dominion over Jews continued in one form or another for a very long period. Even after their influence had waned, Jews in Babylon continued to have to deal with them. It was interrupted in the fourth century BCE in Palestine by the conquests of Alexander the Great, under whose leadership Greek civilization embraced the Near East, including the land of Palestine. As a result of Alexander's early death the vast empire that his conquests had put at his disposal began to split up among his generals, with the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt and in the region around Syria of the Seleucid dynasty. The position of Palestine centred between the two empires meant that for much of the period 300–200 BCE control oscillated between the two. The Seleucids took control in 198 BCE, but meanwhile in Egypt the presence of a large number of Jews meant that the Ptolemaic dynasty continued to have dealings with Jews.³

The eventual triumph of the Seleucids in Palestine heralded a period of unrest for Jews in the area. A programme of enforced Hellenization was instigated by King Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (the whole area was subject to Hellenistic culture and Judaism too was gradually changed by it over the centuries preceding the start of the Common Era).⁴ His aim was to establish a degree of uniformity in religion and general outlook which would give cohesion to his empire by the inculcation of Greek beliefs and culture. He moved against Jewish religious practices in 167 BCE (Dan. 11.30ff.; 1 Macc. 1.1ff.). While there had been a long process of Hellenization going on among certain parts of the population in Jerusalem,⁵ the attempts of Antiochus provoked a backlash against the foreign intrusion into Jewish customs. This conflict, intense though it was, epitomizes the problem that confronted all Jews living as they did as an alien people, whether in the midst of international politics or in conflict with ethnic identity and customs outside their own land. The attempt to incorporate Judaism into the all-embracing Hellenistic cultural world was resisted and this led to the outbreak of revolt in Judaea, led by the Maccabean family.⁶ The outcome of this was a period of independence for Jews in Palestine in 141 BCE under Simon, gained by playing off the various pretenders to the throne of Antiochus IV against each other. Simon was made king and high priest, and so began the Hasmonean dynasty which was to control Judaea until the advent of the Romans under Pompey in 63 BCE.

The period was marked by resentment at the usurpation of the High Priestly office by the Hasmonean kings (as they did not belong to the family from which priests were traditionally drawn), and the growth of internecine strife, which finally brought the Romans into Jerusalem to intervene in the struggle between the two brother Hasmoneans, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus II. Pompey, who was campaigning in Syria, besieged the Temple and in 63 BCE entered the Holy of Holies, that part of the Temple where only the High Priest was allowed to go on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16; *Ant.* 14.61ff.).

From this time on, Rome became the colonial power, though there continued to be a large degree of religious freedom; the cult and its operation were almost completely unaffected. Roman colonial policy meant the *de facto* governance of Judaea being in the hands of the local élite. The advent of the Romans was to have a profound effect on the nature of Jewish attitudes, particularly in Judaea, during the crucial years which saw the rise of the Christian movement, with the exception of brief periods in the first century CE. National freedom was at an end after the brief period of autonomy under the Hasmonaeans. Between 37 and 4 BCE, however, there was independence under the client king Herod the Great, whose Idumean origin did not commend him to Jews. He spent vast amounts of money, for example, on rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem (*War* 1.524; 1.401ff.; *Ant.* 15.299ff.; 16.149ff.; 17.302ff.). After Herod's death in 4 BCE, his kingdom was split up, and his sons for a brief period reigned over his territory. In 6 CE there was trouble in Judaea, and Archelaus' territory was placed under direct Roman rule, which necessitated a census, while Herod Antipas (Mark 6.17; Luke 23.6f.) and Philip ruled Galilee and Batanaea until 39 and 33 CE respectively.⁷ Philip's territory was eventually added to the province of Syria and Herod Antipas' was given to Agrippa I, who ruled Judaea between 37 and 44 CE. Later, the son of Agrippa I, Agrippa II, was allowed by the Romans to have limited jurisdiction and in 53 was given the former territory of Philip, as well as parts of Galilee and Peraea; he was also given the right to nominate the High Priest.

The story of the first century CE in Judaea is one of misunderstanding by the colonial power and the growth of disaffection within the Roman province for social, religious and political reasons leading eventually to a disastrous overturning of the precariously balanced political arrangement which characterized the Roman colony of Judaea. The best known of the prefects of Judaea, Pontius Pilate, is a good example of the lack of sensitivity. He was in Judaea for about ten years (26–36 CE), and during this time he instructed his legions to bring their shields into Jerusalem, a provocative act. This act offended Jewish religious scruples. Stories of his behaviour are told by both Philo (*Embassy* 299ff.) and Josephus (*War* 2.175ff.). Indeed, it was his reckless action against the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim which led to his removal from office.⁸

The Jewish historian Josephus has much to say about this period in his account of the origins and course of the Jewish war against Rome in 66–70. While he lays much of the blame for the disastrous revolt against Rome in 66–70 at the door of the Zealots (Jewish freedom fighters, *War* 2.254ff.), he does not neglect to note Roman maladministration as a cause of the conflagration (e.g., *War* 2.271ff.). The act which finally provoked the revolt of Jews against Rome was the robbery of the Temple by the procurator Florus (*War* 2.285ff.). Sacrifice for the emperor was stopped (*War* 2.415), and once

the revolt had started there was to be no going back, despite the pleas of some of the leading citizens. The revolt itself is a story of fanatical courage, bitter internal strife and suffering on an enormous scale. It dragged on for four years; indeed, the last resistance was not quelled until Flavius Silva finally took the desert fortress of Masada in 73. The reason for the prolonged war was the trouble in the empire at large provoked by the death of Nero (see Tacitus *Histories* 5).⁹ In 68 CE there were no fewer than four emperors in quick succession. In this political confusion the struggle carried on in Palestine, and was only resolved when Vespasian became emperor, and his son Titus took command of the campaign against the Jews in Palestine which led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70.

With the end of Temple worship profound changes came upon the Jewish religion. The Temple, focus as it was of so much devotion and a crucial part of the religious practice of Judaism, lay in ruins. Josephus explains the reasons for the terrible events in *War* 6.127. The regular payment of half a shekel by all male Jews for the upkeep of the Temple and its worship was diverted by the Romans to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome (*War* 7.216ff.). Despite all the difficulties caused for Rome by the Jews, Judaism was not proscribed, and Titus refused the pleas of those who asked him to withdraw privileges (*War* 7.110f.). The history of the period following the First Revolt is by no means clear. There may have been hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple, as Solomon's Temple had been rebuilt (*War* 6.268). The Temple continued to be a focus of hope and may have been instrumental in fanning the flames of revolt in 115–117 and 132–135. Hopes for rebuilding emerged much later under Julius in 362.

Despite the ravages of the First Revolt, there was a revolt of Jews in North Africa in 115, and in 132 Simeon bar Koseba or Bar Kochba led the Second Revolt of Jews against Rome, provoked by Hadrian's wish to turn Jerusalem into a Greek city, Aelia Capitolina, to plough the Temple land, and build a shrine to Jupiter there.¹⁰ This revolt brought about even greater devastation and loss of life (*History* 69.12ff.; *EH* 4.6.1ff.). The fact that another uprising could have taken place within 60 years of the calamitous First Revolt may be testimony to the Jewish religious spirit and the undying convictions concerning God's promises for his people. The legend of the coins of the Second Revolt, 'for the freedom of Jerusalem', demonstrates the continuing eschatological fervour and how much the yearning for the freedom of God's people from foreign domination still exercised the imaginations of the Jewish nation. Indeed, according to the rabbinic tradition, Simeon bar Koseba was hailed as the one promised in Numbers 24.17 by no less a figure than Rabbi Akiba, the leading Jewish teacher of his generation.

The history of the period is one of political subjection, continued Torah observance and occasional outbreaks of protest. It would be easy to assert that such hope for deliverance was rooted solely in oppression and economic

hardship. The evidence suggests, as we shall see, that Judaea was probably worst affected of all. Religious socio-economic factors led to the disturbances throughout the first century. Palestine in the first century CE had become very much part of the Graeco-Roman world. Those who espoused the idiosyncrasies of the Jewish religion had to learn to coexist with the Greek language and Roman law and administration. The conquests of Alexander had brought about a vast dissemination of Greek culture. However much the Jews may have wanted to, they could not entirely isolate themselves from the influence of Greek ideas.¹¹ Explicit Hellenizers were resisted, but the writings of Philo of Alexandria demonstrate a blend of Greek philosophy and the Jewish traditions, which indicate how far the subtle influence of Hellenism could permeate Judaism, at least in Egypt.¹²

When brought under Roman rule, Judaea experienced politically what it had undergone socially for at least 100 years: assimilation to a wider framework of life and thought. It became a small part of a large empire, though its strategic importance on the boundary of the empire should not be ignored. The influence of foreign culture was not at all times apparent, nor was the path to complete assimilation a direct one. The evidence suggests that in Palestine in particular there could well have been pockets which remained to a considerable degree unaffected by the prevailing spirit of the age. Even in the Diaspora, as we shall see, Jews enjoyed some independence and a degree of separation from the surrounding culture. But to say this cannot minimize the effects that this culture continued to have on Jews throughout the Roman world. Even when they retreated to the desert of Judaea, as the Qumran sect did, it was impossible to retain a separation which avoided contact with the outlook of Hellenism.

We have already noted that Jews in Palestine were allowed a significant degree of religious freedom. With the exception of the control over the appointment of the High Priests (*Ant.* 18.26; 93; cf. *War* 4.151ff.), Temple worship continued until 70, little affected by Roman restrictions. The Romans allowed the local law-making body to continue its activities within certain parameters.¹³ The Romans continued to allow the death penalty to be carried out on all those who transgressed the line which marked the furthest point to which Gentiles were allowed to go in the Temple.¹⁴ While sacrifice to the emperor would have been anathema to the Jews (cf. *Embassy* 157), it became customary to offer sacrifice *on behalf of* the emperor.¹⁵

As far as the religion of the ordinary people was concerned, the pious probably found that there was little to affect their quest for holiness. It has been suggested that during the first century CE, Pharisaism had undergone quite a significant shift of emphasis from being a movement extensively politically involved during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76) and Alexandra (76–67) to one that was primarily pietistic in its orientation.¹⁶

Whether this was in fact the case (and it has been the subject of considerable debate), such a movement corresponds to the growing lack of involvement in political matters at all levels.¹⁷ As most popular piety was focused on the Temple in Jerusalem, the continuation of its activities, without any significant harassment from outside influences, meant that there was normally little cause for general unrest. The storm of protest which greeted attempts to interfere with the religious activities of the Temple indicates the level of feeling with regard to the cult.

It is all too easy for us to stop analysis of Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism with a reference to religious difference as the core of the debate within Judaism and to imagine that differing attitudes to the traditions are themselves the sole cause of strife. Such cannot be regarded as an adequate assessment. We need to press behind the religious differences and to ask what these religious ideas also tell us about the social and economic circumstances of those who espoused rival views.¹⁸ While we cannot always say with certainty that the advocates of change were those who had least to lose and most to gain, it is apparent that those who had most to lose were the ones who were, in fact, in charge of centres of religion like the Temple, and resisted any extensive change, or any subversive activity, which might destabilize the precarious political situation. There have been attempts to examine the political and economic situation in Palestine round about the beginning of the Christian era and to assess how much of a contribution this might have made to the emergence of Christianity.¹⁹ The place of economic life in the construction of a religious outlook should not be neglected; religious ideas are no less important for being at least partly explicable by the changes in the socio-economic structure. Of course, one of the problems which confronts total explanations of this kind is the paucity of evidence which would make an adequate socio-economic explanation possible. Nevertheless, the contribution which such investigations are going to make to our understanding of Christian origins should not be underestimated. In recognizing this, we may distinguish between a readiness to offer a total explanation of religious ideas by their socio-economic conditioning and the need to understand human ideals with reference to their socio-economic conditioning. Even those ideas which are shaped by socio-economic forces can themselves exercise an influence on the economic circumstances that produced them.²⁰

An adequate account of Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices must derive as much from the knowledge of the social history of the period as the history of doctrines. The history of Judaism in the first century has become a prime candidate for an interpretation in which the socio-economic factor looms large. After all, as we have seen, it was the culmination of a succession of periods of dominance by foreign overlords, which eventually bubbled over into open revolt in 66. This may well be the consequence as much of

economic and social factors as religious enthusiasm. The heartfelt comment of the companion of Jesus on the road to Emmaus illustrates this: 'We thought that he was the one to liberate Israel' (Luke 24.21) may well be an expression which includes longing arising from economic dissatisfaction. It is no coincidence that acts of insurgency intensified during the period of the Roman prefecture (*War* 2.55ff.; 2.224ff.), though we must not generalize too much about the effect of Roman rule on the whole area.²¹

Two caveats need to be entered here. We have already noted that ideas which reflect social and political conditions themselves take on a life of their own and have an active role in the creation of the kind of society which they outline. There is another dimension to the study of the social history of Judaism, namely the biblical traditions themselves. Whatever the social and economic circumstances which led to the genesis of those traditions, the biblical material was itself a factor in the emergence of attitudes. Its presence as a catalyst was one which could, and did, lead to dangerous and subversive attitudes (e.g., *War* 7.255). Resentment would have been there, but it is hard to see that resentment being channelled into such revolutionary attitudes without the contribution made by the Scriptures themselves.

The traditions about the glorious future which God had prepared for the people was itself, therefore, a cause of disaffection. Once the contrast between social and political realities stood in the sharpest possible contrast to the glorious future promised in the Scriptures and echoed in writings of the period, the situation probably led to disillusionment, a narrowing of religious vision or the conviction that change was needed. That hopes were entertained not merely as articles of faith but also as part of a programme of action is confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the War Scroll from Qumran (1 *QM*) we find there the belief that the might of God's enemies would be overthrown in a battle in which the angelic legions would come to the aid of the sons of light. The fantastic detail of the preparations outlined in the War Scroll gives some indication of the frame of mind of some groups as they entertained hopes of participating in an armed struggle against the enemies of Israel (cf. *War* 5.459; 388).

While it would be wrong to suppose that an increase in eschatological hopes always accompanies times of political unrest and economic dissatisfaction, there is a strong case to be made for the view that the period when the early Christian movement emerged was one which favoured the utopian dreamer (see *War* 2.259ff.; 6.351.; 7.437f.; *Ant.* 20.167ff.).²² In addition to the visions, the presence of pagan soldiers on the soil of Israel might have made the political situation resemble the era of tribulation before the coming of the messianic kingdom more than almost any earlier period of Jewish history.

The reorganization of land by Pompey in 63 BCE had caused a considerable land shortage²³ and resulted in a large number of landless peasants,

whose impoverishment contributed to the feelings of dissatisfaction which were experienced at the time.²⁴ There seem to have been large landowners, upon whose land a great number of the landless rural proletariat would have been called to work as day labourers.²⁵ Large problems faced the tenant farmer throughout our period.²⁶ As has often been pointed out, several of Jesus' parables reflect the social situation of first-century Palestine with its unemployment (Matt. 20.3ff.) and large pools of people looking for work (Luke 16.1ff.; Mark 12.1ff.; Luke 17.7; 19.19). In addition, the level of taxation dating from Herod the Great's day proved to be an added burden, which had not afflicted the populace since the time of the Seleucids.²⁷ The fact that one of the first acts of the rebels in 66 CE when Jerusalem fell to the rebels was to burn the record of debts kept in the Temple (*War* 2.427) indicates that the problem posed by the need to borrow money was one causing considerable hardship during this period.²⁸ The degree of social and class conflict should not be underestimated, as is suggested by the attack of Simeon bar Giora on the houses of the large estate owners.²⁹ Judaea was helped by the great influx of capital as the result of the flourishing industry connected with the Temple and the Temple tax, the tax levied on every male (Exod. 30.15; *mShekalim* 1.3; *Ant.* 3.196; cf. Neh. 10.32). The needs of the Temple must have helped, at least in Jerusalem and its environs, to create employment (*mShekalim* 4.1ff.).³⁰ Yet it must be remembered that the control of the Temple and its worship was largely in the hands of the High Priestly families, and there was considerable room for exploitation of a source of income (*Ant.* 20.180f.; *tMenaboth* 13.21) whose size and significance can be judged from the covetous glances which successive Roman emperors and officials cast at it (e.g., *War* 2.175ff.; *Ant.* 18.60ff.), culminating of course in Vespasian's confiscation of the Temple tax after CE 70.³¹ Thus the economic conditions of the country must have played a significant role in the rise of discontent which ultimately led to the First Revolt. Josephus is in no doubt about the impoverishment of the people (*Ant.* 15.121; 299ff.; *War* 1.370).³²

We have still a very long way to go before we can adequately unravel all the social and economic issues which led to the First Revolt. But it has been all too easy for the student of Christian origins to forget the enormous contribution of economic and social factors in the formation of attitudes in the first century CE.³³ Perhaps we have gone as far as we can with an account of the social and economic history of Judaism in Palestine which depends on Josephus,³⁴ but the literature of Palestinian Judaism still awaits an assessment. How far do the production of distinctive literary forms and specific religious interests manifest the spiritual disillusionment and deteriorating economic situation in Palestine? All too often we have to rest content to examine the religious ideas in such documents only without seeking to establish what evidence they give us of the social and economic circumstances out of which they were born.

The brief survey of social and economic factors influencing the emergence of religious belief has concentrated on those negative factors in Palestine which helped to precipitate revolt against Rome. The picture given might seem to indicate that the influence of Rome was in fact actually hostile to Judaism and the Christian movement; this would be an inadequate assessment. Popular belief is that the early Church was persecuted by the Romans, but generally speaking, such action that was taken was spasmodic and local, and Jews often received very favourable treatment from Romans. A positive note is sounded by some New Testament writers towards Rome, particularly by implication the writer of Acts, but also the authors of 1 Peter and the Pastoral Epistles (e.g., Rom. 13, 1 Tim. 2.1ff.). Leaving aside the desire not to offend the imperial power, this suggests that some saw benefits in the *Pax Romana*, even if its brutality was also evident (Rev. 17–19). The control by Rome of the area bordering on the Mediterranean not only conditioned the direction which the Christian mission took but also made it possible for Christian missionaries to move reasonably freely throughout the area under Roman jurisdiction. It is difficult to imagine that Paul would have found it anything like as easy to have embarked on the kind of missionary project he set himself some 200 years previously.

Paul travelled round a world in which the practice of Judaism was by and large firmly established. Not only in the major cities of the Roman empire but also in the Parthian empire Jewish communities of varying sizes were to be found.³⁵ Jews were a significant, and often influential, minority within the Roman world. Their religion and its practice were often guaranteed and not subject to the proscription faced by other alien cults.³⁶ At times their often extensive rights, which Josephus describes in *Ant.* 14, provoked hostile reactions from pagan neighbours (e.g., *Ant.* 12.125f.; 16.27ff.).³⁷ In many cases the rights of Jews also extended to the possession of Roman citizenship, a good example, of course, being Paul of Tarsus himself (Acts 16.37; 21.39).³⁸ They had the right to collect the money for the Temple tax and were exempt in many cities from military service. For a period the early Christians also were able to shelter under the umbrella of Judaism and to avail themselves of many of these privileges.

The meeting place for Jews outside Palestine was the synagogue. Philo speaks of synagogues as places where the ancestral customs of Judaism were taught (*Life of Moses* 2.216), and Josephus similarly speaks of the injunction of Moses to spend one day each week in the study of the Law (*C. Ap.* 2.175). Archaeological evidence³⁹ indicates that these places for meeting were to be found all over the Roman world, and in cities like Alexandria where there were large Jewish communities, it would be expected that there would be several synagogues, each with its own distinctive religious outlook (cf. Acts 6.9). As well as being the focal point for Jews, the synagogues attracted the attention of many pagans who for various reasons were sympathetic to

Judaism but found it impossible to become full converts (proselytes). They took it upon themselves to fulfil certain requirements.⁴⁰ This cosmopolitan aspect of synagogue life is stressed by Philo, who calls them 'places open to all as schools of good sense' (*Spec. Laws* 2.62). Acts furnishes us with several examples of God-fearers being in the synagogue congregations when Paul preached (Acts 13.26; 13.16).⁴¹ Paul's offer that 'every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the Law of Moses', would have had considerable attractions for those God-fearers who did not wish to go the whole way and accept the requirement of circumcision.⁴²

With Paul the Christian gospel not only left the predominantly Jewish atmosphere of Palestine but also underwent other changes. As we shall see later in this study, the mission and work of Jesus started life not in the cities but in the Galilean countryside. The character of discipleship required by him was not geared to urban existence, with his emphasis on the wandering disciples who trusted to God alone for their food and clothing (Luke 10.1-12; Matt. 6.25ff.). With Paul the Christian communities became primarily, if not solely, urban in their make-up. Their concerns and problems differed greatly from the wandering disciples who followed Jesus, the 'Son of Man', who had nowhere to lay his head. The understanding of this fundamentally important social change goes some way towards explaining the development of the Christian movement in subsequent centuries.⁴³

The importance of such questions is only now being recognized again by New Testament scholars, though investigation of such matters has had a long pedigree.⁴⁴ We may not always be able to ascertain what precisely were the circumstances in which early Christian literature like the Gospels was written. Nevertheless the examination of broader social trends in the period, as well as hints in the extant literature, will enable us to build up a picture of the problems which would confront the early Christians with their distinctive view of the world.⁴⁵

PART II

Jewish Life and Thought at the Beginning of the Common Era from the Perspective of the Study of Christian Origins

God's Covenant with the Jews

It is tempting for Christian writers on Jewish religion at the time of Jesus to imagine that the contents of Jewish works like the Mishnah with its vast collection of legal prescriptions represent the sum total of Jewish piety at this time. Apart from anything else there remain problems with the use of this material for the interpretation of Christian origins on account of its date and the developments through which it went. Such an assessment has been the cause of many views of Judaism, which concentrate on its minute legal detail and contrast it with the religion of grace and liberty manifested in the pages of the New Testament.¹ In the detailed prescriptions of the Mishnah we have reflected the major themes of the Jewish Scriptures. The absence of explicit and frequent references to ideas like covenant, promise, grace and the like from the Mishnah should not lead us to suppose that those Jews, who sought to observe the minute detail of divine obligation, did not continue to acknowledge in worship, in public and private, the God who had brought their ancestors out of Egypt into the land of promise and who would bring creation to perfection under the dominion of a divinely chosen representative. The celebration of the deliverance from Egypt year by year in the Passover and the praise of God in the liturgy are the necessary framework for our understanding of the detailed minutiae contained in the Mishnah.² So a consideration of the tractate dealing with the celebration of the Passover in the Mishnah (tractate *Pesahim*) might lead the unwary to suppose that all that the Jews of the period, who wrote this material, were concerned about was the minutiae of the observance of a particular ritual rather than the great themes which undergird it (Exod. 12). A glance at the Passover Haggadah recited at the Passover meal would put the Mishnah in perspective, however. Concern with the correct observance of the festivals and with other aspects of Jewish life does not imply that the theology which undergirds the observance has been lost sight of. Because Jews felt the great debt of obligation to the God of their ancestors, they concentrated great attention on the minutiae of observance; a God who wrought such a great deliverance was worthy of the utmost devotion, even a willingness to die (*War* 1.148).³ The fact that God has chosen the people of Israel and has been revealed in divers ways to them throughout their history are things which are presupposed by the Jewish authors. Those who have been fortunate enough to be recipients of this salvation are obliged to do all in their power to respond, therefore, by showing a type of obedience which can in some way express the gratitude appropriate to such a divine act (e.g., 1 *QS* 11.2–3; 1 *QH* 4.29f.).⁴

The theme of the covenant is one which is to be found throughout the bulk of the Bible⁵ and takes different forms. Thus God makes a covenant with Noah not to send another flood to destroy the earth (Gen. 9.9ff.); with Abraham to make of his descendants a great nation (Gen. 15.18); and a promise sealed by circumcision (Gen. 17), with the people of Israel (Exod. 24)⁶ and then with the family of David (2 Sam. 7.8ff.). From time to time this covenant is renewed (e.g. Josh. 24; Ezra 10.3ff.). In various ways the notion of covenant has exercised a profound influence on the understanding of God's relationship with the Jewish people (*Spec. Laws* 1.303; Psalms of Solomon 9.9; *CD* 6.19; 15.5; 1 *QpHab.* 2.3–4; 1 *QS* 5.8–9).

The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls believed, like the early Christians, that they had entered into a new covenant with God (e.g., *CD* 6.19; cf. Mark 14.24; Heb. 8.7ff.).⁷ The covenant was central to the lives of Jews. Recognition of belonging to the people of God was marked at the very beginning of the life of every male Jew. On the eighth day after birth every male is circumcised and shown to be a member of the covenant people (Gen. 17.10ff.; Lev. 12.3; cf. Luke 2.21; Phil. 3.5). That is a sign that the God who cared for the ancestors of the Jews now accepted new members of the holy nation, who in their own turn would undertake to observe the demands of God. This rite is the important sign of membership of the covenant people, and it is vital to understand the strength of feeling (including the evidence of it as a stigma, 1 Macc. 1.11–13) generated by Paul's decision not to insist on circumcision for his Gentile converts to Christianity.⁸

The gracious act of God is intimately linked with the command of God to Israel to keep the statutes and ordinances (Deut. 7.6ff.). The introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20.1 is an indication of the balance between divine initiative and human response in the covenant relationship. Behind the detailed discussions in the early rabbinic literature about the meaning of various passages there lies the need to make every endeavour to put into practice the precepts of God in the different circumstances of the Graeco-Roman world, not least the limits imposed by the laws affecting Jews living outside the Holy Land and apart from the Temple. The detailed and ongoing interpretation is a witness to the highest priority given to the covenant and explains why it is that Jews of every generation felt the need to go to so much trouble to ascertain the demands of God. To learn from the ways in which past generations have responded to the covenant-demands is the reason for the respect for oral tradition, as well as that contained in the Bible. Those who had walked the way before could cast light on the pilgrimage of those who now had to tread a similar path (*Ant.* 13.297; Mark 7.1–8).

In another area of Jewish life the covenant had a continuing role. One of the biblical passages concerning the covenant speaks of God's promises to David. The remarkable thing about the oracle of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7.8ff. is that, as well as linking the promise with that made to Israel as a whole (v.9),

there is a promise made by God to guarantee the dynasty of David for ever (7.13) and to treat his descendants as a father would a son (v.4). The promise that 'the throne of his kingdom' would be for ever is very important for an understanding of the development of later Jewish messianic hopes which manifested themselves in many different forms in the Second Temple Jewish texts (Psalms of Solomon 17; *Ant.* 18.3–10; *War* 1.347).⁹ Already in the Bible we find that the promise is taken up and examined in very different circumstances. Thus, for example, Psalm 89 contrasts the present plight of Israel (89.38) with the promise given to David (89.28). Similarly, in Psalm 132.10 prayer is made to God not to abandon the anointed 'for David's sake' (cf. 2 Chron. 6.42). Later, in the Psalms of Solomon 17.5, we find in the context of the fully-fledged messianic picture an allusion to 2 Samuel 7 again, with a lament over the fact that God's promise to David has not been realized.

When we accept that the underlying theme of a relationship with its obligations is itself dependent on the divine initiative we shall begin to do justice to Judaism. It was not early Christianity which invented a doctrine of grace and election; these are rooted in the Bible. While there may have been grounds for various critiques of Jewish piety (after all, Christians were not the only ones to criticize other Jews who disagreed with them), the existence of concern with the minutiae of observance indicates neither the emergence of dry legalism nor a radical shift from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible itself.¹⁰

Central to the covenant was the promise of land.¹¹ According to Genesis 12.7, when God appeared to Abraham at Moreh, there was a promise that his descendants would inherit the land, a promise that is confirmed in Genesis 15.18 and 17.8 and renewed to Jacob (Gen. 28.13; 35.12). It is a promise which is repeated in the context of the Passover ritual (Exod. 12.25), and lies at the heart of the mission of Moses (Exod. 3.8). The goal of the wanderings of God's people in the wilderness is the Promised Land, and its conquest is told in the books of Numbers and Joshua. At the centre of the covenant renewal in Joshua 24 is the inheritance of land, and a major theme of the book of Deuteronomy is the covenant between an obedient people and a God who gives the people land. The land emerged as an issue during the Babylonian crisis in the sixth century BCE (cf. Ps. 137). Those left behind in the land of Israel after the deportation to Babylon regarded their position as a sign of divine favour, a matter about which Jeremiah speaks in Jeremiah 24, and the repossession of the land is a dominant theme in some of the oracles preserved in Jeremiah 29 and 32. By the time we get to the first century CE the land of Israel promised to the descendants of the ancestors was once again inhabited and ruled by Gentiles.

Since the time of David the promise with regard to the land had become tied up with a particular place (Deut. 12.5): Jerusalem, Zion, the city of the

great God. No one can read through the book of Isaiah (e.g., ch. 29), or the Psalter (e.g., Ps. 46ff.) without noticing how prominent a place Zion has within the framework of the divine promise.¹² The restoration after the destruction of the First Temple was to be centred on Zion (Haggai 1–2) and in later Jewish eschatological beliefs the city of David figured prominently (see e.g., Rev. 21.1ff.). In the oracle of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7, the promise of the land and the promise to David are both linked with the building of the house of God in Zion (2 Sam. 7.13), a combination of themes with important implications for later Jewish belief. The evidence of the Temple Scroll (11 *QT*) from the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests a group which had separated itself in the desert to wait for a day when they would be able to be part of a purified city and Temple.¹³

2

*The God of the Covenant*¹

Theology as an abstract speculative exercise did not form a significant part of the religious reflection of most Jews, though practice did: ‘piety governs all our actions and occupations and speech’ (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.171). While the philosophical tradition of Alexandria helped Philo to articulate a complex biblical exegesis with some affinities to the theology that was to emerge in the early centuries of the Church,² the God whom the Jews worshipped was the God of the Covenant, who had made a bond with the ancestors of the Jewish nation and remained faithful to the people through the many vicissitudes of its history. The simple formula in Deuteronomy 26.5ff. encapsulates the central features of Jewish convictions about God and God’s relations to a chosen people:

A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression; The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and God brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.³

The deliverance from Egypt and the settlement in the land of Canaan were central to the Jewish apprehension of God. The deity was not to be found primarily in the wonders of nature⁴ (though such ideas are not entirely lacking in the pages of the Bible, as Psalms 19, 104, 148 and Job 38ff. make plain), or in the annual cycle of the seasons, but in the movement of history itself. The Exodus experience became central to Jews' apprehension of God. The redemption from slavery was a gratuitous act of God, who offered a relationship with this oppressed people (Deut. 20.1, cf. 4.37); it was the basis of the bulk of theological reflection and the reason for hope when circumstances seemed to be at their most difficult. In the midst of the Exile, Isaiah of the Exile recalls the deliverance from Egypt as the basis of a new work to be wrought by God (Isa. 52.3–6), and later in early Christian literature the Exodus experience became a paradigm of God's saving act (e.g., Mark 10.45; Heb. 11.27ff.; Rev. 5.9, 15).

These twin features dominate Jewish writing about God. The God who delivered Jews is the God of history as a whole and is to be obeyed. In the biblical tradition we find that these elements condition the way in which people and events are interpreted. Foreign kings and nations become the agents of God's purposes (Isa. 10.5; 45.1ff.). In the aftermath of their direst calamity, the Exile, Jews reflected on that experience in history as an experience of their God; and in the story of their nation, in the books of Samuel and Kings, there is an attempt to reflect on the disasters and disobedience which culminated in the sack of the city in 586 BCE.⁵ It is taken for granted that God remains faithful to the people, even when judgement seems to be the only proper course of action in the light of the people's infidelity.⁶ God's concern for the people is evident throughout the Bible; they were God's own possession (Exod. 19.5), in a position of privilege which would be theirs, provided that they obeyed God's voice and kept the covenant. Jewish apologists and the writers of eschatology, despite the fierce nationalism which one often encounters, acknowledged that the God of Israel was the God of every nation. Some indeed looked forward to a time when the nations would join Israel in worshipping the one God (Zech. 8.20; Ps. 72.10f.; Rev. 21.25).⁷ In the classic statement of the supreme position of the God of Israel in Isaiah 40ff., a universal significance of Israel's God is enunciated in a context where the worship of other gods is so roundly condemned (Isa. 45.21f.; 44.6–11).

The road to belief in the unique authority of the God of Israel was not one that was taken easily or unambiguously in the Hebrew Bible. Much of the biblical material is taken up with the need to persuade the people of Israel of the exclusive claims of YHWH. The settlement in a foreign land, with its own theological traditions, caused the new settlers to consider whether in fact they ought not to add the worship of the indigenous deities to their devotion to YHWH. The idolatry, which is roundly condemned in the prophecy of Hosea, manifests this kind of espousal of Canaanite religion.

It was an understandable development, as a nomad people accommodated itself to the settled urban life of their promised land. The God of the desert wanderings might not have seemed an appropriate tutelary deity for new conditions of life in an urban setting. Nevertheless despite the utter repudiation of the Canaanite deities and culture in the pre-exilic prophets, a great debt was owed by emerging Jewish theology to the mythology of Canaanite religion and other extraneous elements (e.g., in the mythological features connected with the Temple, *War* 5.214 which deals with the astrological features connected with the curtain of the Temple). We can see this particularly in those passages dealing with the heavenly court (Ps. 82.1; Job 1–2; Isa. 6).⁸ These beliefs are found in a distinctive form, however; God, the God of Israel is seated as *lord* in the assembly of the gods, ‘God is a judge among gods’ (Ps. 82.1). Even Isaiah of the Exile with his denunciation of idolatry and promotion of the uniqueness of the God of Israel (Isa. 45.14) works within the framework of this heavenly court mythology (Isa. 40.1).⁹ In later times such views must have had their contribution to make to the angelology of Judaism. The attendants in the heavenly court ceased to be lesser divinities, but angels, the servants of God (cf. Heb. 1.14) and the heavenly representatives of people and nations (e.g., 1 Enoch 89.59; Dan. 10.13; 12.1; and the angels of the seven churches in Rev. 1–3).¹⁰ The repudiation of idolatry was not so much a rejection of the existence of the demonic world and the reality of the spiritual entities which stood behind the religious activities of the nations (cf. 1 Cor. 10.14ff.; Col. 2.14; Eph. 1.21) as an emphatic rejection of such devotions to such beings as *true* religion. There was only one possible way of worship and only one object of their devotion; any concession to syncretism, where worship of other gods was added to the worship of YHWH, was a threat to the covenant (Exod. 20.3). In later times, when the world was thought to be populated with legions of spiritual powers, the assertion of the lordship of the God of Israel and the Christ over this demonic world was an important element of the Jewish and Christian tradition. Complete devotion was required, and with it came the conviction that there was no need to be concerned with other gods, for in the God of Israel there was the only living and true god (Wisd. 13ff.; *Sib. Or.*; 1 Thess. 1.9).¹¹

The future hope which is so intimately linked with the historical perspective in Jewish theology is not unusual. Such ideas are to be found in a variety of religious traditions; the return to paradise is one which is deeply rooted in the human race.¹² What is much more remarkable in Jewish thought is the consistent streak of self-criticism which is manifest in the prophetic literature. The criticisms of Israel and the oracles of doom, which we find in the prophetic literature, probably have their origin in the knowledge of the covenant demands and the comparison between them and the actuality of popular practice.¹³ The development of the prophetic vocation from enthusiasm and shamanism via cultic officials to the divine spokesmen against

cultic and social abuses is a fascinating story.¹⁴ Underlying it is the conviction that the fulfilment of the demands of God is an integral part of the maintenance of a well-ordered society. Jews continued to maintain that their religious beliefs alone were authentic and that ultimately they would be shown to be so, when all the earth acknowledged the supremacy of their God. The existence of the Jewish nation and its distinctive way of life are as important as a theological datum as any series of theological propositions. As a holy nation and God's special possession, the Jews themselves were a living testimony to the character of the God whom they worshipped. Their concern for holiness (Lev. 19.2) and their criticism of their past failures to attain to the demands of God reflect the conviction that God and God's ways are to be found in the fabric of everyday existence. Holiness was something which could be appreciated and acted out in society.

The emergence of an elaborate cosmology in the apocalyptic literature, in which heaven was believed to be populated by a multitude of beings and to consist of a number of different compartments, it has been suggested, contributed to an increased emphasis on God's transcendence. God was enthroned in the highest heaven, far away from the world. This transcendent God, separate from the flux of human history and glimpsed only occasionally by the fortunate visionary (e.g., Rev. 4), embodied that perfection of the divine will which was absent from human affairs. This view does not tell the whole story of post-biblical developments in Jewish theology, however. The emerging cosmology did not necessarily lead to a belief in the absence of God from history.¹⁵ What we find in later Jewish literature are varieties of ways of speaking about the presence of God, for example, concepts like the *Shekinah* (God's presence, *Pirke Aboth* 3.2),¹⁶ the divine Wisdom permeating human affairs (Wisd. Sol. 7-9) and Philo's Logos,¹⁷ as well as the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ All these indicate that, far from being totally absent in heaven, God was still thought of as being present in the world.¹⁹

As we have already noted, Jewish writers did not speculate much about the nature and the attributes of God. Yet there are indications of the beginning of a speculative theology in Judaism. The belief that no one could see God and live (Exod. 33.20) itself implies a conviction that God *might* be seen. Within the Bible itself mention is made of visions of the all-holy God enthroned above the cherubim (Isa. 6; Ezek. 1, 10; 4 Q 405). In the later apocalyptic literature, with its more elaborate cosmology, God is enthroned in heaven surrounded by the heavenly host.²⁰ In such passages God's person and dress are sometimes described (e.g. Dan. 7.9; 1 Enoch 14.20f.). Such anthropomorphism, which has its origin in Ezekiel's call-vision (1.27f.), became a feature of much later Jewish mystical tradition. Such speculative extravagance did not form part of the piety of a later age only. There is evidence to suggest that from a very early period there was a colourful, and sometimes extravagant, theological speculation, which might have

represented currents in popular piety, even if it tended to be frowned on by official organs of Judaism.²¹ There was discouragement of speculative activity among the rabbis (*mHagigah* 2.1), though even the rabbinic academies were not totally free from such theological speculation.²² While the amount of material dealing with such speculative activity forms only a small part of the rabbinic corpus, it had a central position in the lives of some of the leading rabbis at the beginning of the Christian era. Indeed, the exegetical activity which occupied the attention of the rabbis brought them face to face with those parts of Scripture most open to theological speculation. As we shall see, passages like the account of Creation in Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1 were both subjects on which there was extensive reflection and formed the centre of a visionary and mystical tradition in Judaism.²³ God's character was understood by the people of God in the context of their experience throughout history. God was like a parent who was not afraid to discipline them also (Deut. 1.31; cf. Prov. 3.11f.). Israel as a nation had experienced God as one who kept the covenant and who remained faithful, even when the people were themselves disobedient. Convictions like these influenced Jewish theology and lent it the distinctive hue which it has among the religions of antiquity.²⁴

3

*The Heavenly Host*¹

In Jewish theology there was an ancient tradition which stressed the importance of God as the Lord of the heavenly host.² By the Second Temple period, Judaism had an elaborate angelology and demonology.³ In the Torah we find references to the Angel of the Lord, who acted as the embodiment of God's presence and purpose (e.g., Gen. 16.7ff.; 22.11ff.).⁴ In the later biblical material, particularly the book of Daniel and the apocalyptic writings, we find an angelology in which God is served by exalted angels like Michael (Dan. 10.13, 21) and Gabriel (Dan. 8.15f.; 10.5f.). The former was regarded as the guardian angel of the people of Israel and their representative in the heavenly court (Dan. 12.1f.; 1 *QM* 17.5; cf. Rev. 12.7). The archangels acted as emissaries of God, to communicate God's will to those chosen to receive it (e.g., Luke 1.11, 26). Just as the development of an elaborate cosmology did not make God more remote, so also the developing angelology did not lead to the separation of God from humanity by the lower angelic forces and to

the need for angelic mediation. In gnostic writings from the second century CE and later, however, we find a separation between the transcendent God and a lesser divinity. But such a separation between the God of the highest heaven and the lower created God is contrary to the outlook of the angelic beliefs of Judaism. Nowhere is it suggested that the angelic powers have usurped God's sovereignty.⁵ They are ministering spirits (Heb. 1.14; 4 Q 400).

The development of angelic powers hostile to God is a feature of the post-biblical literature. In affirming that the nations of the world had their representatives in the heavenly court, Jewish writers were admitting that the reign of God was something not yet evident in human affairs. While not directly opposed to God, since they acted by divine permission, the angelic powers were thought to be temporarily opposed to God's purposes and would ultimately have to face punishment (1 Enoch 89.59). The growth of angelology to embrace angelic counterparts in heaven to human beings on earth is a mark of the spirituality of the age (Matt. 18.10; Acts 12.15). Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest an intimate relationship between holy human life and the angelic world, thus requiring that the community be pure and holy (1 QM 7.6; 1 QSa. 2.3–9; 1 QSb. 4.24–6; 1 QH 3.21–3).

More significant is the growth of a belief in a hostile power opposed to God, Satan.⁶ In appearances in the Bible, Satan is not an opponent of God but an accuser in the divine court (Job 1; Zech. 3.1), as well as an agent of temptation (1 Chron. 21.1; Job 1–2; Zech. 3.1). Elements of this idea persisted into the early Christian period (Rev. 12.9), but particularly dominant was Satan's position as the chief celestial opponent of God and his ways (Mark 1.13; Luke 10.18, cf. 2 Cor. 4.4; Eph. 2.2). Evil angels came to have a role in the writings of our period.⁷ The angel of light governs the children of righteousness and the angel of darkness the children of wickedness (1 QS 3.15–4.1). It is no accident, therefore, that the conquest of the angelic powers is an important feature of the triumph of Christ as it is set out in the New Testament (1 Cor. 15.25ff.; Col. 2.14f.; 1 Pet. 3.22).

Related to the development of a belief in Satan as an evil angel is the way in which the 'sons of God' mentioned in Genesis 6.1 began to assume an important position in the explanation of the origin of evil.⁸ This myth has an important position within the early Enochic literature, for example 1 Enoch 6–11, where the blame for evil in the world is placed at the door of supernatural forces opposed to God. The transference of blame for evil in the world onto the supernatural plane could bring with it a rather fatalistic attitude towards human destiny.⁹ There is a tension in the sources: those which see God as being in complete control, for example in Josephus' description of divine providence at work in the Roman triumph in 70 CE. Rather different is the more dualistic interpretation which explains evil in the world by forces opposed to God (e.g., 1 QM and 1 QS 4.9 and 3.21). If the battle between good and evil was being fought on a cosmic plane, then the puny attempts of

humanity to interfere were doomed to disaster, unless an individual was given the resources to cope with the phenomenon, as seems to be the case in the decisive struggle described in 1 *QM* 3.35; 15.14. The existence of this superhuman struggle was a fact of life of the world of late antiquity.¹⁰ Its presence within the religious traditions and the resources for dealing with it are testimony enough to that fact. The growth of magic as a way of dealing with this supernatural evil is also a feature of our period.¹¹

4

Angelic Mediators

Much discussion has taken place over the years about the growth in the number and character of intermediary figures, not least because of the importance of such figures for the development of beliefs about Christ.¹ Already in the Bible, God's attributes were spoken of in a way which might lead one to suppose that they could be conceived of as separate divine beings participating in the divine nature. Thus God's Wisdom in both Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon is spoken of in quasi-angelic terms. Wisdom dwells with God (Ecclus. 24.1ff.); sits alongside God (Wisd. 9.4) and comes to the world (Ecclus. 24.3f.; Wisd. 9.10). Indeed, even in Proverbs 8.22 Wisdom seems to be spoken of as if a divine being. There has been much debate over the significance of such ideas,² as well as the similar development, which we may discern in Philo's use of the term Logos, which speaks of God's immanent activity in the world. Even if we may be reluctant to suppose that these writers have taken the step of supposing that Wisdom and Logos are intermediary figures who were angelic personalities participating in the divine nature, such developments provided at the very least the raw material of later christological reflection.³

We find in some of the literature of the period evidence of other heavenly beings, who were regarded as embodiments of the divine presence and purpose. There is still much disagreement over the meaning of the phrase, the 'Son of Man' in the seventh chapter of Daniel. There the seer in his vision reports that he sees 'one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven' (v.13). Some scholars prefer to regard this reference merely as a symbol of the persecuted people of God, the Saints of the Most High, and therefore not a reference to a divine being.⁴ Alternatively, there are those

who think that we should regard the figure as an angelic being, whose character resembles other angelic figures mentioned in the book of Daniel (e.g., 3.25; 8.15; 10.5f.).⁵ When we come to examine the later development of the phrase in the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 Enoch 37–71), this writer had in mind a heavenly being who existed with God and even sat on God's glorious throne (1 Enoch 61.8; 62.2; 69.29).⁶

One specific development deserves to be mentioned here, namely, an exalted angel described as having divine attributes.⁷ There is evidence from Jewish apocalyptic texts that there was an aspect of angelology emerging which spoke of an angelic being who embodied the divine attributes and appeared as the presence of God, similar in many ways to the function of the *mal'ak YHWH* in the early chapters of Genesis (e.g. Gen. 16). This is most apparent in the angelophany in Apoc. Abr. 10f., where an angel called Jaobel appears to the patriarch and announces that he has the ineffable name of God dwelling in him (cf. Exod. 23.20). Similar ideas may be found in other works, and evidence of similar ideas is to be found in the New Testament, in Revelation 1.13ff.⁸ Angelology of this kind probably led to some theological confusion, and it may be that some connection exists between it and the earliest forms of gnostic heresy, in which there were two gods in heaven, not to mention the elements in the earliest Christian theology, in which Jesus sits alongside God with equal status (Mark 14.62). Attention has been devoted to mediatorial figures in Judaism, because of the possible contribution they may have made to nascent Christology.⁹ We cannot assume that there was a clear-cut monotheistic theology which was adhered to by all Jews. The gap between early Christian theology and pre-Christian Jewish theology is not as wide as is sometimes assumed.¹⁰ Communion between heaven and earth, between humans and angels, was an important feature of the piety described in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹¹ In discussing the relationship between angels and humans, mention must be made of an aspect of Jewish angelology which, while it cannot be regarded as a prominent feature of ideas of our period, is of considerable importance for the evolution of early Christology.¹²

One of the central features of early Christian preaching is the conviction that the God of Abraham has vindicated Jesus and exalted him to glory: 'this Jesus whom you have crucified God has made lord and Christ' (Acts 2.36). For Saul of Tarsus this was a radical claim, but if his letter to the Galatians is anything to go by, the problem was the fact that the one so designated had died the ignominious death of crucifixion (Gal. 3.13; cf. 1 Cor. 1.23) rather than that such claims could be made for a human being. It seems unlikely that Paul would have found any problem at all with the exaltation of a person to the presence of God. Already in the Bible we find the account of Elijah's ascent to heaven on the chariots of fire (2 Kings 2.11). The conviction grew

that Enoch also had been privileged to ascend to heaven directly without tasting of death. This is based on an enigmatic verse in Genesis 5.24, which states that 'Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him'. In later Jewish tradition this was interpreted as a reference to the privilege granted to Enoch to go to the Garden of Eden (*Jub.* 4.21), to be the heavenly scribe (1 Enoch 12.4; Test. Abr. Rec. B 11; *Targum Ps. Jon.* on Gen. 5.24) and even to be transformed into the heavenly 'Son of Man' (1 Enoch 71.14) and the archangel Metatron (3 Enoch).¹³

Such beliefs, however, are by no means confined to Enoch. The discovery of a fragmentary text in Cave 11 at Qumran has given us evidence that well before the first century CE, similar beliefs were held about Melchizedek.¹⁴ Although the text is very fragmentary it would appear that the first verse of Psalm 82 ('God has taken his seat in the congregation of Gods') has been applied to Melchizedek. The priest of Salem, therefore, is regarded as the heavenly judge in the divine tribunal and is called Elohim (God). In similar vein the proto-martyr Abel is described as the heavenly arbiter seated on a throne of glory in the Testament of Abraham 11. Like Enoch at the end of the Similitudes of Enoch, Abel is seated on God's throne and is attired with the raiment of majesty fitting for God himself. He exercises judgement over the future destiny of men and women.¹⁵

Links between heavenly beings and righteous individuals are found in a rather different form in two works which probably come from Egypt, the Prayer of Joseph, and Joseph and Asenath. In the former, which is quoted in fragmentary form by Origen in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel, we find that the patriarch Jacob is none other than the incarnation of an exalted archangel, Israel:

I Jacob, who am speaking to you, am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit. Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But I, Jacob, who am called Jacob but whose name is Israel am he whom God called Israel which means a man seeing God, because I am the first born of every living thing to whom God gives life.

And when I was coming up from Syrian Mesopotamia, Uriel, the angel of the Lord, came forth and said that I [Jacob-Israel] had descended to earth and I had tabernacled among humanity and that I had been called by the name of Jacob. He envied me and fought with me saying that his name and the name that is before every angel was to be above mine. I told him his name and what rank he had among the sons of God. Are you not Uriel, the eighth after me? and I, Israel, the archangel of the power of the Lord and the chief captain among the sons of God! Am I not Israel, the first minister before the face of God? And I called upon my God by the inextinguishable name.¹⁶

In Joseph and Asenath, which has some peculiar elements, a glorious angel who appears to Asenath, Joseph's future wife, is said to resemble Joseph in all things (Joseph and Asenath 14). Indeed it seems that the angel is the heavenly counterpart of the patriarch (cf. Acts 12.15).

A figure of central importance for Judaism was Moses.¹⁷ Like Enoch, he was the subject of extensive speculation in various Jewish works, though his position as the mediator of the divine revelation in the Torah meant that speculation about him was of central importance to the very heart of Judaism. In the book of Jubilees we find that Moses' ascent of Sinai becomes the setting for the communication of divine revelations by the angel of the presence. In this case the content of the revelations is the history as set down in the books of Genesis and Exodus 1–12. Moses' ascent of the mount was regarded in later tradition as an account of an ascent into heaven, though some of the rabbis became a little sensitive about such claims (*bSukkah* 5a). In Philo's eyes Moses became the revealer of supreme importance and able to pierce into the innermost secrets of divinity. The material available to us does not allow us to reconstruct with any degree of certainty the contours of this speculation about Moses at the beginning of the Christian era. Later sources, particularly the Samaritan material, allow us to glimpse the way in which the ideas developed. Thus while Moses' ascent to God (Exod. 19.3) was interpreted as an ascent to heaven (an understandable conclusion in the light of the developing cosmology), other aspects of the speculation concerning Moses are for the most part hidden from us. There is, however, one text which should be mentioned. This antedates the rise of Christianity. It is quoted by Eusebius in *Praeparatio Evangelica* and goes under the name of Ezekiel the Tragedian.¹⁸ In it we find an account of Moses' being offered a throne by God. It is an isolated glimpse of ideas about Moses which must have had considerable currency at this time.

In the bulk of the works mentioned here we do not appear to have a doctrine of the pre-existence of the human being concerned. By and large it would appear that a righteous individual is exalted to heaven and then identified with a heavenly being or given a place of pre-eminence in the heavenly world. With some the situation is a little more complicated. The Prayer of Joseph seems to suggest that an angelic being (Israel) descended to earth and was incarnate in the person of Jacob. We have here a form of speculation on the destiny of the righteous individual which is of considerable importance for our understanding of the way in which the first Christians fashioned their beliefs about Jesus. It becomes a little more comprehensible why, in so short a time, a group of Jews could make such extravagant claims. What seems to be clear from the evidence available to us is that Jewish religion already furnished the framework of ideas to make such claims possible. Indeed, one might go further and say that it would have been surprising if, in the light of

the various ideas which existed in Judaism, a sophisticated Christology had not developed.

So recognition of the existence of traditions of this kind should cause us to pause before we suppose that the christological developments of early Christianity necessarily indicate an inventiveness and unique creativity which cannot be paralleled in early Judaism. Recent study of Jewish texts is making it clear that the whole area of theology and anthropology, particularly insofar as the latter impinges on the former, is an area which has not received sufficient attention in the past. What has emerged is a complex pattern of ideas concerning the heavenly position of the righteous and the equally extensive delegation of divine authority among a multiplicity of heavenly potentates. While this probably never infringed belief in the unique authority of the God of the Jews (at least explicitly), the daring character of many of the ideas should make us pause before we confine the boundaries of Jewish beliefs about humanity and God too narrowly. For a Jew to have called another being 'God' or to have supposed that divine characteristics may have been shared by an exalted person of old seems to have been an accepted part of Jewish thought among some of the groups during this period. While it would be wrong to suppose that such views were accepted by all Jewish groups, the theological possibilities which they exhibit demonstrate the panorama of options available to the early Christian exposition of the doctrine of the person of Christ. Jewish categories offered many opportunities for a profound expression of the intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and God and to produce a highly developed Christology, albeit in Jewish categories in an early stage of the religious evolution. The claim made by Jesus in John 10.30 that 'I and the Father are one' was one that was considered blasphemous by some. What is not so clear is that such a claim would have been considered completely out of bounds within first-century Judaism. Indeed, it may be the case that early Christianity may itself offer testimony in its christological reflection more to the theological complexity already inherent within contemporary Jewish religion rather than to the unique inventiveness of its adherents.¹⁹

*The Temple*¹

The fact that the Mishnah contains a tractate (*mMiddoth*) which deals with the measurements of the Temple,² despite the fact that the building had long lain in ruins, is testimony enough to the importance of the cult within Jewish life. The growing dominance of the Torah and its interpretation in the years after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE could not erase from the memory the tragedy of the Temple's destruction nor the hope for its rebuilding. In an old Jewish prayer dating from the years after the destruction of the Temple (the *Shemoneh Esreh*) there is included a prayer for the rebuilding of the Temple.³ The importance of the Temple for Jews is evident from the writings of two major witnesses for late Second Temple Judaism, Philo (in his *Embassy to Gaius*) and Josephus (*Ant.* xix), when they deal with the universal opposition of Jews to Caligula's plan to erect a statue of himself in the Temple. In the Bible itself there is interest in the legal sections in cultic matters. The regulations for the organization and building of the Tabernacle in Exodus 25ff. and the details for ritual in Leviticus and Numbers all manifest the intense concern with the details of cultic activity among collectors of Israel's traditions.

The place of the worship of the Temple within Jewish life before the Exile owed a great deal to the mythology which surrounded Zion as the dwelling-place of God and the Messiah, the descendant of David.⁴ Although much of this mythological picture probably ceased to have much influence after the Exile, the preservation of the mythological language in the psalms and the concern felt to rebuild the Temple (backed up by a prophetic vision in Ezekiel 40ff.) indicate that there was a considerable amount of residue from the pre-exilic ideas. In the books of Chronicles, for example, we find a concern with the establishment of the cult on a sure foundation as one of the dominant hopes fulfilled in the return from Exile.⁵ The reappearance of some of the mythology in the prophecy of Haggai concerning the rebuilding of the Temple indicates that there was still a great aura attached to the building as the mark of God's presence. The prophet tells the people that a close link existed between the glory of Zion and the emerging prosperity of the nation (Haggai 1.4), and that neglect of the former had dire consequences for the latter. There is an echo of this in Josephus' *Antiquities* 20.166 where Josephus attributes the fall of Jerusalem to the atrocities in the Temple. Astrological themes emerge elsewhere (e.g., *War* 5.212-14) and it seems to have been part of the hope for renewal (11 *QT*).

In view of the central place which the Temple played in Israelite life it is

hardly surprising that it should have loomed large in the piety of emerging Judaism. The centralization of cultic activity, particularly after the Deuteronomic law (Deut. 12.13), meant that the influence of the Temple worship was very much linked with Jerusalem. That is not to say that there were no departures from this rule, for we have to remember that Onias built a Temple in Leontopolis (*War* 7.420ff.; *Ant.* 13.62ff.) and mention is made of cultic activity in the Elephantine papyri.⁶ Nevertheless the centralization of the cult meant that worship for most Jews took place only in Jerusalem and, without a local shrine, cultic acts were confined to certain occasions, when journeys were made to Jerusalem. In our period this would have particularly applied to the pilgrim festivals (Deut. 16.16): Passover (*Pesab*), the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*) and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*).⁷ Such festivals attracted enormous crowds (*War* 6.420–7) and were an essential part of the economic life of Jerusalem. Even if actual participation in the worship carried on in the Temple in Jerusalem was occasional, the influence of the Temple and its requirements was felt by all Jews, and its position as a focus of devotion and affection was considerable (*Ant.* 18.259–261; *Embassy* 311). A tax was levied on all Jews to help with the massive costs incurred by the demands of the Temple and its worship (Neh. 10.33f.; cf. Exod. 30.11ff.; Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.66–9).⁸ Various decrees were issued outside Palestine to make sure that the dues paid there would in fact reach the Temple (e.g., *Ant.* 16.28). After the destruction of the Temple the emperor decreed that the money should be paid to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome,⁹ which probably posed a real problem for Jewish Christians, as Matthew 17.24ff. indicates.¹⁰ In addition, Jews were liable to further demands on them. Already in the time of Nehemiah we find that priestly dues were being enforced¹¹ (Neh. 10.36ff.; cf. Num. 18.8ff.; Lev. 7.30ff.).

Priests and Levites received recompense for the fact that they had no inheritance in the land by a system of tithes (Num. 18.20–31; Deut. 18.1–2). There are different regulations concerning this in the Torah (Lev. 27.30–32; Num. 18.21–32; Deut. 14. 22–29; 26.12–13; cf. Tobit 1.7; *Jub.* 23.10–14; *Ant.* 4.69, 205, 240). This led to a variety of tithes; one for the Levites and one to be spent in Jerusalem (the so-called second tithe). The scriptural complexity prompted discussion about the extent of the obligation. In addition, priests benefited from the first fruits (Num. 18.13; Deut. 18.1–2). When the priests ate the food they had to be in a state of purity (Lev. 22.4–7; Num. 18.13), as did ordinary people eating the second tithe in Jerusalem. Whether priestly privileges were a significant bone of contention within the Second Temple, and whether circumstances might have made it difficult for some ordinary Jews to fulfil the laws of tithe period, is not clear.¹²

The variety of public and private sacrifices day by day kept the priests on duty in Jerusalem busy (*Ant.* 3.234–253; *C. Ap.* 2.105–8; *Spec. Laws* 1.169–200.). The *tamid*, the daily burnt offering of the people (Exod.

29.38ff.) and the daily grain offering of the High Priest were the regular features of the sacrificial round. In addition, the priests were expected to attend the altar of incense. The elaborate procedures for the public sacrificial worship of the Temple were accompanied during the day by the innumerable private acts of piety, which were carried out by the priests on behalf of all those who had come to Jerusalem with their own particular cultic act to make at the place which the Lord had chosen (Deut. 12.11). Sacrifices were also offered for the common good (*Spec. Laws* 1.168; *War* 2.197, 409; *C. Ap.* 2.77).

There were various demands made upon those responsible for the cult. There was responsibility for the vast amount of wealth owned by the Temple as the result of donations and the wealth accumulated as the result of the payment for sacrificial offerings and the cost of redeeming the firstborn male (Num. 18.15f.). The demands of the cult and its maintenance were an ever-present factor in the lives of Jews in the first century. How far priestly rules of holiness extended from the Temple to ordinary life is not clear. If the rules of holiness did extend further than the Temple, it is yet another indication of the extraordinary influence of this institution.¹³ While the financial demands were a regular commitment for all Jews, the participation in the Temple's activities was not a frequent part of the life of most Jews. This was especially true of Jews in the Diaspora. Of course the giving of first fruits (Deut. 26) did not normally apply to those who did not live in the Holy Land. Interest in the Temple and participation in its ritual were of great importance to these Jews as well, as the representations of Philo about the setting up of a statue of Caligula in the Temple make clear (*Embassy to Gaius*). The fact is that, as far as regular patterns of religious observance were concerned, the synagogue, with its study of the Torah and the application of that study to everyday life, had in practice far more influence on Jews, particularly those outside the land of Israel. Early Christianity and the Qumran community regarded the Temple in high esteem, yet both found it necessary to spiritualize cultic actions and apply them to the deeds of the respective communities. In the case of the Qumran community there was the expectation of a renewed Temple in the last days;¹⁴ some early Christian writers, however, took a more radical line towards its position in the new age, especially the writers of the Fourth Gospel, Hebrews and Revelation.¹⁵ The end of Temple worship gave an extra impetus to trends which had been emerging long before: to concentrate the heart of religion in Torah, the community and the divine presence in the hearts and lives of the people of God.

Festivals

In the Jewish calendar there are several festivals, some of which are prescribed by Torah, namely Passover/*Pesab*; Tabernacles/*Sukkot*; Weeks/*Shavuot* and others such as *Purim* (derived from the book of Esther 9.26ff.) and *Hannukah* (on which the dedication of the Temple after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes was celebrated). In addition to the festivals, the season of penitence around the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) and the New Year (*Rosh ha-Shanah*) should also be mentioned.¹

Whatever the origins of the three major festivals,² by the first century CE they had become intimately intertwined with Jewish experience of salvation and were occasions when Jews congregated together in the holy city, as they were pilgrim festivals (Exod. 34.23). The Passover³ was the reminder of God's deliverance of Israel (Exod. 12; Deut. 16.1–8; cf. *mPesahim* 10.5). It lasted seven days, starting on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, and had been merged with the feast of Unleavened Bread (Deut. 16.2). On the eve of the festival (14th Nisan) lambs were offered as a sacrifice and were then eaten in family groups after being roasted whole. There were thus two major parts to the festival: the slaughter of the Passover lambs, which had to take place in the forecourt of the Temple (2 Chron. 30.15ff.; *Jub.* 49.16, 20); and the meal which, in the time of the Second Temple, had to be eaten in houses in Jerusalem (Mark 14.12; *mPesahim* 7.9). During the meal the deliverance was recalled (cf. Exod. 13.8; *mPesahim* 10.4) and in the later Passover *seder* or ritual it concludes with a prayer for liberation.⁴ Because of the evocations of national liberation Passover was often a time of unrest (*War* 2.10–13).

The second pilgrim feast, *Shavuot*⁵ (Weeks or Pentecost), took place on the sixth day of Sivan (Exod. 34.22; Deut. 16.10; Num. 28.26; Exod. 23.16; Lev. 23.15ff.). It fell 50 days after the sheaf had been waved on the day after the sabbath on the Feast of Passover (Lev. 23.15). During it, two loaves were waved before the Lord, a reminiscence of its agricultural origin as a festival of the first fruits (cf. Deut. 26.1–11; *Jub.* 6.21, 22.1), stress its agricultural nature. The festival became an anniversary of the giving of the Law on Sinai (Exod. 19.1; *bPesahim* 68b).⁶ In *Jub.* 6. 1–21 it is seen as a feast of covenant renewal.

The third major festival is *Sukkot*, or Tabernacles, which took place on the fifteenth day of Tishri⁷ and was the last of the three feasts connected with the agricultural year (Exod. 23.16; 34.22; Lev. 23.34–6; 39–43; *Ant.* 3.245; Deut. 16.13ff.; Neh. 8.13ff.). It commemorated the period spent by the children of Israel in the wilderness. The major feature of it was the obligation to dwell in

booths (Lev. 23.40) 'that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when they came out of the land of Egypt' (Lev. 23.43). The booths were made of olive, myrtle and palm (Neh. 8.15), and Jews had to sleep and eat all their meals in the booth for seven days. During the period of the Second Temple, the festival was the occasion of several rites in the Temple, including a water libation (*mSukkah* 4.9; John 7.37), during which priests with water from the pool of Siloam processed round the altar before pouring the water. Branches were taken from trees to form the *lulab* (Lev. 23.39ff.; Neh. 8.17; *Ant.* 3.245). Also during the festival four huge candlesticks illuminated the Temple area (John 8.12)⁸ and Psalm 118 was sung. On the seventh day the Hosanna featured prominently in the liturgy. There was a reading of the law every seventh year (Deut. 31.10ff.). In 1 Kings 8 the Feast of Tabernacles was the occasion of the dedication of Solomon's Temple and, like the Passover, it came to be associated with the eschatological hope (*Zech.* 14.16ff.; *Rev.* 7).⁹

The solemn day of penitence is the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*),¹⁰ whose ritual is set out in Leviticus 16 and Numbers 29.7–11 (cf. *mYoma* and Heb. 9). It fell on the tenth day of Tishri. The purpose of the rite was to cleanse the Temple (Lev. 16.16), priesthood (16.11) and people from sin (16.15, 33), with the only fast prescribed by biblical law (Lev. 16.31; 23.32, cf. Joel 2.15). There was to be a sabbath (Lev. 23.32). During the rite the High Priest in special vestments (Lev. 16.4) entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple for the only time during the year (16.2), offered incense before the Mercy Seat (16.12ff.) and laid hands upon the scapegoat which was released into the wilderness (16.20ff.).

While the Temple still stood there was a very different pattern of religious activity compared with the situation after 70 CE. The ritual of the Day of Atonement and the elaborate, Temple-based celebrations connected with the feasts of Tabernacles and Passover all probably disappeared after the destruction of the Second Temple, though memory of them was kept alive in the disputes, which are recorded in the Mishnah. The importance of this difference should not be underestimated. Insofar as the Temple service looms largest in the pages of the Torah the demands of religion were very much centred on its activity. Obedience was therefore tied up with fulfilling that obligation to stand before the Lord three times a year (*Exod.* 23.17; 34.22; *Deut.* 16.16) and to observe what was prescribed in the Torah concerning sacrifice and remedy of uncleanness (see Lev. 11ff.). Even those who lived outside the land of Israel did not neglect to attend these festivals, though such attendance was probably occasional (*War* 2.280; *Ant.* 4.203; 17.26; *Spec. Laws* i.70; see also *Acts* 2).¹¹

The Synagogue¹

The synagogue assumed a growing importance for the religion of Second Temple Judaism. The place of meeting where prayer took place, where the ancestral traditions were read and expounded, was central to the vision of a people trained and able to apply their customs (*Life* 295; *Creation* 128; *Spec. Laws* 2.62; *Every Good Man is Free* 81). The origins of the synagogue are shrouded in obscurity.² Tradition traces it back to Moses, but it seems more likely that the origin was much more recent. Positive evidence is not available from primary sources much before the third century BCE, though we may suppose that the various places of meeting mentioned in Scripture, for example Ezekiel 8.1 and Psalm 137.1, may well reflect the beginnings of the process which led to the emergence of the synagogue. The idea of a local assembly was not in itself new in Jewish religion. Despite the Deuteronomic regulation, which forbade the worship of Yahweh outside Jerusalem (e.g., Deut. 12), Israel had a long history of local shrines administered by the priests from the local area. The abolition (or at least attempted abolition) of these shrines probably caused a large vacuum in the religious practice of the people (2 Kings 18.4; cf. 23.5), and the pressure to continue the worship in this or similar form must have been enormous. While there is nothing to suggest that there was any connection whatsoever between these local high places or shrines and the later synagogues, it may be imagined that the emergence of the synagogue would provide an opportunity for those outside Jerusalem to practise their religion in a regular and frequent way, a problem accelerated by the dispersion of Jews out of close contact with the cult in Jerusalem (Dan. 6.10).

What evidence has come down to us about early synagogue practice, mainly from Philo and Josephus (*C. Ap.* 2.175), indicates that the chief occupation of the synagogue was prayer and the study of the Scriptures.³ The offering of sacrifices and similar cultic activities was, in conformity with the Deuteronomic law, confined to the Temple in Jerusalem (though we may note the existence of shrines at Elephantine in the fourth century BCE and of Leontopolis in Egypt which was destroyed in 73 CE). At various times Jews were given rights: of assembly (*Ant.* 14.214–16, 227, 235, 257, 260); sabbath observance (*Ant.* 14.226, 242, 245, 258, 263); right to eat their ancestral food (*Ant.* 14.226, 245, 261); deciding their own affairs (*Ant.* 14.235, 260); and contributing money (*Ant.* 14.227, 241). In Palestine itself synagogues seem to have taken on a more 'sectarian' air (e.g., Acts 6.9), for the synagogue seems to have represented the distinctive viewpoint of a particular interest.

As the synagogue was essentially a place for study and devotion rather than for sacrifice, the archaeological remains from the synagogues of the early Christian era reveal a plain style of construction. With the exception of the orientation of the synagogue towards Jerusalem, the place of prominence for the seat of Moses and, in later synagogues, a place for the ark of the Torah, the structures were quite simple. The same cannot be said of the decoration of synagogues. Since the discovery of the synagogue at Dura-Europos (third century CE), it has become clear that there was by no means strict adherence to the ban on imagery.⁴ Some of the mythology in the Dura paintings indicates the extent to which popular piety had been infiltrated by a vast array of ideas.⁵

The requisite quorum for worship was ten persons, and the central feature of the worship was the reading from the Torah as well as from the Prophets and Writings. In addition there would have been the recitation of the Shema ('Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is one.' Deut. 6.4–9; 11.13–21; Num. 15.37–41), the recitation of prayers, and the blessing (cf. 1 QS 9.26–10.1; *Ant.* 4.212). The form of the prayers (*Iefillah*) was considerably altered after the fall of Jerusalem, so that we cannot be sure what form it took before the destruction of the Temple.⁶ The reading and exposition of the Scriptures were a vital part of the synagogue liturgy, as their correct understanding and interpretation became an ever more important focus to the continuation of the Jewish tradition. Much later, a regular pattern of reading was established, so that the whole of the Pentateuch was read in a three-year cycle and the other parts of the canon ordered in relation to it.⁷ Despite attempts to show that various lectionary patterns antedate the fall of Jerusalem and have influenced various books in the New Testament,⁸ there is no evidence to suggest that the three-year cycle of readings was in existence during the Second Temple period. What the Torah itself specifies is that the law should be read every seven years at the feast of Booths (Deut. 30.11; Neh. 8.17). Portions from the prophets (*haftaroth*) may have been included in the synagogue liturgy at the time of Jesus, as various passages from the New Testament suggest (e.g., Luke 4.17; Acts 13.15).

By the first century knowledge of Hebrew was not widespread, as the language of the common people in Palestine was Aramaic. As the common tongue of the empire, Greek was spoken and may well have been used also even in Aramaic-speaking areas,⁹ it was necessary for the readings from the Bible in Hebrew to be translated. In many places this was Greek; elsewhere this translation or *targum* offered a version of the original in Aramaic, which in due course had a fixed form but at a very early period sat fairly loosely to the Hebrew text.¹⁰ In the form in which we now possess them, some of the *targumim* contain much extraneous material, indicating a considerable degree of elaboration of the biblical text.¹¹

The synagogue and its life seem not to have been confined solely to Jews.

Evidence from Acts indicates that, on the fringes of the synagogue, there were some pagans sympathetic to Judaism, described as God-fearers (Acts 13.26). Indeed, while it may have been the case that part of Philo's purpose in recommending the activities of the synagogue to his non-Jewish readers was to defend Jews against the taunts of contemporaries, it would not be surprising to find that the attraction of the Jewish life as set out by the Alexandrian Jew was the reason for many participating in the activities of the synagogue and accepting limited portions of the Jewish life as their own (*Life of Moses* 2.216). Indeed, a degree of apologetic work can be found in some of the literary remains of early Judaism (e.g., Sibylline Oracles).¹² It is unlikely that there was any active proselytizing, however, despite what is suggested by a passage like Matthew 23.15. Jews in the Greco-Roman world, like the Christians after them, concentrated on the cultivation of their own habits of life under God. It was this which attracted sympathizers rather than force of argument or evangelical zeal.¹³

8

*The Torah*¹

Central to Judaism was the belief that through Moses God had bequeathed to the Jewish people the Torah. Much of the first five books of the Bible is devoted to law and the history of the origin of the covenant people. These five books formed a central pillar of Jewish identity. In addition to offering an explanation of their origin as an elect people, the Torah sets out the conditions under which this election may be given effect: for example, male circumcision (Lev. 12.3; Gen. 17.9ff.); the sabbath in remembrance of God's rest at the end of creation (Gen. 2.1f.; cf. Exod. 20.8–10, though there was considerable dispute about what was involved in humans reflecting the divine rest, e.g. *CD* 10.15–11.9; *mEruvim* 6.2). In daily life Jews observed the purity laws (Lev. 13–15) and the food laws (Lev. 11; Deut. 14.3ff.). Unlike the nations round about, the Jews are not to practise idolatry (Lev. 19.4; Exod. 20.4); blasphemy is excluded (Lev. 24.11), and there are strict laws with regard to sexual behaviour (e.g. Lev. 18; Deut. 27.21ff.). Civil law is also set out in the Torah (Exod. 20ff.; Lev. 25.25ff.; Deut. 17:22) with various mechanisms to bring about a degree of equality (e.g., Lev. 25; Deut. 15). There are laws relating to agriculture (Lev. 19.9ff.), which are linked with certain cultic observances, like the tithe (Deut. 26.12).

Dominant in the pages of the Torah are the detailed prescriptions with regard to cultic activity, which take up a large part of the books of Exodus and Leviticus. Central to the Torah are the purity and food laws whose influence is to be found in the New Testament (e.g., Mark 7.17–23; Acts 10–11; 1 Cor. 8). There are laws to do with clean and unclean food (Deut. 14). Food presented ongoing challenges and problems requiring awareness about distinction between clean and unclean and that which was an abomination (Lev. 11; Deut. 4). Purity laws concern issues such as contact with a corpse (Num. 19.15–18), menstruation (Lev. 15), childbirth (Lev. 12), genital discharges (Lev. 15) and leprosy (Lev. 13).

There is considerable uncertainty about the status of other books which we now class as part of the Jewish canon. The canon as we know it in the Protestant churches² was probably formally ratified after the fall of Jerusalem in 70, though that is not to suggest that the various groups which existed before this time did not have a fairly clear idea what was and what was not authoritative (*C. Ap.* 1. 38–41; *Ecclus.* 49.10; cf. 4 *Ezra* 14.45). By the time of the first century most Jewish groups would have regarded the prophetic literature as an authoritative continuation of the divine proclamation, which expounded the initial deposit in the Torah. In the introduction to *Pirke Aboth* we find a chain of tradition outlined, in which the prophets take their place in the long line of expositors of the tradition of Jewish tradition stemming from Moses himself (*Pirke Aboth* 1.1; cf. *Ecclus.* 39.12f.). Breaking a rule which only had traditional authority was not considered a transgression (*Ant.* 13.297). It has often been suggested that the Sadducees denied the authoritative status of the prophetic writings, but it is difficult to substantiate this statement. In the light of their rejection of the doctrine of resurrection (Acts 23.6), it may be possible to suppose that the status of works like Daniel and those prophetic writings which might seem to point in the direction of resurrection (e.g., *Dan.* 12.2; *Isa.* 26.19), was given a subordinate position by them. Josephus tells us that they rejected the tradition of oral interpretation which formed such an important part of the pharisaic-rabbinic approach, though all the evidence suggests that they had their own tradition of interpretation and one which refused to go further than what was written.³ The lack of detail in the Torah, for example, concerning the calendar, necessarily demanded of them that they create extra-biblical rules and tradition. By contrast, Jesus is represented as using Exodus 3.6 in his discussion of the resurrection of the dead (*Matt.* 22.32). Sadducees, therefore, insofar as we can reconstruct their beliefs, represented a more literalistic approach to the interpretation of Scripture (*Ant.* 13.297) and their attitude may have been much more widespread than we sometimes suppose.⁴ They seem to have been reluctant to accept the need for hermeneutical flexibility, though they may have had their own oral tradition. They were not exponents of any explicit heretical ideas, despite the attempts of the later pharisaic-rabbinic

tradition to taint them in this way (*m.Sanbedrin* 10.1; possibly also Psalms of Solomon 17.6–8).

The great burst of literary activity during the Exile, when ancient traditions were codified and reflections on recent experience took place,⁵ meant that a significant shift began to take effect in the character of Jewish religion. The vindication of the prophetic message of judgement in the sixth century BCE and the greater weight given thereby to the hopes of restoration and future bliss meant that the prophetic oracles were treated with great reverence and set alongside the original deposit stemming from Moses as the bedrock of the Jewish faith. It is difficult to know whether the collection of the prophetic oracles was the cause or merely a consequence of the diminution of the living prophetic voice.⁶ Whatever may have been the case, the return from Exile saw the gradual waning of the prophetic movement. Possibly it may have been discredited by the fervent support given to the messianic movement centred on Zerubbabel by Haggai and Zechariah, but little is known, apart from a few cryptic passages (e.g., Zech. 13.1ff.) about the fate of the movement. It is difficult to believe that it vanished without trace, and the suggestions of those who think that it was either forced underground during a power struggle in the post-exilic community or became connected to the emerging apocalyptic literature may have some cogency.⁷ Nevertheless, prophecy became not the living words of the contemporary individual but the written deposit of past Sages whose words were looked to as means of ascertaining the divine will in the present. Exegesis became more important than attention to the living voice of prophecy.

Direction in the life of the community had, before the Exile, been given by priest and prophet, and practical guidance on particular problems relating to religious observance continued to be given by priests after the Exile (Haggai 2.11ff.; Neh. 8.7–9; 1 Chron. 23.3–6; Ezra 7.6; Deut. 31.9; 17.18; Mark 1.40–5 on the continuing importance of priests; *C. Ap.* 2.187); but there grew up another body, the Scribes.⁸ Ezra, the great exponent of the centrality of the Torah, the scribe *par excellence* in Jewish tradition, was himself also a priest. The task of Scribes was to study, write and expound the sacred writings for the use of the people of God. In the days of Jesus ben Sirach the Scribes rank in a position of some importance (Ecclus. 39; Neh. 8.9). The person who spends time studying the oracles of bygone days is in a position not only to help companions but also to be of assistance to the mighty (Ecclus. 39.4). That person is not merely a student of the ancestral writings who, by study, can make plain that which is difficult to understand, but also a person of prayer, who may be filled with the spirit of intelligence and, as a result, may produce maxims of his own, which may enlighten his hearers.

We do not possess enough information about the nature of this scribal activity in the second century BCE. While we would not expect the sophisti-

cation of method or exegetical result which is apparent in later texts, what we have in the Mishnah is the end product of a process which is already at work in the Scribes of Ben Sirach's day and long before, perhaps already evident in the Bible itself.⁹ It is evident from Ecclus. 39.3 that detailed exegesis was part of scribal expertise. The Scribes were the ones who, in Jesus' words, had the key of knowledge (Luke 11.52). In the Gospels we frequently find Scribes and Pharisees lumped together. The Scribes were primarily the interpreters of the Torah, the spiritual descendants of Ezra, who had interpreted the Law in times past (Ezra 7.6; cf. Matt. 13.52; Luke 11.46; 23.2). As we have seen, the place of Scripture had become so central that its accurate transmission and interpretation had become matters of the utmost concern for all. As an expositor of the Torah it would have been possible for a Scribe to have espoused a Sadducean position with regard to his interpretation of the Scriptures (e.g., Jesus ben Sirach – see ch. 39). When we find in the Gospels Scribes being called 'Scribes of the Pharisees' (Mark 2.16) this probably reflects the possibility that Scribes were affiliated to a number of interpretative traditions within first-century Judaism. Already in Neh. 8.8, 13, we see that the importance of a correct knowledge and understanding of the Law is stressed. What emerges in these chapters is the close connection which exists between correct understanding and observance and the fulfilment of the covenant obligation.

The fact that the Torah laid down rules for conduct outside as well as inside the cult meant that its influence extended to everyday existence. Such knowledge of the Torah and its application to the *whole* of life and not to specifically 'religious' acts increased the power of those who had the knowledge of what the demands were and could seek to ascertain what areas of life needed to be regulated by them. The expertise which characterized the Scribes was something which was of such importance within the religious life of the nation that steps were taken to ensure the transmission of their knowledge and skill to future generations. We know from texts which relate to the situation after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 that considerable care was taken to ensure that the knowledge of previous opinions was passed on to succeeding generations.¹⁰ Part of the task of the later teachers was to teach and to assemble pupils who would be sufficiently well equipped with the exegetical skill and knowledge of earlier ideas to continue the ongoing interpretative process.

In the Second Temple period the Sanhedrin, or council, is mentioned in the sources (e.g., at the trial of Jesus in Mark 14.55–64; the first Christians in Acts 5.27–40; 23.10; cf. *War* 1.208–11, 571–3; *Ant.* 14.163–84; 15.163–76; 20.199–203, 216–18).¹¹ Its composition, the extent of its authority and the character of its religious outlook at the end of the Second Temple period are unclear and it may have been at times little more than an *ad hoc* group convened by the nation's leaders, often to rubber-stamp the policies of the

leader. According to the Gospels and Acts, it supported the prosecution of action against Jesus and the first Christians both in Palestine and beyond (Acts 9.2), and in it the priestly element seems to have predominated (Mark 14.61; John 18.19ff.; Acts 4.5f.; 5.17). With the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, it ceased to have such a dominant role and eventually its role was usurped by the emerging rabbinic leaders.¹²

9

*The Interpretation of Scripture*¹

By the time we reach the first century CE, the Torah had assumed a position of pre-eminence in Jewish life. Not only was it the major source of information for the ordering of the cult but also it offered the inspiration for all Jews on the character of obedience which God expected of his covenant people. The problem with the Torah, however, was that the statutes and ordinances laid down by God for the people were nothing like as explicit as was necessary in order to ascertain the precise form of the obedience required. Even cultic regulations, about which there was far more information in the Torah than on other issues, were a source of bitter conflict.² The ongoing interpretation of the biblical text produced a tradition of rulings from Jewish teachers, which are designated *halakab*. These concerned matters relating to the application of biblical law in specific circumstances. *Halakab*, as opposed to *haggadah*, which is non-legal material, centres on the practice of religion: what is necessary in a particular situation in order to abide by the ordinances of God. In the rabbinic literature as we have it, *halakab* is presented in two forms. On the one hand, guidance is offered on the basis of the elucidation of a particular passage of Scripture. On the other hand, much more frequently, as in the Mishnah, the earliest codification of rulings dating in its present form from the end of the second century CE, such guidance, while relating in general terms to a particular aspect of laws in the Torah (purity, food, festivals, sabbath, etc.), is not explicitly linked with a particular passage of Scripture and takes the form of a pronouncement on the appropriate matter by a rabbi and the ongoing discussion of the ruling. A distinction is made therefore between *halakab* and *halakic midrash*. The former involves the pronouncement of a teacher either on the basis of tradition and custom or new formulation to meet differing circumstances; the latter involves the interpretation of biblical

passages in such a way that it relates to conduct (midrash relates to the interpretation of Scripture). Most *halakah* was not specifically sanctioned in Scripture, nor was it the result of deductions from exegetical activity. Rather they were the practices and customs of the Jewish people sanctified by time and their practical desirability. Such were some of the practices connected with the sabbath; for example, the lighting of the sabbath light and the various rites connected with the sabbath meal (see also the complex discussions in *mErubim* 6.2; *mHagigah* 2.2–5; *mBets.* 5.2).³

Many differences are apparent in the interpretative approaches to the Torah found in the writings of Jewish groups of the period and have been illuminated by some of the discussions found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in particular the extent of legal dispute and discussion as is evident from 4 *QMMT*. Underlying the *halakah* of the later rabbis was the concern that every precaution be taken to ensure no accidental disobedience of the divine commands: 'Making a fence around the Torah' (*Pirke Aboth* 1.1). That meant outlining precautions to be taken to make sure there was no accidental breaking of a biblical law. Then there was the constant attempt to show how the ancient laws could be made relevant for the changed circumstances of the Greco-Roman world. When Jews were involved in trade and commerce to earn a living for themselves and their families, it became imperative to know how the demands of, say, sabbath or festivals impinged on the regular activity of earning a living.

One of the most famous examples of a pharisaic enactment coined with the specific intention of facilitating the participation of Jews in commercial life was the *prozbul*. This relates to the law prescribed in Deuteronomy 15.1–11, which states that every seven years all debts should be remitted. This placed a severe obstacle in the way of successful commercial activity. When the year of remission of debts drew near, there would have been considerable reluctance on the part of the lender to lend money, for fear that he would never see it again. With the intention of facilitating the practice of Judaism and efficient business life, Hillel is reported to have instituted the *prozbul*, which enabled the creditor to make a declaration before the council (*mShebi'ith* 10.4), thereby enabling him to reclaim his debt. *Halakah* was an ongoing process. The situations which had caused the enactment of past decisions changed. There was a need for new thinking and fresh insight. Over the course of time fresh decisions accepted by the majority of the rabbinic academy themselves took their place alongside the other *halakoth*. In rabbinic traditions these ranked alongside the written Torah as part of the revelation given by God to Moses on Sinai (e.g., *Exodus Rabbah* 47.7).

While much of this legal discussion has practical relevance, not all of it was formulated to meet the difficulties which confronted Jews in the observance of their religion. Some decisions have their setting not in the actual

problems of Jews but in the theoretical discussions of the rabbinic academies (e.g., *mYaddaim* 4.3f.). Before 70 CE when the rules of the Pharisees were not always binding upon all Israel, the influence of the proposals of the Sages probably had little effect on the mass of people.⁴

The scholarly activity on the Torah centred on the conviction that God's revelation was deserving of the most careful study and, what is more, would yield to those who searched carefully enough the insights which would enable a person to live according to the divine will. Over the centuries the study of the Scripture had made the scholars aware of the contradictions, similarities and variety within the text. As well as being the cause of problems to be solved, Scripture offered new resources as a means of ascertaining new information, as related passages yielded new insights which a similar passage would not necessarily give. Although it is likely that exegetical tools were developed over the years, rabbinic tradition specifically attributes to Hillel the responsibility for formulating seven exegetical rules or *middoth* (see *ARN* 37a).⁵ Two of the best-known rules are as follows:

- 1 *Qal wahomer*: what applies in a less important case will apply in a more important case (e.g., John 7.23: if one breaks the sabbath law to receive circumcision, which applies to just one organ in the human body, then it should be possible to act in order to make a person as a whole healthy).
- 2 *Gezerah shawah*: similarity of language in two different passages; where the same words are applied to two separate cases it follows that the same considerations apply to both (e.g., Rom. 4.5; a quotation from Psalm 31.1 is used to interpret Gen. 15.6).

Such exegetical rules represent a sample of the approach of the Hillelite rabbinic school, but the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls⁶ has revealed to us a distinctive approach, which has parallels with New Testament exegesis, particularly in the eschatological exegesis (4 *QTest.* and 4 *QFlor.*) and in some of the scriptural commentaries, particularly the commentaries on the prophetic books of Habakkuk and Nahum. In these we find that two very distinctive uses of biblical prophecy emerge which resemble the way in which early Christians related prophetic texts to their own Christian convictions. In several of the Christian texts and in the Habakkuk commentary we have the sense that a definitive understanding of Scripture is offered, in which there remains no possibility of deriving further insight from the biblical text given the definitive interpretation offered. In a passage from the Habakkuk commentary (1 *QpHab.* 7) the writer contrasts the prophetic oracle with the interpretations offered by the Teacher of Righteousness in the following words:

... and God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end. And as for that which he said, that he who *reads* may read it speedily, interpreted this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets.

What makes the particular understanding of authority in the Habakkuk Commentary stand out is that it seems to brook no disagreement whatsoever. What characterizes the rabbinic tradition is the fact that the possibility is allowed of rival interpretations of the same passage, one of which may be opposed by the majority yet may be recorded in the tradition. The unique position given to the Teacher of Righteousness in the tradition by the community reflects the latter's belief that the authentic meaning of the prophetic oracles has been divulged to one person. He has been given the divine insight and his interpretation is given the force of new revelation akin to the revelations of the apocalyptists.⁷ This claim to the authoritative interpretation of Scripture is one which is found in a rather different form in early Christianity: here both Jesus and Paul claim to know what the true meaning of the Jewish tradition is and push this in the face of opposition from their peers, for example, Matthew 5.20ff.

The other distinctive feature of this interpretative method is what has become known as the *peshet* (Hebrew for 'interpretation') method of exegesis. This is the method where the words of Scripture are held to apply not to events and persons centuries before but to the particular experience of the righteous community in their struggle in the present to maintain their identity and purity in the face of opposition from the powers of evil (what we might term the 'actualization' of the texts in the exploring of its relationship to new circumstances). This technique is seen most clearly in the biblical commentaries from Qumran, where events in the life of the community are found predicted in the words of a prophet coined for a very different situation. One of the classic examples of this refers to an incident when the Wicked Priest (mentioned often in these commentaries and variously identified with Jonathan or Simon, the Hasmonean priests) pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to the place of his exile:

Woe to him who causes his neighbour to drink; who pours out his venom to make them drunk that he may gaze on their feasts.

Interpreted this concerns the Wicked Priest who pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to the house of his exile that he might confuse him with his venomous fury. And at the time appointed for rest, for the Day of Atonement, he appeared before them to confuse them, and to cause them to stumble on the Day of Fasting, their Sabbath of repose. (1 *QpHab.* 11)⁸

Here an event which had a significant place within the memory of the community has been explicitly related to biblical prophecy. Such an identification of present historical events with biblical passages is to be found from time to time in the Bible (cf. Zech. 3.8; 6.12, and the use of older traditions like Isa. 4.2; Jer. 33.15). Examples in the New Testament are the scriptural citations in the Gospel of Matthew.⁹ The prophecy of the birth of a son to the Davidic king, the Immanuel oracle (Isa. 7.14) is related by Matthew to the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1.23). Similarly, the story of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on an ass is explicitly linked by Matthew (21.1–9) with Zechariah 9.9.

Undergirding the use of Scripture in the New Testament¹⁰ is the conviction that the promises found in its pages had been fulfilled (John 5.39; Mark 1.24; 1 Pet. 1.10f.; Mark 1.2f.; Acts 2.16ff.) and that while Jews were the recipients of the oracles of God (Rom. 3.2; 9.4), those who did not accept that Jesus was the promised Messiah had failed to perceive the true significance of the words contained in Scripture (2 Cor. 3.14ff.). Even allowing for the growing exclusivism in the application of Scripture (a feature also evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls), the Bible provided the Christians with the framework for the establishment of their own identity, though it was a framework which was to be filled with the insight of their own experience, that is, what they had lived through and in company with one another was the prime interpretative key to the meaning of the Scriptures. In Christianity, as in Judaism, there is a wide variety of interpretative methods; for example, typology, where biblical figures are brought into juxtaposition with contemporary persons and events in a mutually illuminative way (Rom. 5.12ff.; Heb. 7.1ff.; 1 Pet. 3.21ff.; 1 Cor. 10.1ff.); and allegory, where deeper spiritual meaning is read into the text and the *real* meaning is set forth (Gal. 4.24; 1 Cor. 9.8ff.), the latter being an interpretative method which is akin to that which we find in the Habakkuk Commentary. Some of the rabbinic techniques can be found in the New Testament; for example in John 7.22; Mark 2.25f.; 12.35ff. In addition there is some evidence to suggest that collections of appropriate texts were made similar to those found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (4 *QTest.* and 4 *QFlor.*); the most popular were Psalms 22 and 110.1.¹¹

With the formulations of various exegetical methods, Jewish interpreters were in a position to make the most of the Scriptures at their disposal to obtain further information on disputed points and to justify practices which were not explicitly recommended by the Torah. The sophistication of this work, particularly in the later rabbinic academies, is itself testimony to the conviction that in the Torah there was an eternal supply of spiritual insight waiting for those who would engage themselves patiently and sympathetically in its study (cf. *Pirke Aboth* 6.1, where Rabbi Meir talks of the mysteries of the Torah).

Although the major reason for study of the Torah was the business of

ascertaining the import of its words for belief and practice, there was also the important task of explaining the Scriptures which did not relate to legal matters.¹² What is loosely referred to as *haggadic midrash* is a rich variety of material dealing with the stories of Israel's past and the supplementing of the sparse accounts with myth and legend. This form of scriptural exposition took many different forms. We have texts which explicitly set out to retell the biblical narrative, while there are others, like the apocalypses, which include extended legends (e.g., Apoc. Abr. 1ff.; Dan. 1–6). Attempts to retell Israel's history are found in various forms. Hellenistic Jewish historians like Eupolemus and, of course, Josephus, in his *Antiquities*, bear witness to the compulsion to retell Jewish history. In retelling the biblical story, the writers testify to the development of particular stories in their day. Similarly the book of Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon (1 *QGen.*) from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo offer versions of the biblical story of Israel's origins with some very colourful expansions of the biblical text, some of which have little or no basis in Scripture itself and which exemplify the extraordinary narrative art of Jewish interpreters.

The most comprehensive of the retelling of the biblical narratives is to be found in the various *targumim*.¹³ These are Aramaic versions of the Bible, in which there is verse-by-verse translation with considerable augmentation from other material. In their present form the *targumim* are much later than the New Testament,¹⁴ but they probably already existed in some form at the time of Jesus. Indeed, evidence from Qumran suggests that the process of translating the Bible into Aramaic for the benefit of Aramaic-speaking Jews in Palestine who knew no Hebrew was already under way in the first century.¹⁵ The *targumim* on the Pentateuch probably contain the earliest material. There are *targumim* on other books of the Bible, including the prophets, and in the light of the use made of the book of Isaiah by the early Christians the careful evaluation of that targum and the extent of its post-Christian reworking is a task of great importance for the understanding of Christian use of this text.¹⁶

The *targumim* and the related biblical expositions suggest that we need to be much more sensitive to the various nuances in the material.¹⁷ One word could give us the clue that a whole wealth of material may stand behind it.¹⁸ Study of the Jewish exegetical tradition is important because it enables us to build up a picture of the way in which the Bible was expounded and the kind of presuppositions with which Jews would have approached the text. Early Christian exegetes read an already interpreted Bible. Their own convictions about Jesus did, to a great extent, colour their own approach, but they did not formulate any novel rules of exegesis.¹⁹

Apocalyptic Approaches to Scripture: The Disclosure of Heavenly Knowledge

There has been renewed interest in recent years in apocalyptic, or apocalypticism as it is now more often called, and its place in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. The words 'apocalyptic' and 'eschatological' have been used indiscriminately to describe Jesus' message. This oscillation is a good example of the way in which the treatment of apocalyptic has ended up as a discussion of eschatology, with well-defined characteristics. Indeed, it is probably fair to say that for many, apocalyptic is a type of eschatology which speaks of the imminent end of this world and the introduction from above, amidst cataclysmic disorders, of a transcendent realm.¹

This eschatological orientation of the understanding of apocalyptic demands a little explanation. While all would recognize that apocalyptic derives from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, a word which is used to describe the disclosure of supernatural persons or secrets, the same word is also used to describe the religious perspective found in a number of writings including Daniel, Revelation, 1 and 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, the Apocalypse of Abraham and the Testament of Abraham, all of which, with the exception of Revelation, are attributed to a hero of Israel's past. It is true that a dominant concern in the book of Revelation is with eschatology, expressed in imagery similar to that found in other apocalypses (e.g., Dan. 2.31ff.; 7.1ff.; 8.3ff. and 1 Enoch 85ff.) and with a belief in the manifestation of God's justice in human history (Rev. 19.11ff.; 22.20). The use of the word 'apocalyptic' to describe this cluster of ideas is widespread, and it is important to recognize this usage, in order to understand how apocalyptic has come to be used virtually as a synonym for eschatology.²

It has become very common to find the words 'apocalypse' and 'apocalyptic' used to describe the end of the world. At the heart of apocalyptic, it is argued, is its distinctive expression of the future hope. The belief that this view of the eschatological picture of Revelation is typical of other apocalypses has led to a definition of apocalyptic which concentrates on eschatological features like the doctrine of the two ages, a future realm of a transcendent kind, a divine irruption into history and a pessimistic attitude towards the present age. The origins of these beliefs are traced to several passages in the Bible (e.g., Isa. 24–7, Joel, the final chapters of Isaiah and Zechariah),³ which seem to provide the antecedents of such an eschatology.

The religious outlook called apocalyptic is by no means as widespread and clear-cut as is often supposed, however. What is more, the distinction between the apocalypse as a literary genre and apocalyptic as a pattern of thought has led to considerable confusion.⁴ Some have rightly questioned whether apocalyptic as usually defined finds its best expression in the apocalypses.⁵ The eschatology of the apocalypses only occasionally corresponds to the 'apocalyptic' type (i.e. other-worldly and dualistic). Our understanding of the pattern of eschatological ideas usually identified as apocalyptic may better be categorized by some other term (for example, transcendent eschatology), thus reserving the word apocalyptic to describe the distinctive religious outlook of the apocalypses themselves, which is focused on the revelation of divine secrets.⁶ When one investigates the eschatology of the apocalypses, it becomes clear that what are often regarded as typical features of apocalyptic are by no means common. What is more, actual teaching about the content of the future hope, for example the character of the new age, the origin and activity of the Messiah, the organization of the messianic community etc., are frequently passed over with little explanation. While the apocalyptists may devote much attention to the progress of history leading up to the new age, there is an evident reluctance to speculate about its character. The conviction about a glorious future for the people of God is there, but its character is hardly ever elaborated in detail.

A survey of the contents of the apocalypses would reveal a wide range of topics. Important in many apocalypses is an interest in details of the heavenly world (Dan. 7.9; 1 Enoch 14.8ff.; 71; Apoc. Abr. 18ff.; Test. Levi 2f.; Greek Baruch; Rev. 4; Ascension of Isa. 6ff.), astronomy (1 Enoch 72ff., Slav. Enoch 23), the course of Jewish history (Dan. 8; 1 Enoch 85ff.; 91.12ff.; 93; Test. Levi 16ff.; 4 Ezra 11f.; Syr. Baruch 35ff.; 53ff.; Apoc. Abr. 27ff.) and human destiny (Apoc. Abr. 20ff.; 4 Ezra 3.4ff.; Syr. Baruch 48). All these issues correspond roughly with the revealed things which are at the heart of apocalypticism.⁷ Of course, all these topics were, for one reason or another, of immense interest to all Jews, and it would be wrong to suppose that interest in history, eschatology, astronomy and cosmology is by any means confined to the apocalypses only. What is distinctive about the use of this material in the apocalypses is that it is offered to the apocalyptic seer as a *revelation direct from God*. It is not the product of human observation or even the application of conventional exegetical techniques to Scripture. What we have expressed in the apocalypses is the conviction that God has spoken directly to the seer, whether by means of vision or angelic pronouncement. As a result, the divine truth can be apprehended by the seer and by all those to whom the seer chooses to make known this knowledge.

The fact that there is a lack of detail about the hope for the future, an interest in other subjects and an emphasis on the revelation of divine mysteries suggests that apocalyptic cannot be regarded as merely a science of the

end, in which heavenly journeys and other revelations serve only as a convenient backdrop for eschatological information. The evidence from the apocalypses themselves indicates that we should not regard their function as merely the fanciful speculations of those whose interest was solely in eschatological matters. The emphasis on the revelation of God and the divine purpose for the cosmos as a whole should be seen as an attempt to answer the crisis facing the Jewish tradition at the time of the apocalyptists. Knowledge of God's saving purposes, which according to some apocalypses were on the point of being realized, would offer hope (Dan. 12.6; 4 Ezra 14.10; Syr. Baruch 85.10). The use of apocalyptic provided an authoritative statement of belief which, while rooted in Scripture, avoided the human limitations present in conventional exegesis by recourse to the direct disclosure of heavenly knowledge.

In considering apocalypticism we are dealing with a religious current in Judaism (and for that matter in the Hellenistic world generally), which spans a long period of time. Even if we date the earliest parts of 1 Enoch to the third century BCE⁸ (and they are probably much older) and the latest apocalypses at the end of the first century CE, we are speaking of a period of 300 years or more. The changing circumstances probably affected the choice of material for inclusion in the apocalypses and the form which the visions took. In the three apocalypses written in the aftermath of the First Revolt (4 Ezra, Syr. Baruch and Apoc. Abraham), for example, we find a particular concern for the destiny of Israel together with impassioned pleas for an explanation of the suffering of the people of God.⁹ Concern in detail with astronomical data is manifested in the Enochic literature (e.g., 1 Enoch 72ff.), though there is occasional evidence that other apocalyptists may also have been interested in this subject (Syr. Baruch 48.1ff.). Likewise the dominant concern with eschatology in Daniel and Revelation is not typical of other apocalypses. The origin of Daniel in its present form during the crisis provoked by the action of Antiochus Epiphanes probably explains the single-minded preoccupation with suffering, martyrdom and eschatological vindication.¹⁰ The dominance given to the revelation of the course of human history leading up to the establishment of the kingdom of God is without parallel in other Jewish apocalypses.¹¹

One common feature of the Jewish apocalypses is the fact that they are pseudepigrapha (i.e., writings falsely attributed to another person, normally a figure of antiquity). Pseudepigraphy is not peculiar to the apocalypses; the practice probably already had a long history in the prophetic tradition.¹² But while pseudonymity is a common feature of the apocalypses, the figures chosen and the revelations attributed to the various figures show some variation. Whereas Enoch and Abraham, Levi and Isaiah are allowed to ascend to heaven during their lives and return to tell of their experiences, the same cannot be said of Ezra and Baruch in 4 Ezra and Syriac Baruch respectively,

though Greek Baruch does speak of Baruch's heavenly ascent. Ezra and Baruch ascend to heaven at the time of their deaths (Syr. Baruch 13.3; 25.1; 46.7; 76; 4 Ezra 14.9) but not before. Indeed, in 4 Ezra the author seems to go out of his way to play down the heavenly ascent and the disclosures which result from it (4.8).¹³ The choice of Baruch and Ezra as recipients of divine revelation is entirely appropriate when one considers that those who had either lived through the catastrophe of the destruction of the First Temple or participated in the rebuilding afterwards appropriately speak for those going through similar experiences after 70 CE.

Even if pseudepigraphy was a very common literary convention, we should not exclude the possibility that it served as a means of enhancing the authority of the revelations committed to writing. To see the use of pseudepigraphy in this light leaves open the possibility that the apocalypses are not merely literary creations following a conventional pattern (though this may be true in some cases) but include the relics of actual experiences by unknown visionaries. In suggesting this it is appreciated that one is entering the realm of speculation. Study of apocalypticism has not always done justice to the possibility, particularly when we remember how significant a part the mystical element played in the religion of antiquity.¹⁴ Although it is impossible to prove this, the apocalypses are more than the expression of literary convention; their very nature argues strongly that they reflect the actual experiences of the apocalyptic writers themselves.¹⁵

There is much in the apocalypses to suggest that there is no fundamental opposition to the Torah (e.g., *Jub.* 23.26ff; 4 Ezra 3.19; 7.17ff.; 9.31ff.; 1 Enoch 93.6; 99.14; Syr. Baruch 38.2; 59.2). Rather, apocalypticism should be seen as part of Scripture study which took its start from precisely those passages which deal with the hidden mysteries of heaven and earth rather than the application of biblical principles to everyday concerns as set out in the Bible.

It has been asserted that there was a polarization in Judaism between apocalypticism and Pharisaism.¹⁶ Apocalyptic is regarded as the science of the end or an understanding of the whole of history leading up to the kingdom of God, whereas what dominates the study of the Scribes and their rabbinic successors is the science of the Torah. The latter is centred on the practical details of everyday existence, not the fanciful speculations of eschatology. Far from being the product of fringe groups in Judaism, however, apocalyptic may well have been the esoteric tradition of the Scribes.¹⁷ Apocalypticism was not an interpretation of the Jewish tradition which was an alternative to other interpretations. Rather, we should regard it as the common property of all groups at the period (something which is suggested by the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the greater appreciation of the mystical and esoteric in emerging rabbinic Judaism).

There is, in the apocalypses, interest in the mysteries of cosmology,

astronomy, history as well as eschatology. Such interests did in fact form part of later rabbinic tradition, but there seems to be a hint already in the Mishnah that speculative interests, perhaps of an esoteric character, already existed in the Second Temple period.¹⁸ The passage is to be found at *mHagigah* 2.1:

The forbidden degrees may not be expounded before three persons, nor the Story of Creation before two, nor the Chariot before one alone, unless he is a Sage that understands of his own knowledge. Whosoever gives his mind to four things it were better for him if he had not come into the world – what is above, what is beneath, what was beforetime, and what will be hereafter. And whosoever takes no thought for the honour of his Maker, it were better for him if he had not come into the world. (Mishnah, tr. H. Danby)

In the second part of the Mishnah we find a dire warning against those who would occupy themselves in subjects which, according to Ecclesiasticus 3.21, are difficult for humans to comprehend. The four prohibited topics represent the major concerns of the apocalyptists. The Jewish apocalypses contain speculation about heaven, hell and human destiny, as well as the mysterious workings of human history as it moves towards the new age. The final threat in the Mishnah is a thinly veiled warning to those whose theological interests led them to speculate in such a way that they would dishonour God.¹⁹

Two of the restrictions mentioned in the Mishnah concern Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1. Here are two passages from Scripture which open the door to speculation about the creation of the world and the God who created it. They are passages which students studied regularly and which pointed him not so much to his obligations and how they could be fulfilled, as to the nature of God and the creation. In the light of the sophistication of the exegetical methods applied to the Scriptures to enable the will of God in specific situations to be discerned, the hints found in passages like Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1 could lead expositors to visions, as they sought to understand the process of creation and the immediate environs of the Creator. These passages (to which we might add others like Isaiah 6.1ff.) offered the exegete a glimpse into another world, a disclosure of the way things were before the universe existed, and the nature of God who sat enthroned in glory on the cherubim chariot above the firmament.

We know from later Jewish texts that cosmogony and theosophy played a very significant part in rabbinic theology. A glance at *bHagigah* 12aff. will indicate that by this time the mystical lore based on Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1 was fairly extensive. The work of Gershom Scholem has done much to expose the history of Jewish mysticism from its obscure beginnings during the period of the Second Temple through the age of the *hekaloth* texts (which

describe the mystical ascent through the heavens via the celestial doorkeepers) to the *Kabbalah* itself. While the literary remains are extensive enough to establish the contours of this speculative interest in the fourth and fifth centuries CE, the character of the mystical lore in the age of the Second Temple and just after is unclear. We find that names like R. Yohanan ben Zakkai (*bHagigab* 14b) and R. Akiba (e.g., in *bHagigab* 14b–15b) are linked with it. This suggests at the very least that later interpreters considered that the mystical tradition should be associated with the heart of early rabbinic Judaism rather than be regarded as the interest of a peripheral group. It seems likely, however, that the evidence may allow us to assume that this interest did form part of the religious beliefs in the Second Temple period, a fact that has been confirmed by the material from the Dead Sea Scrolls, known as The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4 Q 400–407). The paucity of information about the mystical involvement of late first century and early second century CE rabbis does not allow us to reconstruct with any degree of certainty the character of this mystical interest. There are hints that visions of Ezekiel's chariot may have been involved (*tMegillab* 4.28; *bMegillab* 24b), though it has to be admitted that the evidence does not allow us to do any more than put this forward as a tentative suggestion.²⁰

This interest in passages of Scripture which might enable the expositor to gain further information about God and the divine ways is not confined to the rabbinic tradition. In several places in apocalyptic literature there is evidence that the apocalyptists were also interested in the first chapter of Ezekiel (Dan. 7.9; 1 Enoch 14.20; Rev. 4; 4 Q 405 20 ii 21–2; Apoc. Abraham 17f.) and the first chapter of Genesis (*Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 28; 4 Ezra 6.38ff.; *Jub.* 2.2ff.; Slav. Enoch 25f.).²¹ Consideration of the use made of Ezekiel 1 in the apocalypses leads to the suggestion that these passages, one of which (1 Enoch 14) may go back to the beginning of the second century BCE or before. Here at least is evidence that apocalyptists were not merely interested in eschatology, nor did they regard the throne-vision merely as a convenient backdrop for eschatological teaching. Rather, the interest in God's throne is already a matter for mediation in its own right.

In these cases the basis of the apocalyptic vision is Scripture itself. The vision takes its origin from the insight already communicated in the biblical passage, however further it may take it. Examples of Scripture being the basis for apocalyptic visions and pronouncements can be found elsewhere, for example Daniel 7 in 1 Enoch 46, 4 Ezra 12–13, Revelation 13, Jeremiah 23 in Daniel 9, Genesis 6 in 1 Enoch 6.1ff. The use of Scripture in the apocalypses is a subject which is only just being investigated in any detail.²²

When we come to ask about the pseudonymous authorship of the apocalyptic visions and their relationship to biblical antecedents, we have to face the fact that our knowledge of the origin and composition of the apocalypses is very rudimentary. Are we dealing with purely literary compositions, or

have we to do on occasion with the relics of actual visionary experiences? The material occasionally has been subject to later editorial revision: 4 Ezra 11–12 is a good example. Nevertheless, the occasional interest in fasting and other preparations for visions (Dan. 10.2f.; Apoc. Abr. 9; 4 Ezra 12.50) suggests that it would be rash to rule out the possibility of some kind of mystical praxis and its results being contained in the apocalypses.²³

The discovery of the Enoch fragments in Cave 4 at Qumran has pushed back the origin of this work well into the third century BCE. Hints like Zechariah 13.2ff. suggest the latter of the two alternatives above. What is more, the visionary character of Zechariah 1–8 already points in the direction of later apocalyptic visions.²⁴ Thus that quest for higher knowledge, so characteristic of apocalyptic, can be grounded in Scripture in the claims of the prophets to direct, visionary experience and to knowledge of the debates in the heavenly court.

To do justice to apocalyptic, however, we cannot ignore that quest for knowledge of things earthly and heavenly, which in part at least is characteristic also of the Wisdom tradition.²⁵ As we have already noted, the links are particularly close in parts of 1 Enoch which gives evidence of a definite interest in the created order, though with the important difference that the information in 1 Enoch comes *through revelation* (e.g., 1 Enoch 72.2). There *are* significant differences between the apocalypses and the Wisdom literature. Nevertheless, there is affinity of certain parts of the apocalypses, particularly parts of Daniel, with mantic Wisdom, which was concerned with the interpretation of dreams, divination, mysterious oracles and the movements of the stars.²⁶ Even within the biblical tradition, however, there is a closer link with the Wisdom tradition than is often allowed.²⁷

The questioning spirit of the biblical wisdom tradition and the interpretation of dreams and visions are antecedents, which should not be ignored in our attempt to elucidate apocalyptic origins. Thus it would be wrong to assert that apocalypticism has its origin either in prophecy or in Wisdom, for both have contributed much to apocalyptic. Rather, it is a case of elements of prophecy and Wisdom contributing to an outlook which set great store by the need to understand the ways of God. Apocalyptic approaches Scripture with the conviction that the God who is revealed in the pages of the sacred writings may be known by vision and revelation. The interpretation of Scripture offered the opportunity to plumb the depths of some of the most profound divine mysteries, often only hinted at darkly in the sacred text. The yearning for this knowledge is akin to some of the passionate searching apparent in the book of Job, though the conviction that God is revealed to chosen agents lies at the heart of the prophetic experience. The apocalyptists were not content with answers to mundane questions and pressed on in search of divine knowledge. Indeed, they were probably the ones castigated in Ecclesiasticus 3.21ff:

Do not pry into things too hard for you or examine what is beyond your reach. Meditate upon the commandments you have been given; what the Lord keeps secret is no concern of yours. Do not busy yourself with matters that are beyond you; even what has been shown you is above human grasp. Many have been led astray, by their speculations, and false conjectures have impaired their judgement. (cf. 34.1ff. New English Bible translation)

There are many indications that it was a significant component of the early Christian outlook.²⁸ Visions of a type found in the apocalypses are evident in early Christian literature and serve to initiate the careers of key figures (Mark 1.10; Gal. 1.12, 16; cf. Acts 9; 26.19). The heart of the early Christian message was in fact eschatological: the coming of the promised Messiah and the pouring out of the prophetic Spirit. But if this is the content of the message, the means by which individuals were enabled to reach this conviction can best be characterized as apocalyptic. Apocalypticism provided the vehicle of eschatological conviction, therefore. This may be most clearly seen in the book of Revelation itself. The message is communicated by means of an apocalypse, a revelation from Jesus Christ (Rev. 1.1). This is the guarantee of its authenticity (22.15) and authority. Thus what we find in early Christianity is apocalyptic functioning as the basis for the eschatological convictions belonging to the key figures in its early history.²⁹

11

Schools of Thought: An Introduction to Sectarianism in the Second Temple Period

Discussion of Jewish sects demands that the commentator explain the way in which he or she is using a term which has become important in the sociology of religion. The following typology outlined by Bryan Wilson indicates the importance of making distinctions among the various kinds of sects.¹ He offers a sevenfold classification of sects which define the group in relation to the world, its customs and beliefs. These include:

- the ‘conversionist’ (changing individuals in order to change a corrupt world);
- ‘revolutionary’ (removing the present social order at the right time, if necessary by force and so suspicious of social reform);
- ‘introversionist’ (escaping from the world to enjoy the holiness gained thereby);
- ‘manipulationist’ (insistence on specialist or arcane knowledge);
- ‘thaumaturgical’ (enabling the extraordinary effects of the supernatural to affect human lives);
- ‘reformist’ (accepting a place in the world, being ‘the leaven in the lump’ of society);
- ‘utopian’ (separatist but idealist in that it wishes to remake the world according to its own specification).

So, we should distinguish between organizations of a more open-ended kind, and the closed group, more readily defined and more exclusive. There are advantages in using this categorization. Thus, while it would be possible to argue that a group like the Qumran community manifests all the exclusive characteristics of an ‘introversionist’ sect, claiming for their élite group attributes applied elsewhere to the whole Jewish nation (1 QS 1.11–18; 7.16, 22–4), the same cannot always be said of other Jewish groups. Josephus comments on the Essenes that they were more exclusive than the Pharisees (*War* 2.126, 150). Early Christian literature suggests that Pharisees were prepared to eat with all sorts (e.g., Luke 7.36). At least as far as the rabbinic sources depict the pharisaic-rabbinic position, there is a degree of flexibility and open-endedness which is absent from the Qumran Scrolls (cf. 1 QS 5.11–12). Pharisaic-rabbinic attitudes towards the ordinary people (*‘am ha-aretz*, the people of the land) who did not accept pharisaic principles indicates that there was not a widespread rejection of those who refused to espouse the rabbinic position. These people might have been despised but were not rejected from the commonwealth of Israel.² Such variation probably has a long history in Second Temple Judaism.³ There was some variety also among early Christian groups. On the one hand the Johannine writings manifest many of the characteristics of an ‘introversionist’ sect while, on the other hand, Paul occasionally manifests some of the uncertainties which characterize the more open-ended type.⁴ This is particularly true of his treatment of Israel in Romans 9–11, where he leaves open the possibility of the inclusion of some or even all Jews within the process of salvation despite their present rejection of the gospel (Rom. 11.25ff.). In this respect Paul manifests some of the similar concerns which characterize the rabbinic attitude towards the *‘am ha-aretz*. The outlook of Matthew’s Gospel, if the parable of the wheat and the tares is anything to go by, is an example of the view which regards the community as a mixture of righteous and sinners.⁵

The character of Judaism changed markedly after the destruction of the Temple. The concerns after 70 included a desire to maintain a significant degree of unity,⁶ though uniformity to any overwhelming degree can hardly be said to characterize the rabbinic traditions. Differences of opinion were accepted, and after a certain period included in the tradition, so that it would not be unexpected to find two contradictory opinions recorded side by side (e.g., *mMegillah* 4.10). In rabbinic Judaism we are not dealing with a monolithic, uniform system but a tradition which was living and changing, with room left for a considerable amount of divergence.⁷

The varied character of Jewish religion is something which is hinted by Josephus in his account of the Jewish sects (*hairesis*). In *War* 2.119ff. Josephus recounts the beliefs and practices of Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, dwelling particularly on the last-mentioned group. In mentioning just three groups Josephus was probably diminishing the variety which existed within Jewish religion during the first century CE as he saw a dominant position emerge. The rabbinic traditions which have come down to us, even allowing for a significant editorial process after 70,⁸ particularly the disputes between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, reflect a considerable amount of difference in approach even within a group which is normally given one label.⁹

So, there is unlikely to have been orthodoxy at this period;¹⁰ though with regard to matters like the calendar (date of festivals, etc.) we may expect that there would have been a considerable degree of uniformity. We know from the Dead Sea Scrolls and from texts like 1 Enoch and Jubilees that there was a significant divergence of opinion over the way the calendar was calculated and so there was the inevitability that some groups celebrated major festivals on different days (1 *QS* 9.26–10.4; 1 Enoch 72–5; *Jub.* 6.29). Because of the disappearance of many of the sects and whatever literature they produced after 70 we have no means of assessing the extent of the religious variety in Judaism at this time. Recent discoveries, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, are confirming that the nature of Judaism was a complex of competing and conflicting opinions and beliefs. Not only the contrast between Diaspora and Palestine but also the contrast within Palestine itself, meant that differences emerged for geographical,¹¹ and social¹² as well as religious reasons. Consequently diversity of interpretation of the religious traditions was inevitable.

There were probably common features to most Jewish groups, e.g. the Temple and the Torah, which would have united all but the Samaritans, who rejected the shrine in Jerusalem in favour of their own on Mount Gerizim.¹³ Even those who wrote some of the Dead Sea Scrolls did not reject the Temple outright. The Damascus Document suggests that members of the group went to sacrifice in Jerusalem (*CD* 9.13; 11.17–21; 12.1).¹⁴ To say that the Torah and the Temple were in fact central to most Jews is in fact to single out the main reason why there was such variety. The exercise of a central

control was probably confined to the official organs of Jewish society which were administered in Jerusalem, such as the Temple, together with affairs in the immediate environs of the city.¹⁵ The practice of Jewish individuals and groups, outside Jerusalem, was less controllable (Mark 3.22; Matt. 15.1; Mark 7.1; John 1.19; Acts 9.2). Granted that the Torah laid down what was essential for Jewish observance, the nature of the practice of these demands was by no means obvious. God called the people to be holy (Lev. 19.2); but what did this mean in practice? The means whereby this separation was effected were not always clear in the pages of Scripture. If God had laid down the conditions for a continuing relationship, how did these conditions apply in various situations? The difficulties confronting Jews in this period were compounded because of the problem of interpretations and the contents of the Torah. The regulations for the administration of the cult were fairly extensive, but even here there was much room for difference of opinion, and this was even more true in civil and family law in the Torah.¹⁶ It is when questions on these issues were put to the Torah that one sees why interpretations and indeed new enactments were necessary and also why differences emerge, particularly when the traditions of interpretation followed by various groups gave greater degrees of prominence to ancestral customs and beliefs than others.¹⁷

12

Schools of Thought: An Outline of Jewish Groups in the First Century CE

In both his *Jewish War* and his *Jewish Antiquities* Josephus gives an account of what he describes as 'schools of thought'. Three schools are mentioned, added to which there is a 'Fourth Philosophy'. By far the longest account is that concerning the Essenes, and that despite the fact that Josephus tells us that he himself was aligned with the Pharisees after having tasted of the various 'schools of thought' in his early life. This included living with an ascetic named Bannus in the wilderness, a reminder of the variety which the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has only confirmed, but in the end he opted for the sect of the Pharisees (*Life* 10–22).

What follows here follows Josephus' typology in full recognition, as Josephus himself hints throughout his narrative, that such a neat separation probably hardly does justice to the complexity of the religious situation in the final years of the Second Temple period. In *Ant.* 18.11 he writes of the antiquity of three of the 'philosophies' (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes). The 'fourth philosophy' is more recent, however and, in Josephus' view, is closely akin to Pharisaism (*Ant.* 18.23).

(a) Sadducees

The Sadducees 'own no observance of any sort apart from the laws', are argumentative and uncouth in their behaviour (*Ant.* 18.16–17; *War* 2.166). They were closely linked with the priestly and largely aristocratic section of Jewish society (*Ant.* 18.16), amenable to foreign ideas and influence.¹ During the early second century (c. 170 BCE), several of the priests were open to Hellenistic influence,² but that should not be taken as the dominant characteristic. In the time of Jesus, some of their number had more contact than most Jews with the Roman government, because of their role as leaders of the nation, and those who gave effect to everyday colonial rule in Judea. Some supported peaceful co-existence, if not active co-operation, with the Romans, for the sake of peace and security (cf. John 11.48f. and *Ant.* 18.3). They appear to have had a very conservative attitude towards the Law of Moses and probably rejected extra-biblical traditions (*Ant.* 13.297), particularly those which did not coincide with their interests. The fact that Jesus of Nazareth is represented as trying to persuade Sadducees with a fairly sophisticated exegesis of Exodus 3.6 in Mark 12.26 may suggest that they were not as literal minded as is sometimes suggested. While this could have led them to adopt positions which were unrealistic in the changed circumstances of the Greco-Roman world, their position had the merit of not extending the domain of the Torah into areas of life which were not explicitly provided for in the Torah. In this respect we may suppose that their attitudes may well have reflected the beliefs of the population at large.³ It is not easy to reconstruct exactly what the beliefs of the Sadducees were. According to Paul, the Synoptic Gospels and Josephus (Acts 23.7; Matt. 22.23 and *War* 2.165), the Sadducees denied the belief in the resurrection of the dead, because they could find no reference to it in the Torah (cf. *mSanhedrin* 10.1). Josephus tells us that they believed in free will (*War* 2.164f.; *Ant.* 13.173) and 'were harsh in judgement' (*Ant.* 20.199).

We know that there were many priests who not only sympathized with the Pharisees but classed themselves as part of that movement (there were several priests among the nascent rabbinic group meeting at Jamnia after the Fall of Jerusalem, e.g., R. Jose the Priest). Such priestly sympathy with the Pharisees is not really surprising given the cultic inspiration of the pharisaic

ideal. If the rabbinic traditions are to be believed, the Sadducees often found themselves in a position of having to accept pharisaic rulings on matters with which they were intimately concerned, such as the regulation of the Temple worship (e.g. *mYoma* 5.1; *bYoma* 19b, which indicates the disputes which existed about what constituted appropriate divine service, cf. also MMT, 4 Q 394–9).

(b) Pharisees

Josephus writes of the importance of the Pharisees as the leading sect (something that may well have been the case when *Jewish War* was published at the end of the first century CE), the mutual affection among Pharisees (*War* 2.166), their accuracy in the interpretation of the laws (*War* 2.162), their simple lifestyle (*Ant.* 18.12) and their respect for their ancestral traditions (*Ant.* 18.12):

The Pharisees are considered the most accurate interpreters of the Laws, and hold the position of the leading sect, attribute everything to fate and to God; they hold that to act rightly or otherwise rests, indeed, for the most part with humanity, but that in each action fate co-operates. Every soul, they maintain, is imperishable, but the soul of the good alone passes into another body, while the souls of the wicked suffer eternal punishment. (*War* 2.162, Loeb translation)

And:

The Pharisees simplify their standard of living, making no concession to luxury. They follow the guidance of that which their doctrine has selected and transmitted as good, attaching the chief importance to the observance of those commandments which it has seen fit to dictate to them. They show respect and deference to their elders, nor do they rashly presume to contradict their proposals . . . They are, as a matter of fact, extremely influential among townsfolk; and all prayers and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their exposition. This is the great tribute that the inhabitants of the cities, by practising the highest ideas, both in their way of living and in their discourse have paid to the excellence of the Pharisees. (*Ant.* 18.12–15, Loeb translation)

We find in *War* ii.162 (cf. *Ant.* 13.162–6; 18.15) that the Pharisees were at various times deeply involved in political affairs in the reigns of Alexandra (*Ant.* 13.399–411, 76–67 BCE), were favoured by Hyrcanus (*Ant.* 13.288–300, late second century BCE) as they were at the time of the First Revolt (*War* 2. 411–17; 4.159; *Life* 190) and in the discussions surrounding the origins of

the Christian movement if Acts is to be believed (Acts 5.33–40; 15.5; 23.6). They were held in great esteem by ordinary people (*Ant.* 17.206–18; 18.116–19; *War* 1.655).

In the Gospel of Mark the Pharisees are described disputing with Jesus about the sorts of people with whom he eats (Mark 2.18) and about fasting, an ascetic practice which hardly features in the Torah (2.18). In Mark 7.1 it is the issue of the washing of hands which is the basis of dispute. In Mark 10. 2 the Pharisees engage with Jesus in legal dispute over divorce, and in 3.6 and 12.13 are linked with Herodians, suggesting a political alliance. Mark 12.13 is presented as part of a test of Jesus (cf. Luke 11.53–4) in which the Pharisees and the Herodians are sent, presumably by the chief priests, the Scribes and the elders (Mark 11.27).⁴ Jesus compares them with ‘leaven’ (Mark 8.11). The Pharisees are linked with the Scribes in Mark 2.16 (cf. 7.1), an important reference which may suggest that there were those engaged in scribal activity who were also Pharisees. The Scribes are described as authoritative teachers (Mark 9.11; 12.35), and part of the ruling élite which opposes Jesus (Mark 8.31; 10.31; 14.53; 15.1). They have a Jerusalem connection (Mark 3.22). Not all Scribes are treated in a hostile way, however, as one could be ‘not far from the kingdom of God’ (Mark 12.28–32). There is a similar need for wariness as with the Pharisees (12.38, cf. 8.11).⁵

In the Gospel of Luke Jesus is once again criticized by a Pharisee over the sort of contact he allows (Luke 7.30–8). The issue of cleanness comes up once more in Luke 11.39, and in 11.42 there is criticism of tithing – not the act itself but the relative importance given to it as in Mark 7.9. Luke 11.44 differentiates the lawyers (in Matthew the parallel saying refers to ‘scribes and Pharisees’) for burdening people and building the tombs of the prophet while not being able to recognize the ongoing prophetic movement.⁶

The rabbinic sources refer to *perushim* occasionally.⁷ This is a word which suggests separation. The rabbis preferred to call their predecessors the *hakamim*, or Sages. There are occasional references to *perushim*, apparently a different group from the Sages, in a passage such as *mYadaim* 4.6–8, where the *perushim* are described as being opposed by the Sadducees. In other places *perushim* seem to be attacked, though the reasons for the hostility are not entirely clear (*mSotah* 3.4, cf. *bSotah* 22b; *jSotah* 3.4; *tBerakoth* 3.25). Occasionally the *perushim* and the Sages are closely linked as in a story which reflects the account which Josephus offers of Hyrcanus and the Pharisees (*bKiddushim* 66a, which is a garbled version of the story in *Ant.* 13.288–300).

Setting out the sources is the easiest task, but the interpretation of the sources has been altogether more tricky. Josephus emphasizes Pharisaic support of oral tradition, but has little to say about their concern with purity. The political involvement of the Pharisees more or less throughout the first centuries BCE and CE is suggested by Josephus and also to some extent in parts of the New Testament evidence (though they are largely absent from

the accounts of Jesus' arrest and death). The Gospels (going back to traditions which, in part at least, may reflect circumstances in Galilee rather than Jerusalem) indicate a greater preoccupation with purity and food, though there is evidence of political involvement, particularly in the context of Jesus' relationships with the metropolis. It is striking, however, that the rabbinic sources do not use the Hebrew equivalent of 'Pharisee' to denote the predecessors of the rabbis. It is plausible that 'Pharisee' may be a nickname used by opponents or even a designation of a more extremist group from whom the Sages wanted to distance themselves.⁸ There is a possibility that there was a variation over time concerning the extent of the political involvement of the Pharisees during our period, as the kind of political power that they exercised in the reign of Alexandra did not seem to continue in the period of colonial rule. Whether they moved from being a largely political body to an introverted group largely concerned with food and purity matters is still a matter for debate, but it seems unlikely. There was probably a very wide spectrum of belief and practice among those to whom the label 'Pharisee' could be applied, so that in interpreting invective against the Pharisees in the New Testament we cannot suppose that one homogeneous group is being addressed all the time.⁹ It is possible that some Pharisees practised levels of holiness in ordinary life which exceeded the norm¹⁰ and took with extra seriousness the obligation laid upon Israel as a whole to be a holy nation before God (Lev. 19.2.).¹¹ If they had practised priestly levels of holiness, they probably would have ended up being distinct groups, with clear-cut demarcation between adherents and outsiders, and as such resembled the Essenes, particularly those who married and went to the Temple (as those mentioned in *CD* apparently did who did not live a monastic existence such as is suggested in 1 *QS*).¹²

Other doctrinal matters are less complex. Josephus hints that the Pharisees attached great significance to eschatology, particularly the belief in the resurrection (*War* 2.119ff.; cf. Acts 23.6; *mSanhedrin* 10.1). The use of books like Daniel meant that they could point to a passage such as Daniel 12.2 for an unequivocal statement of their belief in the resurrection, without having to depend solely on the Torah, though we may expect that, like Jesus, they were able to ground the resurrection doctrine in Torah also (cf. Mark 12.26f.).

The Pharisees accepted the importance of oral tradition (*Ant.* 13.297).¹³ The Torah may have been given by Moses on Sinai, but in succeeding generations pronouncements had been made applying Torah with new insights to each new situation. The *halakah* was eventually codified in the rabbinic corpus, the earliest collections being the Mishnah and Tosefta,¹⁴ though one must assume that this was but a fraction of the material available and that much more was excluded. The purpose was the building of a fence around the Torah (*Pirke Aboth* 1.1), i.e., enacting cautionary rules to halt people

before they got near breaking a specific commandment and making explicit what the Torah left either implicit or unsaid.

The Pharisees shared with most Jews a high regard for the Temple. The debates between the Pharisees and Sadducees over cultic matters contained in the early rabbinic (tannaitic) sources suggest that the Pharisees were very interested in the minutiae of Temple ritual (e.g. *mYoma* 5.1). It is likely that even before 70, those who met together to study the Torah believed that the divine presence (*shekinah*) was with them (*Pirke Aboth* 3.2).¹⁵

There is widespread agreement that there was a degree of continuity between certain groups of Pharisees and the early rabbis whose teaching is included in the corpus of rabbinic literature, though there were probably other components to rabbinic religion as well as Pharisaism, even if the latter was by far the most important. We should not underestimate the vast changes that took place in the years following the débâcle of the First Revolt in 66–70. The outcome, apart from enormous suffering in Judaea and Jerusalem, was probably the cessation of regular Temple worship and the decimation of Judaism as it had been known up to that time. Jewish tradition has it that just before the fall of the city, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, a leading figure of the post-70 reconstruction, escaped from Jerusalem and gained permission from the Romans to move to Yavneh/Jamnia.¹⁶ The result was that one group of first-century Judaism (or to put it another way, a faction of a faction, i.e., the Hillelite wing of Pharisaism) slowly gained a decisive voice in the formulation of post-destruction Jewish society.¹⁷ Separation between church and synagogue was a long-drawn-out process stretching over many decades, but by the time of Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century, changes in synagogue worship were seen as a contributory factor to the separation.¹⁸

Pharisees were unlikely to have been part of a monolithic religious system, and their beliefs and practices might have changed over time, also depending on geographical situation. There was a wide difference of approach between ‘liberals’ and ‘conservatives’, exemplified in many of the (often legendary) debates recorded between the (more conservative) Shammai and Hillel (the hero of the later rabbinic compilers). There is a series of stories about the different approaches of Shammai and Hillel, in this case in dealing with a would-be proselyte (*bShabbath* 31a), which both reflects the way in which differences were expressed and shows that such differences were more of emphasis and approach than substance:

Our rabbis taught: It happened once that a certain non-Jew came to Shammai and said: How many Torahs have you? He said, Two: written Torah and Torah transmitted by mouth. I believe you with respect to the written, but not with respect to the oral Torah: make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the Written Torah. He scolded and repulsed him in

anger. When he went before Hillel, he accepted him as a proselyte. On the first day he taught him, Alef, beth gimel, daleth; the following day he reversed them to him. But yesterday you did not teach them to me thus, he protested. Must you then not rely upon me? Then rely upon me with respect to the oral Torah also.

On another occasion it happened that a certain non-Jew came before Shammai and said to him, You can make me a proselyte providing that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one leg. Shammai chased him away with a stick. Then he came before Hillel and asked him the same thing. Hillel replied, That which you do not wish people to do to you, do not do to them (cf. Matt. 7.12). This is the Law and the Prophets. The rest is commentary; go and learn it.

On another occasion it happened that a certain heathen was passing a Bet haMidrash, when he heard the voice of a scribe reciting, And these are the vestments they shall make; a breastplate, an ephod (Exod. 28.4). Said he, For whom are these? For the high priest, he was told. Then said that heathen to himself, I will go and become a proselyte, that I may be appointed high priest. So he went before Shammai and said to him, make me a proselyte on condition that you appoint me a high priest. But he repulsed him with a builder's cubit which was in his hand. He then went before Hillel who made him a proselyte. He said to him, Can any one be made a king but he who knows the arts of government? Go and study the arts of government. He went and read. When he came to, Any unqualified person who comes near to it shall be put to death (Num. 1.51), he asked him, To whom does this verse apply? Even to David King of Israel, was the answer. Thereupon the proselyte reasoned with himself by *qal wahomer*: if Israel, who are called sons of the Omnipresent, and who in his love for them he designated them, Israel is my son, my firstborn, yet it is written of them, Any unqualified person who comes near it shall be put to death; how much more so a mere proselyte who comes with his staff and wallet. Then he went before Shammai and said to him, Am I eligible to be a high priest? Is it not written in the Torah, Any unqualified person who comes near it shall be put to death? He went to Hillel and said to him, O gentle Hillel, blessings rest on your head for bringing me under the wings of the Shekinah. Some time later the three met in one place; they said Shammai's impatience sought to drive us from the world, but Hillel's gentleness brought us under the wings of the Shekinah.¹⁹

(c) The Fourth Philosophy

In his *Antiquities* Josephus describes also a 'fourth philosophy' set up by Judas the Galilean:

This school agrees in all other respects with the opinions of the Pharisees, except that they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master. They think little of submitting to death in unusual forms and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsfolk and friends if only they may avoid calling any one master. Inasmuch as most people have seen the steadfastness of their resolution amid such circumstances, I may forgo any further account . . . The folly that ensued began to afflict the nation after Gessius Florus who was governor [64–5, *War* 2.277–9], had by his overbearing and lawless actions provoked a desperate rebellion against the Romans. (*Ant.* 18.23–5, Loeb translation)

Josephus never links this philosophy with the Zealots (*War* 4.121ff.), though in the story of the First Revolt as it is told by Josephus, the Zealots (*War* 2.118; 4.156; 7.323; *Ant.* 18.23) have some similarities with the outlook of the 'fourth philosophy' some of whose members died in the heroic final struggle against the Roman general, Flavius Silva, in the fortress of Masada 73.²⁰

From the time of the Maccabees there had been a tradition of militant defence of the faith of the fathers, which involved violent struggle against domination by a foreign power. Such an outlook was given added weight by the stories of the conquest of the Promised Land and the ejection of foreigners in the Torah. Indeed, in the biblical stories such armed struggle is frequently linked with an emphasis on the divine assistance given to the people of God in their struggle (e.g., Judges 6; Josh. 10.10f.; 5.13ff.). When Rome took over Judaea in 6 CE there was resistance to the census from Judas the Galilean,²¹ and it was one of his descendants, Menahem, who played an important part in Jerusalem during the First Revolt (*War* 2.433–49). Given the importance of inheritance and 'dynastic' succession, some connection between the origins under Judas and the subversion at the time of the First Revolt is likely, though whether we can speak of a Zealot party throughout the whole of the first century CE, from the time of Judas' opposition to the First Revolt, is not so clear.²² An ideology might have persisted, however, which spoke of the need to purify the land of foreign defilement by violent means. Possibly the War Scroll from Qumran (1 *QM*) allows us to glimpse something of the mentality of such groups, who believed that, despite all the odds being stacked against them, the people of God could triumph over the forces of darkness, with the angelic hosts playing their part alongside them, replicating the divinely inspired deliverances of old.

(d) Essenes

Josephus devotes by far the most attention to the Essenes in his two accounts in *War* and *Antiquities*. In *Antiquities* 18.18–22 he writes about the Essenes sending offerings to the Temple (though there are textual problems with this passage which prevent complete certainty on this) and employing a different ritual of purification which meant that they were barred from the precincts of the Temple. Priests prepared their food. They devoted themselves to agricultural labour and community of goods. There were no women in their communities and they refused to own slaves. They practised charity to others. Josephus estimates that their number was about 4,000 (a number suggested also by Philo in *Every Good Man is Free* 75).

In his much longer account in *War* 2.120–61 concerning the Essenes Josephus describes their reputation for sanctity. He describes two types of Essenes, one which disdained marriage and recruited by ‘adopting others’ children’ and another which allowed marriage, though women were subjected to the same kind of critical scrutiny as the Essenes themselves. Within the communities there were four grades, with strict separation and ordering of relations between the various grades. They despised riches and practised community of goods, took no protection for themselves on journeys, eschewed buying and selling, practised provision for the stranger, and wore the same clothes until they were threadbare. In their common life they showed deference one to another, and accepted a strict hierarchical discipline, though initiatives in assistance and compassion were left to individuals. Josephus comments on the silence which typified their common life (though these orders did not abstain from speaking). Josephus describes the communities as existing in every town, with officers who were elected. He describes their daily ritual which was that of a disciplined community. There were prayers at dawn followed by manual work. At mid-day they assembled, and engaged in ablutions prior to a meal which was preceded and concluded with prayers. They then engaged in manual labour until the evening. Josephus describes the process of candidacy in which there was a probationary period of one year after which proof of good character qualified the candidate for closer acquaintance with the rule. After two further years there was an admission at which oaths were sworn before the sharing of the food. They swore not to share the secrets of the community, to transmit what they had received with utmost accuracy, and to preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels. They accepted the ‘powers that be’ as ordained by God (cf. Rom. 13.1), avoided oaths (cf. Matt. 5.33–7) and manifested great interest in the writings of the ancients, as well as the medicinal properties of roots and stones. Some foretold the future. There was expulsion for serious crimes, a decision taken by the assembled members. Josephus alludes to the problems of those who had severe problems after expulsion reorientating themselves to

lives in ordinary society. They observed the sabbath strictly and even in the practice of their ablutions respected the honour of God. They underwent terrible persecution during the First Revolt with enormous fortitude. That may be understandable given their attitude to life after death, for they regarded the soul as immortal and dwelling in a place beyond the ocean.

The Essenes have been the subject of renewed interest ever since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Judaean desert just after the Second World War.²³ Josephus, in *War* 2.119ff., portrays a closed society with strict rules of admission and conduct and prophetic power (*War* 2.159). There has been much debate since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the excavation of the buildings, which are closely linked with the Scrolls, as to whether in fact the writings are the products of an Essene sect and should be identified with the Essenes mentioned by Josephus, Philo and the Roman writer Pliny.²⁴ The problem is that the Dead Sea Scrolls never use the word 'Essene' to describe the group. There are strong arguments in favour of seeing the Qumran community as Essene: the location; the similarity in organization and doctrine, including common meals, bathing, regulations for assembly, entry procedures, sabbath rules. On the other hand, the Dead Sea Scrolls do not always assume common ownership of property or celibacy. While the similarities between what Josephus has to say and the information from the Scrolls themselves make an identification of the Qumran community as Essene most probable, we should not ignore the significant priestly strand within the Scrolls.²⁵ There are questions which have been raised about the appropriateness of linking all the texts found in the vicinity of Qumran with the beliefs and practices of one Jewish group. What the Dead Sea Scrolls have offered the student of first-century CE Judaism, above all, is a glimpse of another form of Jewish piety, which has links with other groups,²⁶ but had an extremely hostile attitude towards other Jews and, we may presume, succeeded in existing under the umbrella of Judaism throughout the first century CE.

The origins of the community remain obscure, though there are many tantalizing hints in the Scrolls themselves about the reasons which led to the group's formation. Apart from several passages in the biblical commentaries, which refer to significant events in the group's history, we have a passage in the Damascus Document (*CD* 1), which speaks about the foundation of the community 390 years after the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. For twenty years, we are told, they were groping for the right way and then the Teacher of Righteousness appeared and guided them. The archaeological evidence indicates that the community settlement was built in the second half of the second century BCE. A date in the first part of the second century BCE would fit in with the growing reaction to the explicit Hellenization, which was taking place in Palestinian Judaism, culminating in the armed reaction against Antiochus Epiphanes recorded

in 1 Maccabees and the book of Daniel, and the rise of the *Hasidim* (1 Macc. 2.42–3).

In the accounts of the Essenes and their activities set out in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the description of their beliefs in the writings of Josephus, we find a description of communities (there is some difference of emphasis between the separatists of 1 *QS* and the slightly less strict regimen in *CD*) with a strong sense of their own identity and with a strict organization. There was a stern probationary period and an elaborate initiation process. If the Scrolls are anything to go by, the organization was hierarchical (*War* 2.134; 1 *QS* 6.26), and the slightest transgression against authority brought about the direst penalties (1 *QS* 7). Holiness was a characteristic of the community, and this affected their view of themselves. It was precisely because they were a well-ordered community reflecting the order of heaven (1 *QS* 2) that they could be an enclave of divine holiness and share the lot of the angels (1 *QS* 11; 1 *QH* 3.20f., 11.10f.).²⁷ The priests were important in the community and had the leading role in the organization and administration (1 *QS* 9). Specifically, mention is made of an overseer, who was to be a student of the Torah and who instructed the community (1 *QS* 6). Alongside him there was a priest who exercised all priestly duties in the community (*CD* 13; 1 *QS* 6).

Entry into the community was seen as the participation in a new covenant (1 *QS* 1, 5, 6; *CD* 15f.). It was the conviction of the community of the Scrolls that they were the faithful remnant of Israel and part of a new covenant (1 *QpHab.* 2.3). God had revealed his wisdom to the Teacher of Righteousness and only he knew what was the true will of God. All those who entered the sect had to act in accordance with all that had been revealed of it to the sons of Zadok (1 *QS* 5). There was a long novitiate with many tests before it was possible for the initiate to enjoy full participation in the life of the community (*War* 2.137–9; 1 *QS* 1.18–2.10; 5.7–11; 6.18–23, an anticipation of thorough preparation for Christian initiation in the catechumentate). There was purification by water (*CD* 10.10–13; 1 *QM* 14.2–3; 1 *QS* 3.4–5; cf. *CD* 3). Members saw themselves as children of light, specially chosen by God (1 *QS* 3). That is not to suggest that there was any unthinking feeling of superiority. Throughout the hymns there is a profound understanding of dependence on God's mercy, which has many affinities with the Pauline understanding of righteousness by faith alone (1 *QH* 19.7; 1 *QS* 11).²⁸

In their calendrical observances the sectaries conflicted with the majority practices in Judaism by their observance of a solar calendar (4 *Q320–30*). This led to a significant disjunction between their own observance of festivals and sabbaths and that of other Jews.²⁹ Ritual washing was practised in the community (*CD* 11; *War* 2.129–32). There was a hostile attitude to those who managed the Temple in Jerusalem, because it was believed that it had been run by wicked priests. The Qumran sectaries were not opposed to the Temple but wished to see the establishment of proper cultic worship,

according to the appropriate calendar (*CD* 6, 11) and looked forward to that in the messianic age (1 *QM* 2.5–6). In place of the regular cultic participation we find the same kind of spiritualizing of cultic language as is to be seen in the New Testament (Rom. 12.1; 1 Cor. 3.16; for example, 1 *QS* 8f.).³⁰ As in other Jewish groups, the meal seems to have played a most important part, and a close link seems to have existed between the common meal regularly celebrated and the messianic banquet (1 *QSa.*; 1 *QS* 6.2–5; 7.24–5).

The War Scroll indicates a heightened eschatological expectation.³¹ This document describes the detailed preparations required of the sons of light in their struggle with the sons of darkness. It breathes a fanatical conviction that, however much the odds may have been stacked against them, the legions of angels would come to the aid of the righteous as they struggled with the forces of darkness (1 *QM* 15.14). The First Revolt also saw the end of the Essenes (cf. *War* 2.152). The archaeological evidence suggests that they possibly perished at the hands of the Romans, perhaps attempting to put into practice preparations outlined in the War Scroll.

The Scrolls offer us evidence of a community separate from the rest of Israel in the Judean desert. Due account must be taken of the possibility that its views were entirely eccentric. We should not forget, however, that Josephus tells us that Essenes were to be found in towns (*War* 2.124; cf. 2.160), and it is unlikely that we are dealing with a *totally* aberrant approach to the traditions of Judaism in these documents. What these documents have indicated is that the world of Judaism in the first century was complex, in which a variety of different interpretations of the Jewish heritage were being explored and tested in everyday life.³²

(e) Christianity in the Context of Second Temple Judaism³³

Although care is needed in placing too much weight on the evidence of Acts, there are hints that from an early stage there were differences of opinion about the Christians (Acts 5.37; 23.2). The issue concerned less their theology and more the socially disruptive character of their activity (Acts 4.15–17). Early Christians were faced with a variety of synagogues and Jewish groups with varying degrees of contact with Jerusalem, and varied outlooks on the nature of religious observance. So while Acts suggests that attempts may have been made by the High Priest or Sanhedrin to take action against Christians in Damascus (Acts 9.2), the extent to which it was possible at this stage to enforce any kind of unified action must have been limited. Paul was able to make use of obvious doctrinal differences between Pharisees and Sadducees in his trial, as recorded in Acts 23.6.

The earliest Christian sources do not suggest that they often made exclusive claims for themselves being the 'New Israel' replacing the old.³⁴ Their

situation was different from that of Justin in the second century. Of course, we find some extremely polemical remarks against non-believing Jews, but more often than not these passages occur in situations of extreme conflict when the messianic salvation is at stake (e.g., 2 Cor. 3; Gal. 3–4; 1 Thess. 2.15). This is particularly true of a letter like Galatians. But we have to remember that in Galatians, Paul is not arguing with Jews but persuading those who are already Christians that their way to God is adequate in itself without recourse to certain rites. The issue which so concerns Paul is the *means* whereby that end is achieved by *Gentiles* now that the Messiah has come. To understand Paul's indictment of Judaism and his description of it as an inferior religion (e.g., Gal. 4) one must see it in the context of his eschatological perspective and the crisis which confronted him. The practices hitherto undertaken by Jews were part of a past aeon and were themselves pointing towards a greater purpose of God which had now been revealed in Christ. Such an attitude of messianic superiority, of course, left its legacy and contributed to the increasing polarization.

In 1 Thessalonians 2.16 Paul also writes in frighteningly condemnatory tones about non-believing Jews, whereas in Romans 9–11 the question of Jewish rejection of the gospel is agonized over with considerable courage and, in the end, a considerable degree of optimism. The picture that Paul leaves us with in these chapters is of one whose messianic beliefs have led him to a position which differs significantly from that of many of his Jewish contemporaries, with the result that their rejection of his cherished convictions about the fulfilment of Jewish hopes is a matter of personal sorrow and distress. Nevertheless, the debt to the Jewish heritage is so large (look at the way Scripture functions in the argument) and the centrality of the promises made to the Jewish nation so immovable that it is impossible for Paul to conceive of a situation where God finally casts off Jews (Rom. 11.25ff.). While in the eyes of some of his Jewish contemporaries Paul may be regarded as a Jewish heretic, his position within the spectrum of Judaism is a more extreme form of the various interpretations of the Bible, which were current at the time. Paul did not reject the validity of the Law (Rom. 7.12). Unlike the Christians of the second century,³⁵ Marcion in particular, Paul does not loosen the bonds which link the new covenant with the old. For him the God of ancestors is the God of Jesus of Nazareth and those who put their faith in him as the Messiah. What is more, the Law is not the product of some inferior deity but is the institution of a previous dispensation in the divine economy (cf. Gal. 4.9). Its subordinate position, since the coming of Christ, is the result of its links with that old dispensation. Its role now was to point forward to the completion of God's purposes.

Paul may have represented an extreme form of interpretation of Jewish traditions; so extreme, in fact, that he put himself and his churches beyond the boundaries of Judaism. But we need to ask whether it was possible to say

with any degree of certainty that a particular individual or group had placed themselves outside these boundaries.³⁶

What was the test to be which would separate Paul from his contemporaries? Acknowledgement of the validity of the Law? Observance of the Law (which seems to be the test laid on Paul according to Acts 21.23)? Denial of the messiahship of Jesus? Denial and/or acceptance of particular doctrines? While it may be true that in particular instances Paul deviates quite widely from beliefs held by certain Jewish groups in the first century (note Acts 21.2ff.; 21.28), the question is whether deviation by itself, however marked it may have been, was enough to deny the position of Paul and his circle within Judaism. After all, Paul could with some conviction argue that he upheld the validity of the Law, that he observed the Law, particularly if that was understood as the Law of the Spirit which, in Paul's view, had replaced the written code (Rom. 8.2f.), and that his doctrines only differed from a group, like the Pharisees, in that he believed that particular Scriptures *had actually been fulfilled* rather than merely being articles of faith.

There were norms by which it was possible to distinguish the Jew from the non-Jew.³⁷ One thinks immediately of sabbath observance and a rite like circumcision, both of which helped to identify the Jew outside Palestine. In addition, of course, food-laws and the whole apparatus of purity, however that may have been interpreted, distinguished Jews from the surrounding populace.³⁸ While in the early stages of the Christian movement Jews and Gentile Christians would have appeared outwardly homogeneous to their pagan neighbours, the evidence of the Pauline letters suggests that there was very soon a separate Christian identity in many places as the result of separate meetings, and an increasingly distinctive ideology for the Christian group, typified by a rather different attitude to the Law of Moses. There may have been rival meetings (Rev. 2.9), though this would have been regarded as the usual kind of internal Jewish strife (Acts 18.14f.). The Roman writer Pliny seems to have been able to make a distinction between Jews and Christians in his letter to Trajan (*Letters*, x.96f. c. 112 CE),³⁹ but in the absence of obvious differences in practice or Jewish hostility (e.g., the early Christian text *Mart. Polycarp* 13) differentiation between Jews and Christians would not have been easy. Christians' reputation for the repudiation of idolatry and aloofness from society put them, as far as outsiders were concerned, in the same category as Jews. It is possible that some Christians may have continued to observe the sabbath,⁴⁰ and scruples with regard to food were not immediately abandoned (Acts 15.20; 1 Cor. 8). The curious passage in Matthew 17.24ff. suggests that those who took Jesus' advice seriously might have continued to pay the Temple Tax after 70 when it had become the *fiscus judaicus*. In circumstances where Christians continued to pay the tax, it would have been more difficult to distinguish Jew and Christian.

Belief that the Messiah had already arrived was probably a disturbing

belief for those with the responsibility of maintaining order and social cohesion. It was not eccentric as a belief. Indeed, it was none other than the great standard-bearer of early rabbinic Judaism, R. Akiba, who himself hailed Simeon Ben Koseba as the Messiah, 'the star of Jacob' (Bar Kochba) (*ḡTa'anith* 68d).⁴¹ Christian eschatological belief seems to have been entirely consistent with that held by other Jewish groups. The problem was that they claimed that the beliefs were being fulfilled, and the *practical* consequences some Christians drew from this. The early Christians were not merely suggesting that they had an alternative explanation of the *halakah* (though they were at times suggesting this, e.g., Acts 10–11), but that the perspective, from which they viewed the traditions as a whole was the conviction that eschatological promises were being fulfilled. Thus the challenge posed by the Christian group did not relate merely to specific issues but to the whole gamut of religious and social life. In this regard, the comparisons with later messianic movements in Judaism are most interesting.⁴²

The messianic/apocalyptic character of Christianity by itself did not mean that a split with other Jewish groups, who rejected the Christian beliefs, was inevitable. The reactions of some of Akiba's contemporaries to his support for the messianic claims of Bar Kochba, while very derogatory, do not necessarily imply that such support would have led to exclusion. In this respect the reaction of Gamaliel, as recorded in Acts 5.35ff., is not dissimilar. The test of the authenticity of messianic movements of any kind, despite their disruptive qualities is, in Gamaliel's view, whether they stand the test of time. Like the test of prophecy in Deuteronomy 13, the validity of such claims depended on whether they actually were fulfilled. Provided that a movement did not attempt to lead people to worship other gods, then it would have to be lived with and tested by its fruits. The condemnations of Jesus in Mark 3.22 and John 8.48 point in this direction, however, and the hostility towards Paul as the result of his attitude to the Law of Moses may well reflect the belief of some that the followers of Jesus were involved in a deception which would ultimately lead Israel astray (John 7.47; cf. *bSanbedrin* 43a).⁴³

For a time it may have been possible for Christians to coexist with other groups. The behaviour of Paul and his circle in relaxing some of the ancestral laws as necessary entry requirements and the emergence of separate communities put pressure on the Jerusalem church – hence James' pressure on Paul in Galatians 2 and Acts 21. Life was not easy for the Christians in the environs of Jerusalem, particularly when information filtered back concerning the behaviour of the groups in other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean (1 Thess. 2.16; *Ant.* 20.199; Acts 21.21). Coexistence may have been possible for a short time only. Coexistence should not be mistaken for religious toleration, however. Our contemporary liberal concern to maintain pluriformity of views as an essential component of human experience is not the basis for the complex religious scene in first-century Judaism. The rise and persis-

tence of this particular messianic sect must be understood, in part, as the consequence of the absence of a strong central religious authority and generally accepted orthopraxy during the last years of the era of the Second Temple, particularly in the more religiously complex region of Judaea. What was decisive was the fact that the Pauline communities were separate from neighbouring Jewish communities from a very early time, with a separate, though outwardly similar practice (abstinence from idolatry, mutual aid, and distinctive rituals). The fears of those who expected messianism to be socially disruptive, therefore, were proved correct.⁴⁴

13

Diaspora Judaism

At least as early as the Exile, the Jewish people had to come to terms with the possibility of permanently dwelling in a land far removed from the holy land of Israel. In the words of the Psalmist, Jews had to learn to sing the Lord's song in a strange land (Ps. 137.4). The dramatic vision of the prophet Ezekiel of the glory of God enthroned on the cherubim-chariot marks a watershed in Jewish theology. God appeared to the prophet in all the glory associated with the Temple of Jerusalem in a pagan land, Babylon by the river Chebar (Ezek. 1). The Second Temple still had to be built, and the next time when the Jews would be without a Temple was 600 years away, but the vision of the prophet paved the way for a Jewish theology which allowed for the possibility of acknowledging the presence of God through worship and study outside the land of Israel. From the time of the Exile onwards (sixth century BCE), there continued to be a large Jewish community in Babylon, about which we hear occasionally.¹ In time, Jews were to be found scattered all around the eastern Mediterranean. The prophet Obadiah speaks of Jewish communities in Asia Minor (v.20, cf. Isa. 66.19) and Josephus tells us of Jewish immigrants from Babylonia into Phrygia and Lydia at the end of the third century BCE (*Ant.* 12.147f.). From the papyri discovered at Elephantine we know of the existence of a Jewish military garrison which maintained close links with Jerusalem and manifested a significant degree of variation in its beliefs and cultic practice.²

After the conquests of Alexander the Great, Jews had to come to terms with a pervasive Hellenism.³ These presented themselves in the establishment of the city (*polis*)⁴ as the social unit with its considerable degree of

political and economic autonomy and the communal ideal fostered by common principles and divinities. The acceptance of Hellenistic culture enabled the inhabitants of the *polis* to become part of a much larger world. In addition to acquiring a knowledge of Greek literature, it meant accepting the conventional pattern of education⁵ and religious practices. Full integration into the life of the *polis* meant acceptance of its gods, unthinkable for a Jew brought up on worship of the one true God and the repudiation of idolatry (e.g., *Wisd.* 13.17ff., 15.7ff.). Jewish refusal to worship local gods angered pagans (*C. Ap.* 2.63). Thus total involvement in the *polis* was normally impossible for Jews, unless they repudiated their religion (as was the case, for example, of Philo's nephew, T. Julius Alexander), though inscriptional evidence suggests that there might have been significant involvement of some Jews in the lives of their cities. There was mixing with pagans, therefore (*Life* 16; *Jub.* 30.7; 14–17; *Tobit* 4.12), but also evidence of exclusivism (*Histories* 5.5.2).

There was considerable contact between the Jews in the Diaspora and Jerusalem, a bond which was reinforced by the regular contribution of the half-shekel Temple tax (*Embassy* 156; *Ant.* 14.110; 18.312f.; Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.67–8; Dio Cassius, *History* 66.7.2), which after the destruction of the Temple was diverted to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome (*War* 7.216f.; Dio Cassius, *History* 66.7). Huge crowds came from all over the Roman world to participate in the major pilgrim festivals in Jerusalem (*War* 6.422f.; *Acts* 2).⁶

Devotion to the Temple in Jerusalem was not uniform throughout all the Jewish communities. Daily prayers were said at home coinciding with the morning and evening sacrifice (*Ant.* 4.212). Study of the Law of Moses became a regular feature of life (*C. Ap.* 2.175), the inspiration for which might have been the regular reading prescribed in Deuteronomy 31.10. We know from Josephus (*War* 1.33; *Ant.* 13.62ff.; 12.38; *Isa.* 19.18, LXX) that Onias, a priestly refugee from Jerusalem, received permission to build a Temple at Leontopolis, modelled on the Temple in Jerusalem.⁷ Philo has nothing to say about this Temple in Egypt, but it may well have been a focus for popular devotion among the lower classes in Egyptian Jewry, as well as an alternative shrine for Zadokite priesthood. It was considered to be of sufficient importance as a potential focus of revolt after 70 CE that it was closed down by the Romans some years later (*War* 7.421ff.).

There were large Jewish communities in all the major cities, but by far the largest was in Alexandria, which had a considerable degree of autonomy.⁸ Indeed, according to Philo, the Jewish population of North Africa numbered about one million (*Against Flaccus*, 43; cf. *Embassy* 281). Jews in the Diaspora enjoyed many privileges.⁹ Judaism was respected (*Tertullian Apol.* 21; *Embassy* 155ff.) and was normally treated well by Greek and Roman authorities (*Ant.* 14.306ff.; 16.160ff.). Jewish scruples were respected (*Ant.* 13.251;

14.215–23, 264; 16.27ff.; 16.162; 12.119; *Embassy* 311) and they were excused participation in the imperial cult (cf. *Ant.* 19.284ff., 303f.).¹⁰ It would appear that in the first century BCE some Jews held Roman citizenship (*Ant.* 14.228, 234ff.; Acts 22.27). It is uncertain whether Jews became citizens of the various cities in which they dwelt (cf. *Ant.* 12.119). Josephus suggests that Jews possessed equal rights with their neighbours, though doubts have been cast on the precision of Josephus' discussion of the matter (*C. Ap.* 2.38ff.; *Ant.* 19.281ff.; 14.188; *War* 7.44; *Ant.* 12.119; 16.160). Evidence from Claudius' letter to the Jews of Alexandria would suggest that Alexandrian Jews did not enjoy citizenship rights there (*Ant.* 19.280ff.), though that should not lead us to overlook the rights which were granted to Jews from time to time to organize their religious activities with a great degree of freedom.¹¹ They administered their own funds and settled their own religious affairs (*Embassy* 156; *Ant.* 16.162). Among the privileges that were accorded to them were: rights of assembly (*Ant.* 14.214–16, 227, 235, 257, 260); freedom to keep the sabbath (*Ant.* 14.226, 242, 245, 258, 263); ability to eat their ancestral food (*Ant.* 14.226, 245, 261); deciding their own affairs (*Ant.* 14. 235, 260); and contributing money (*Ant.* 14.227, 241). Some Jews may have aspired to and actually achieved citizenship of their city, particularly among those Jews who had accommodated themselves to a considerable degree to the Hellenistic mores (1 Macc. 1.11–14).¹² More often than not, however, the basic conflict which existed between the demands of citizenship and the practice of the Jewish religion meant that Jews were quite content with the privileges granted to them to practise their religion.¹³ It would appear from Josephus (*Ant.* 14.117) that the Jewish ethnarch in Alexandria had considerable powers to supervise aspects of religious and commercial law as well as settle internal disputes within the community. Titus confirmed the privileges of the Jews in Antioch, even after the costly war which had recently been pursued by the Romans against the Jews in Judaea (*War* 7.110; *Ant.* 12.121). The influence of the Jews of Alexandria is seen in the fact that they had the ability to send a delegation to the emperor himself, about which Philo reports in his *Embassy to Gaius*.

In his report about the Jewish community in Sardis, Josephus tells us about the important place which that community had within the life of the city (*Ant.* 14.235, 259ff.). It had a distinct quarter of its own, with rights to import necessary food supplies, thus guaranteeing a certain degree of control on the requisites for obedience to the Law.¹⁴ It also had its own courts and was guaranteed the freedom to send the half-shekel Temple tax to Jerusalem (*Ant.* 16.27 ff.). In addition, archaeological remains indicate that there was a close link between the Jewish synagogue and the gymnasium, suggesting that there was probably a considerable degree of intercourse between Jews and the culture disseminated by such organizations.¹⁵ What is more, Jews were under no obligation to enter Roman military service, which would have

necessarily involved them in many religious acts which would have been incompatible with the practice of their religion (*Ant.* 14.228). Such rights did not meet with universal acceptance, however.¹⁶ Titus was put under some pressure to dispense with Jewish rights in Alexandria after the First Revolt, a situation which was paralleled in Antioch (*Ant.* 12.123f.; *War* 7.110). Yet despite this hostility and the setbacks to Judaism after two revolts, all the evidence suggests that in the earlier Christian era Jewish practice went on unhindered and in some places flourished.¹⁷ There were isolated incidents, when local Roman officials embarked on violent action against the Jews, such as the incident recorded by Josephus in *War* 7.445f. Here Catullus, governor of Libya, moved against the leading Jews of Cyrene after the false declaration of one Jonathan that he had been incited to revolt by them. Even though the charge, according to Josephus, was shown to be false, we are told that 3,000 of the leading Jews of the area were put to the sword and their property was confiscated. Unwillingness to be embroiled in seditious activities of any kind might have had much to do with the decision of the *gerousia* in Alexandria to hand over fellow-Jews, who were also *sicarii*, to the authorities after the fall of Jerusalem (*War* 7.407ff.).

Jews in the Greek-speaking Diaspora found themselves in need of a version of the Jewish Scriptures in the language, which most of them spoke. Hebrew became less and less common as the language of Jews outside Palestine. According to Jewish legend in *The Letter of Aristeas*, the response to the presence of large numbers of Jews in Egypt (*Ant.* 12.11ff.) was the commissioning by Ptolemy Philadelphus of 72 translators to translate the Hebrew law for his library at Alexandria, hence its title the Septuagint (LXX).¹⁸ The completion of the translation of the books of the Hebrew Bible is the result of many hands over many decades. Its style bears all the hallmarks of the original Hebrew, with several distinctive expressions, which indicate the attempt by the translators to keep as close as possible to the Hebrew original. Yet the changed world of the translators does make its mark in some of the translations. Already we see one of the characteristics of the good translation: interpretation rather than merely the pedantic literalism (e.g., in Gen. 1.1 the Hebrew *tohu wabohu* is translated *aoratos kai akataskeuastos*, 'invisible and shapeless').¹⁹

Other writings in Greek gained authoritative status. In addition to the apocryphal books, which form part of the LXX (e.g., Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, 1 Esdras and the Maccabean literature, 1 and 2 Maccabees) there was a reordering²⁰ as compared with the Hebrew Bible. In the latter the last part of the canon is taken up with the Writings: Psalms, Job, other Wisdom literature, the Megilloth (Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes), Daniel and the books of Chronicles. In the former the order finishes with the Latter Prophets as does the Christian Bible, though we must note that we have to rely on versions of the LXX written by Christian scribes.²¹

The textual relationship between the LXX and the Hebrew Bible is complex (some of the Hebrew manuscripts from Qumran coincide with the text and tradition of the LXX). There are many occasions where there are significant differences between the two (e.g., in the books of Kings²² and in Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah; cf. 1 Esdras²³). The discovery of biblical manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls has given renewed impetus to the discussion of the history of the biblical text. The Hebrew version used by us (the Massoretic Text: so called because it is the product of Jewish interpreters, the Massorettes, working between the sixth and tenth centuries) is in its present form much later as a recension than the manuscripts of the LXX available to us and the texts available to us from among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which have enabled us to have access to Hebrew texts written almost 1,000 years before 1947.

The LXX became the Bible of the nascent Christian community. Throughout the New Testament, we find apologetic and polemic based on this translation, indeed dependent on its version rather than that of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Acts 15.16f.; Matt. 1.23), though it is possible that early Christian writers were aware of other versions of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., *targumim*).²⁴

We know all too little of the Jewish theology of the Diaspora. Because of its volume it is tempting to suppose that the work of Philo is typical of Jewish thought, but it cannot be assumed that this was typical of Alexandrian Jewish theology, despite the influence on the emerging Christian theology in subsequent centuries. Such hints as are available to us about Judaism in Asia Minor suggest that it was quite different from what we find in the writings of Philo. Attempts to ascertain the background of New Testament documents like the letter to the Colossians have succeeded in offering an outline of Jewish thought in the area.²⁵ Equally, we may not suppose that Philo's thought represents the full range of Jewish theology in Egypt. Other Egyptian documents like the Wisdom of Solomon,²⁶ the Sibylline Oracles,²⁷ Joseph and Asenath²⁸ and Slavonic Enoch²⁹ indicate a considerably less sophisticated and philosophical approach than what we find in Philo.

The writings of Philo of Alexandria³⁰ give us some insight into the way in which this part of Diaspora Jewry in the first century dealt with its ancestral traditions.³¹ In the extant writings we find an allegorical exegesis of the Pentateuch in which the contemporary insights of popular philosophy heavily influenced by Platonism have their part to play. Philo was a Jew from the highest echelons of society in Alexandria. His interpretations of the laws of the Pentateuch indicate an extremely inventive mind with a penchant for extracting the ultimate nuance and meaning from the text, a characteristic he shares with some later rabbinic commentators.

Fundamental to Philo's theology is the distinction between matter of which this world is made and the immaterial world, to which God belongs.

God is utterly self-sufficient and is in no way to be identified with the world: 'God is the one who is greater than the good . . . purer than the one, and apprehensible to God alone' (*Rewards* 40). Only good, therefore, can come from God, whereas evil things are human responsibility (*Fug.* 79). The absoluteness of God's divinity and God's utter transcendence are guarded by a series of mediatorial figures, most important of which is the Logos (*Cher.* 27f.; *Confus. Ling.* 171f.; *Quest. Ex.* 2.64ff.). Philo's Logos doctrine shows many affinities with Stoic ideas.³² Another significant component to Philo's Logos doctrine is the Wisdom tradition of Judaism, in which personified wisdom is described as a creative and active attribute of God mediating the divine will in creation (cf. *Confus. Ling.* 146f.). The various emanations which separate God from the creation descend in order, so that the last emanation, the *kosmos noetos* (the world of ideas) forms the pattern for the created world (cf. *Confus. Ling.* 171f.).

In the creation of the world unformed matter was given form, according to the ideal plan for the universe (*Creation* 18, 20, 25). The Logos uses this pattern for the creation of the world. The distinction between the real world of flesh and blood, of change and decay, and the ideal world is best seen in the account of the creation of humanity in *Leg. Alleg.* 1.31. Here the two accounts of human creation in Genesis are taken as indications of the type and antetype, the heavenly and the earthly. The 'man' of Genesis 1.26 is the one corresponding to the divine world, whereas the 'man' whose creation is recounted in Genesis 2 is the 'man' of flesh and blood. In *Creation* the creation of 'man', the one who chose evil, is not attributed to God alone (para. 72), an indication that an attempt is made to shield God from evil.³³

In view of the fact that the created world reflects the pattern of heavenly realities it is the law of nature which is supreme and not the human law (*Spec. Laws* 1.33f.). Human laws cannot be relied upon, except insofar as they are attempts to copy the reflection of heavenly realities to be found in natural law. The Laws of the Torah were concrete applications of the general principles of law expressed in the Decalogue, which in turn were manifestations of the primary Greek virtues.

It is human destiny to reach beyond the sensible world to the unseen world of God. Humanity is a mixture of the soul and the body (*Cher.* 113f.). The ultimate hope is that the soul would be able to have communion with the eternal world to which it truly belonged. The significance of the biblical narratives for Philo was that, properly understood, they offered the key to the human search for their true destiny (cf. *Pirke Aboth* 3.1). The truth about reality was to be found in these ancient stories which were contained in the Torah. This was why the Torah was so important; it contained within it the route of the soul back to the eternal world. Abraham's journey, for example, from his home in Ur is the story of the movement away from a concentration on material things towards the eternal. His union with Sarah is seen as a

union with virtue, which is preceded by intercourse with Hagar as the use of introductory studies of the material world (*Leg. Alleg.* 3.244; *Congr.* 81, 88). When three angels came to visit Abraham at Mamre (*Abr.* 119ff.), it is a revelation of God and the divine powers. Moses' imprisonment in the ark of bulrushes and his weeping speak of the imprisoned soul yearning for the immaterial. Moses has to have Aaron to speak for him, because he is the Logos, and the divine Logos needs some kind of mediation with the material world (*Migr.* 78f.). The flight from Egypt is seen as the flight of the soul from the material world (*Post.* 155). Moses is the one who can save humans by leading them out of the sensible world to an apprehension of God (*Gig.* 54f.).

The Torah, therefore, provides the means of ascertaining how to gain communion with that eternal world. Humanity needs virtue as a way of existing (*Post.* 132–57), and this has two sides: the theoretical (communion with the eternal) and the practical (human relationships) (*Leg. Alleg.* 1.56–8). The practical and the theoretical sides of human existence are well illustrated by his treatment of circumcision, where the benefits of the rite from a practical as well as a spiritual point of view are brought out (*Spec. Laws* 1.2–12).

Philo was not just an eccentric mystic, concerned solely with escape from the real world.³⁴ He was well connected in Alexandrian society. Indeed, his nephew was T. Julius Alexander, an apostate Jew, who was Roman governor of Judaea and later prefect of Egypt. Philo's political concerns are particularly evident in his account of the embassy to the Emperor Gaius (cf. *Ant.* 18.259),³⁵ and the representations made concerning Gaius' abortive attempt to introduce a statue of himself into the Temple in Jerusalem. The *Embassy to Gaius* is a work of importance for our understanding of the delicate balance of relations between Jews and pagans in Egypt, and the extent to which official hostility against the Jews could lead to local anti-Jewish acts (e.g., *Embassy* 132). It also indicates the various ways in which Romans have lent their support to Jews (*Embassy* 276f.) and the respect which Judaism shows to the emperor despite its unwillingness to participate in the cult (*Embassy* 157). A similar apologetic motive can be discerned in the work *Against Flaccus*, which catalogues the infamy of the prefect of Egypt, Flaccus, and his anti-Jewish activities.

The complexity of Philo's thought and the sophistication of his biblical interpretation make the summary of his thought in a small space an inadequate reflection of the place of this thinker in the gamut of Jewish thought. While Alexandrian Jewish theology as expressed by Philo may not have been typical of what was going on elsewhere in the synagogues of the Diaspora, one should not underestimate the contribution made to the history of religion by Philo and similar thinkers. The Christian theologians of Alexandria at the end of the second century onwards manifestly stand in a tradition which stems from Philo.³⁶ Between Philo and Clement and Origen there stand the early gnostic thinkers, about whom so little is known. The reason

for this may be that the early second-century form of the religion in Alexandria was gnostic in character.³⁷ The gnostic influences on Clement are evident, as also is the fact that Egypt has produced one of the foremost testimonies to gnostic religion in the Nag Hammadi library. Philo's own religion already has the seeds within it of some of the main features of gnostic religion.³⁸ We are still a considerable distance from the anti-Semitic gnostic systems of the mid-second century with their dualistic theologies. But the mediatorial dualistic system in Philo's work and the dualism born from the influence of Platonic philosophy are the seed-bed for those features which were to become so much part of the gnostic religion. The writings of Philo, therefore, not only point us to the vitality of the Jewish mind as it sought to commend its faith in a pagan environment, but also look forward to religious developments in both Christianity and gnosticism for which they were the precursor.³⁹

14

*The Expression of Hope*¹

(a) An Outline of Jewish Eschatology

For Jews the promise of a final vindication of the Jewish people and the establishment of a new order in which God's ways would prevail was a belief which had its roots in the covenant relationship itself (2 Sam. 7.8f.). We have already seen that one dimension of the covenant promise between God and the people had a future component. Thus the prophetic hopes concerning a righteous leader who would act as the agent of God in delivering the people (Isa. 11), many of which were themselves derived from the Davidic covenant promises (Ps. 89, 132; Psalms of Solomon 17; 1 *QSa.* 2; 1 *QS* 9.11), exercised their own influence on the imagination of the Jewish writers.

Two constant features of the eschatological expectation during this period are the conviction that before this age would come about, a period of severe distress, of political and cosmic disorder and upheaval, would have to be endured; and the belief that a new age of peace and justice would come *on earth*. The 'birth pangs' of the new age, or the messianic woes, are the series of disasters which had to precede the coming of God's kingdom.² We find the

belief in the New Testament in Mark 13.7ff. (and also in Rom. 8.19ff.; Rev. 6, 8 and 9, 16). These disasters included intensified human suffering through wars and natural disasters and disturbances which upset the normal pattern of planetary behaviour. The idea is hinted at briefly in Daniel 12.1 but is evident in the late second century BCE in Jubilees 23.11ff. Sometimes, as in Revelation, there is a fixed quota of messianic woes which has to be completed before the kingdom finally comes (e.g., Syr. Baruch 25ff.). In some texts this series of disasters is regarded as itself part of the judgement of God (e.g., *Jub.* 23) but there is no mention made of a final assize. By means of these events the way is paved for the reign of God to come about; the disasters are the divinely ordained means of removing all that stands in the way of the fulfilment of the divine will in history (cf. *Ant.* 20.166).

Belief in the coming of a new age of peace and justice is firmly rooted in the Scriptures (e.g., Isa. 11; Ezek. 40ff.; Zech. 8.20ff., 9–14). Passages like Isaiah 11 continued to exercise an important influence (e.g., in texts like the Psalms of Solomon and Rev. 19.11ff.). In our earliest texts the detailed character of the new age is hardly described. All we have in the book of Daniel, for example, is the conviction that an everlasting kingdom would be established on earth in succession to the world empires which could not be destroyed, when the saints would reign (Dan. 2.44; 7.27). This would involve judgement on the nations of the world (7.10f.) and would be preceded by a time of distress (12.1). In the earliest parts of 1 Enoch (which probably antedate Daniel in its present form) we find general predictions concerning the renewal of creation, where the flood in the time of Noah has become a type of the destruction and renewal to be undergone in the last days (1 Enoch 10.17). A much longer eschatological passage is to be found in 1 Enoch 85–90, in which the different persons are represented by animals and birds (hence its name, the Animal Apocalypse). This takes the form of a history of the world from creation to the new age. The latter is said to take place soon after the Maccabean period. The rise of the *Hasidim* at the beginning of the second century BCE is seen as the prelude to a rise of hostile powers against Israel (1 Enoch 90.13; cf. *Sib. Or.* 3.663ff.) followed by the triumph of the people of God. Judgement takes place and then the restoration of Zion with the righteous dwelling at peace in the land (cf. Matt. 5.5) and the nations of the world acknowledging the dominion of Israel (1 Enoch 90.30ff.). Afterwards the world is transformed into the perfection, which God originally planned (90.37f.; cf. *Jub.* 23.11ff.; *Sib. Or.* 3.698ff.) and finally the Messiah emerges from the community.

In the Apocalypse of Weeks,³ which probably dates from a slightly later period, probably round about the end of the second century BCE, we have an outline of the history of the world using periods of weeks as an eschatological template. As in almost all eschatological passages from Jewish and early Christian literature, the hope for the future is centred on this world, albeit

one which has been purged of those elements which have rendered it unsuitable for God (1 Enoch 93.9f.; 91.12ff.).

A this-worldly eschatology is also evident in *Jub.* 1.23ff. and 23.11ff. Once again we find that a deterioration in the human condition precedes the coming of a time of great happiness, when there is a return to a study of the Law and to the pattern of existence as it was at the beginning of creation. Similarly, in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch we find an emphasis on the renewal of the world. The messianic woes are followed by the revelation of the Messiah and the establishment of God's reign on earth, when Behemoth and Leviathan will be food for those who are left (29.3ff.). This time will be marked by periods of great plenty. Here we find, as in 4 Ezra 29f., that the reign of the Messiah will be temporary; his departure is followed by the judgement. This passage is typical of eschatological beliefs around the beginning of the Christian era and includes a periodization of the disasters much as in the book of Revelation in the New Testament:

When stupor shall seize the inhabitants of the earth, and they shall fall into many tribulations, and again when they shall fall into great torments. And it will come to pass when they say in their thoughts by reason of their much tribulation: The Mighty One doth no longer remember the earth – yes, it will come to pass when they abandon hope, that the time will then awake . . . Into twelve parts is that time divided, and each one of them is reserved for that which is appointed for it. In the first part there shall be the beginning of commotions. And in the second part there shall be slayings of the great ones. And in the third part the fall of many by death. And in the fourth part the sending of the sword. And in the fifth part famine and the withholding of rain. And in the sixth part earthquakes and terrors . . . And it shall come to pass in those parts that the Messiah shall then begin to be revealed. And Behemoth shall be revealed from his place and Leviathan shall ascend from the sea, those two great monsters which I created on the fifth day of creation, and shall have kept until that time; and then there shall be food for all that are left. The earth shall yield its fruit ten thousand fold and on each vine there shall be a thousand branches . . . And those who have hungered shall rejoice: moreover, also they shall behold marvels every day. For winds shall go forth from before me to bring every morning the fragrance of aromatic fruits, and at the close of the day clouds distilling dews of health. And it shall come to pass that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they shall eat of it in those years, because these are they who have come to the consummation of time. (Syr. Baruch 24–30)

A periodization of the future age with a temporary messianic kingdom followed by the resurrection and another age seems to have emerged at the end of the first century CE. It is familiar to us from the book of Revelation,

where the millennium marks the climax of the eschatological woes and the judgement on the beast and Babylon but is in its turn followed by the judgement, resurrection and the coming of a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21–22; cf. Isa. 65.17; 2 Pet. 3.13; Isa. 66.22). A similar scheme is to be found in 4 Ezra 7.26ff. Ezra is told of the revelation of the new Jerusalem which ushers in a period of bliss of 400 years. After the death of the Messiah the world returns to primeval silence for seven days (4 Ezra 7.30), and then there are the resurrection and the last judgement, followed by vindication for the righteous and torment for the wicked (7.38). In this work we find an explicit distinction between two ages, e.g., 7.50: 'For this cause the Most High has made not one age but two' (cf. 6.7). Despite what is often asserted, references to a future world of a transcendent kind are by no means common in Jewish texts. A distinction is made, albeit implicitly, between the present imperfections and the glorious future, but a radical distinction between this age and the age to come is by no means common. Indeed, in the contemporary Syriac Baruch, only the expected contrast between the present world of travail and the glorious future is to be found (Syr. Baruch 15.7ff).⁴ Other visions in Syriac Baruch and 4 Ezra do not neglect the traditional eschatological pattern which we have already outlined. It is the imminent demise of the power of Rome which exercises the seer (e.g., 4 Ezra 11–12; Syr. Baruch 36; cf. Rev. 13, 17f.).

Some eschatological material is found in the writings of Philo and Josephus. The relative paucity of material in the writings of the latter is due in no small part to his suspicion of enthusiasm. Indeed, we find Josephus applying those very prophetic oracles, which had provided such a powerful incentive to revolt, to the Emperor Vespasian (*War* 6.312).⁵ Josephus sees the divine will fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem, much as the biblical prophets had seen the heathen nations as the agents of divine judgement (*Ant.* 20.166). Philo looks forward to a time when the people of God would assemble together in *eretz Israel* (*Rewards* 164) and the ruined places would be rebuilt. Indeed, the bliss sketched in Isaiah 11 seems to lie behind another passage in *Rewards* 89f., where the proper relationship of the created world with itself is outlined.

There are several texts which point to a universal salvation, a belief based on biblical texts (Isa. 11.10; 45.22ff.; 49.12; 59.9; Zech. 8.20ff.; Mal. 11.11; 1 Enoch 90.35; *Sib. Or.* 3.767f.; Matt. 8.11). The participation of the nations, either by subjugation or conquest, is mentioned (Sirach 36.1ff; *Jub.* 24.29; 1 Enoch 90.19; Psalms of Solomon 17, 24, 31; Assumption of Moses 10.7; *CD* 14.6; *Sib. Or.* 3.616, 670, 709–12, 772; *Rewards* 93–7, 164). The particularity of the salvation is never lost sight of, however. The twelve tribes will be gathered (Sirach 48.10; Baruch 4.37; 5.5; 2 Macc. 1.27f.; *Jub.* 1.15; Psalms of Solomon 8.34; 11.2; 17.28–31; *11 QT* 57.5). The centrality of the land of Israel with the life of the cult in Jerusalem at its centre is a

feature of some importance (1 Enoch 90.28f.; cf. 4 Ezra 7.26; Syr. Baruch 32.2; *Sib. Or.* 3.767f.).⁶ The Temple will be renewed (Tobit 13.16–18; 1.5; 1 Enoch 90.28; 91.13; *Jub.* 1.17; 11 *QT* 29.8–10; Psalms of Solomon 8.12; 17.30; *Sib. Or.* 3. 657–709; 5.420–5; *Rewards* 168). Purity and justice will characterize that new age (*Jub.* 33.11, 20; *Sib. Or.* 3.756–81; 1 *QM* 7.5; 11 *QT* 45.11–17; Psalms of Solomon 17.26) and obedience to the commandments (*Jub.* 23.26).⁷

Another dominant feature of many of the eschatological beliefs in our period is that of the general resurrection.⁸ By the first century CE resurrection had become so central to the beliefs of some groups, particularly the Pharisees, that it had become the touchstone of orthodoxy (*mSanhedrin* 10.1). The origins of the resurrection belief are obscure. The earliest unequivocal reference to the belief in the Bible is to be found in Daniel 12.2 (cf. Isa. 26.19; Job 19.25), though we may suspect that other biblical passages may have been interpreted in this way before.⁹ The belief enjoyed popularity among the Pharisees and it continued to be a subject of considerable controversy (Acts 23.6). Josephus seems to indicate that the Essenes believed in the immortality of the soul (*War* 2.154), but the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls (assuming them to be the product of Essenes) is ambiguous on this issue.¹⁰ Nevertheless, in the rabbinic literature and the apocalypses, the resurrection is an important component of the eschatological beliefs. Usually this belief takes the form of a general conviction, such as is found in Daniel 12.2, that the dead will be raised up, the righteous to eternal life and the impious to torments. Whether the resurrected were thought to be about to participate in a new life in this world or in some transcendent order is by no means clear. If the book of Revelation is anything to go by, both possibilities are reckoned with. Not only do those, who died for their witness to Jesus, participate in the millennium (Rev. 20.4; cf. 1 Cor. 6.2; Matt. 19.28), but subsequently there is a second resurrection and final judgement to ascertain who will participate in the life of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 20.12).

The uncertainty over the issue of who participated in the new age can be illustrated by reference to the problem which Paul finds himself confronting in 1 Thessalonians 4.13ff. Here the Christians are perplexed that some of their number had died before the age to come has arrived in all its fullness, and the question arises whether the dead would be able to participate in the life of that age. Paul answers by quoting a word of the Lord to the effect that those who were dead would precede those left behind (1 Thess. 4.15). In two late-first-century apocalypses, 4 Ezra and Syriac Baruch, the references to the resurrection from the dead are to be found *after* the description of the messianic kingdom on earth. Thus, in Syr. Baruch 25ff. (cf. 4 Ezra 7.26ff.) we find that the sequence of messianic woes is followed immediately by the messianic kingdom itself; nothing whatever is said about the righteous dead participating in that process. Only those who are fortunate enough to be

alive at the time will be able to benefit from the blessings of the new age (Syr. Baruch 29.3ff.). It is only after the Messiah has returned in glory (30.1) that the resurrection takes place and perdition comes for the wicked.

In some texts from a Hellenistic-Jewish milieu we find clear evidence of a belief in the immortality of the soul (e.g., Wisd. 3.1, cf. *Creation* 70; *Who is the Heir* 274).¹¹ Paul, the erstwhile Pharisee, countenances the possibility of some kind of existence with God at death (Phil. 1.23; 2 Cor. 5.1ff.). Even if it may be thought that the apostle to the Gentiles had come under the influence of Hellenistic ideas, the same cannot surely be said of the authors of Revelation 6.9, where we find reference to the souls of the martyrs crying out for vengeance from under the altar. If this passage and 2 Corinthians 5.1ff. are anything to go by, it seems that some Jewish eschatologies had already combined the notion of resurrection with a belief in immortality, particularly as a temporary existence in heaven for the righteous dead, while they awaited the final consummation. In the Testament of Abraham 10f., it is presupposed that judgement takes place at death; it is then that the destiny of each soul is decided.

Other Jewish texts indicate similar kinds of belief. In 1 Enoch 22, mention is made of different places for departed souls (cf. 4 Ezra 7.75ff.) and in later texts there seems to exist a belief that at death there would be a place for souls to exist (e.g. *Ant.* 18.14; Syr. Baruch 30.2; 4 Ezra 4.35; 7.32, 80, 95 and 101). In the Jewish-Christian apocalypse, the Ascension of Isaiah, which probably dates from the last part of the first century CE, we find the belief that the righteous dead have a place in the seventh heaven with God, awaiting the ascent of the Redeemer back to glory, before they can don their garments of glory (Ascension of Isaiah 9.8ff.). Texts like these make it difficult to draw a clear distinction between Palestinian texts uninfluenced by the Hellenistic belief in the immortality of the soul and the texts from Hellenistic Judaism where this doctrine is more prominent.¹²

(b) Messianic Belief¹³

Jewish beliefs about the Messiah have attracted a considerable amount of attention from commentators.¹⁴ The material concerning the Messiah, his activity and character is by no means large, whereas the outworking of the divine purposes in the future is widespread (*Sib. Or.* 3.708; Testament of Moses 10.7). Indeed, if we were to confine ourselves solely to those texts which mention the term 'Messiah' (*mashiah*, *christos*), we would have only a small number of texts to consider. The impression given by the New Testament that the word *christos* had become such a popular term to designate the eschatological agent of salvation is misleading. In the late-first-century CE apocalypses, Syr. Baruch and 4 Ezra, we find references to the Messiah (Syr.

Baruch 29.3; 30.1; 39.8; 40.1; 70.9; 72.4; 4 Ezra 7.28f.; 12.32). Who this anointed figure is, the texts hardly pause to consider, for little is said about his activity and character. When we refer to Jewish messianic belief, it is more often than not the case that reference is being made to a large complex of ideas to which the adjective 'messianic' is rather loosely appended. Messianic belief covers a much wider spectrum of ideas than merely the belief in the coming of a descendant of David.¹⁵

With the possible exception of the Similitudes of Enoch and 4 Ezra, all the texts which deal with the expectation of a messianic descendant of David indicate the belief that a human descendant of David (though anointed with the divine spirit) would arise at the end of the age, who, by his actions, would pave the way for a period of bliss for Israel. He would pave the way for an era of bliss on earth. The best example of such a belief is to be found in the Psalms of Solomon, which offer us one of the most extended descriptions of the Messiah from our period:

Behold, O God and raise up unto them their king, the son of David. At the time which thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel thy servant. And gird him with strength that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample her down to destruction. Wisely, righteously he shall thrust out sinners from the inheritance. He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's vessel. With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance; he shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth. At his rebuke the nations shall flee before him, and he shall reprove the sinners for the thoughts of their hearts. And he shall gather together a holy people whom he shall lead in righteousness, and he shall judge the tribes of his people which has been sanctified by the Lord his God. And he shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any more in their midst, nor shall there dwell with them any one that knoweth wickedness, for he shall know them that they are all children of God. And he shall divide them according to their tribes upon the land, and neither sojourner nor alien shall sojourn with them any more. He shall judge peoples and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness. And he shall have the heathen nations to serve under his yoke; and he shall glorify the Lord in a place to be seen of all the earth; and he shall purge Jerusalem making it holy as of old: so that nations shall come from the ends of the earth to see his glory bringing as gifts her children who had fainted and to see the glory of the Lord wherewith God had glorified her. And he shall be a righteous king taught of God, over them, and there shall be no unrighteousness in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king the anointed of the Lord. For he shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply for himself gold and silver for war, nor shall he gather confidence from a multitude for the day of battle. The Lord is king,

the hope of him that is mighty is through his hope in God. All nations shall be in fear before him, for he will smite the earth with the word of his mouth for ever. He will bless the people of the Lord with wisdom and gladness, and he himself will be pure from sin, so that he may rule a great people. He will rebuke rulers and remove sinners by the might of his word; and relying upon his God throughout his days he will not stumble; for God will make him mighty by means of his holy spirit, and wise by means of the spirit of understanding, with strength and righteousness. And the blessing of the Lord will be upon him; he will be strong and stumble not; his hope will be in the Lord: who then can prevail over him? He will be mighty in his works and strong in the fear of God; he will be shepherding the flock of the Lord faithfully and righteously and will suffer none among them to stumble in their pasture. He will lead them all aright, and there will be no pride among them that any among them should be oppressed. (Psalms of Solomon 17.33ff.)

This extended quotation from the Psalms of Solomon enables us to see the main qualities of the descendant of David. The humanity seems to be presupposed. Indeed, it may be that phrases like ‘in his days’ and ‘throughout his days’ indicate that as in 4 Ezra 7.29 the Messiah is an ordinary mortal. Behind the phraseology of this psalm there lies the conviction that the descendant of David would be expected to exercise a military role in purging the land and the holy city of all defilement. He will be supported by the might of God (cf. Judg. 7.2ff.), but his dominion over the nations is a theme which has its origins in the biblical hope for the restoration of the idyllic time of Israel’s dominion under David. Throughout the quotation allusions to various parts of Scripture are apparent (particularly Isa. 11.4; 60.6ff.). This passage has often been regarded as typical of the central characteristics of messianic belief, because of its emphasis on the human descendant of David, the vanquishing of Israel’s foes and the establishment of a reign of justice and peace on earth under the direction of the King. In one form or another this belief crops up in most of the different collections of literature from our period, with varying degrees of emphasis being given to the role of the Davidic figure in this process. That its essential features passed on into rabbinic tradition also, albeit much expanded and reflected upon, may be confirmed by reference to the eschatological section in the Babylonian Talmud (*bSanhedrin* 95a ff.).¹⁶

From Cave 4 (4 Q 521) we have a messianic fragment similar in some respects to the passage from the Psalms of Solomon just quoted, as well as Luke 4.16 and Matthew 11.4–5 in the New Testament:

. . . [the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones.

Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service!

All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this?

For the Lord will consider the pious (*Hasidim*) and call the righteous by name.

Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with his power.

And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom.

He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent].

And f[or] ever I will clea[ve to the h]opeful and in His mercy . . .

And the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been . . .

For he will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the poor . . . (Translation Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 391–2)

There is not much evidence to suggest that the Messiah was a pre-existent, heavenly figure, though 4 Ezra and 1 Enoch 37–71 might seem to suggest that there were moves in this direction. The evidence of 4 Ezra is itself difficult to evaluate. On the one hand we have a passage like 7.29 where the Messiah is a mortal figure, whereas chapter 13 implies, and 14.9 explicitly suggests, that the Messiah was indeed a pre-existent heavenly figure.

Much ink has been spilt over the background and interpretation of the passages in the New Testament which speak of the ‘Son of Man’¹⁷ and Jewish texts (Dan. 7.13; 1 Enoch 37–71; 4 Ezra 13). Opinion is still divided over the precise meaning of the various texts. Indeed, some have wondered whether there ever was belief in the ‘Son of Man’ as a messianic (or eschatological redeemer) figure among the beliefs of ancient Judaism.¹⁸ In the light of this, it is probably safer to speak not of a belief in the ‘Son of Man’, as though it were a widely accepted messianic belief, but merely of diffuse beliefs in heavenly mediators or redeemers. The origin of at least one strand of the New Testament doctrine derives from Daniel 7.13, where the figure already is probably to be regarded as a heavenly, pre-existent being.¹⁹

We have already noted that in 4 Ezra there is evidence which suggests that there was emerging a belief in the pre-existence of the Messiah.²⁰ Such a belief is even clearer in the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71).²¹ In this section we find several passages which speak of the ‘Son of Man’ (46.1ff.; 48.2ff.; 62.5ff.; 69.26ff. and 71.17) as well as other passages which speak of ‘the Elect One’ (39.6f.; 40.5; 45.3ff.; 49.2ff.; 51.3; 52.6ff.; 53.6; 55.4; 61.5ff.; 62.1ff.). The overlap which exists between the characteristics attributed to the two figures suggests that in the Similitudes of Enoch, as we now have

them, the two are identified. The references to the 'Son of Man' in 1 Enoch 37–71 derive from Daniel 7.13, and are an extension of the brief reference there in the direction of a presentation of this figure as a quasi-angelic being, who sat on God's throne and exercised divine judgement in the last days. Despite some recent attempts to discredit the value of this work for New Testament research,²² whatever the date of the Ethiopic manuscripts now in our possession (and we have to recognize that the earliest dates from the late medieval period), the original was not much later than the first century CE. Indeed, if it is right to suppose, as many commentators would, that the figure of the 'Son of Man' in Daniel 7.13 already has the contours of a heavenly pre-existent figure, then the development which we find in the Similitudes would be nothing out of the ordinary. In 1 Enoch 48.10 and 52.4 the 'Son of Man' is explicitly linked with the title 'Messiah'. Whether this involved a confluence of heavenly mediator ideas and the traditional messianic expectation of the descendant of David is unclear, though the use of some traditional Davidic passages lends some support to this theory (e.g., 46.1ff.). The confluence seems to be more apparent in 4 Ezra. In 4 Ezra 13, which is dependent on Daniel 7.13, we find that the reference to the eschatological agent is to 'my son' (v.32), kept by God for many ages (13.26, cf. 'Messiah' in 12.32). That these two works (1 Enoch 37–71 and 4 Ezra) are not totally eccentric has been indicated by the discovery of a fragmentary text, which speaks of the activity of Melchizedek in the last days (11 *QMelch*) as well as the messianic text just quoted (4Q521). In 11 *QMelch* it is said that Melchizedek sits in judgement; Psalm 82 is applied to him. What is more, he is said to be the one anointed by the Spirit (Isa. 61.1f.). This text has indicated the beliefs in a heavenly figure with a human appearance which are to be found in some early Jewish texts. The identification of that heavenly figure with a righteous figure of Israel's past and the employment of messianic categories to speak of him all point to a growing fluidity, particularly in texts of a sectarian character, with regard to messianic belief.²³

Discussion of messianic figures in Judaism concentrates on the descendant of David as *the* messianic figure. It must be remembered, however, that in the Bible various figures are said to be anointed; for example, prophets (Isa. 61) and priests (Lev. 8.12) as well as kings. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (assuming that they are, in part, Jewish and not wholly Jewish-Christian) acquaint us with the belief in the coming of a priestly as well as a Davidic Messiah (e.g., Test. Levi 18 and Reuben 6.8). This belief has been strikingly confirmed by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which speak of Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (1 *QS* 9.11). What is more, in a text which prescribes the regulations for the messianic meal (1 *QSa*. 2.1ff.; *CD* 20.15), the Messiah of Aaron, the priestly Messiah, takes precedence over the Davidic Messiah.²⁴

Another figure mentioned in the Qumran texts is that of the prophet

(1 QS 9.11; 4 *QTest.*). The expectation of a prophet who should come in the last days is, like the hope for a descendant of David, firmly rooted in Scripture. In Deuteronomy 18.15ff. (quoted in 4 *QTest.*) Moses predicts that a prophet should arise like himself who would teach the people of God. This is a belief which is attested in the New Testament (John 1.31; 6.14) and probably had some influence on the earliest christological formulations.²⁵ Related to this belief was another rooted in Scripture, namely the expectation that Elijah would come (cf. Mark 6.15; 8.28; 9.11f.).²⁶ According to Malachi 4.5, the coming of Elijah will be before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. 'And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.' In other words, Elijah's coming reverses the process, which the messianic distress had set in motion, when dissension and strife were the order of the day (*mSotah* 9.15; Mark 13.12f.; *Jub.* 23.9). In addition to this restoring function, Elijah's coming seems to link with the coming of the prophet like Moses in one important way: the interpretation of the Torah. In 1 Maccabees 4.46 we find that the desecrated stones of the Temple are removed to a suitable place, until a prophet should arise who would be able to tell the people exactly what should be done with them. Similarly, in the Mishnah (*mEduyoth* 8.7) the coming of Elijah will be the time when disputed issues over ritual cleanness and other disputed halakic issues would be settled (*mBaba Metzia* 3.4f.; 1.8; 2.6; *mShekalim* 2.5). Elijah's departure on the chariot of fire (2 Kings 2.11) contributed to a vital expectation. Indeed, in some Jewish texts, Elijah is an embodiment of another zealot, Phineas. It is no surprise, therefore, that John and Jesus were identified as embodiments of the returning Elijah (Mark 6.14–16).

The evidence of Philo and the later Samaritan material indicates that the belief in the return of a prophet like Moses was a source of rich and varied speculation of a most extravagant kind. Hints of this Mosaic speculation, albeit confined to Moses himself and devoid of messianic trappings, are to be found in the rabbinic literature.²⁷ Particularly important is the belief that Moses' ascent of Sinai was to be regarded as a heavenly ascent (cf. Exod. 24.9). Moses' pre-eminence as the communicator of the definitive divine revelation from God to his people makes him a figure apart from all others. His communion with God and knowledge of heavenly secrets are the basis of a position of special privilege. The prophet like Moses who would follow in his steps in the last days, therefore, would be in a peculiarly privileged position to know God (Exod. 33.19f.) and legislate for all those things which were necessary for the proper administration of human affairs.

Pragmatism and Hope in Second Temple Judaism

(a) **Activists and Quietists**

The stories of the conquest of Canaan in Numbers, Joshua and Judges vindicate the belief that God would raise up those who would lead the hosts of the holy nation in battle to fulfil the divine promises. In Jewish legend these ideas played an important role in conditioning the views of the people of God. So we find that, in the final form of the text of the Pentateuch, the story of the overthrow of Jericho in Joshua 5f. is a great religious occasion, when the might of God is revealed through the obedient response of his people. The heroes of Israel's past like Phineas,¹ whose zeal for God made him violently purge from the community of Israel one who had yoked himself with a Midianite woman (Num. 25.6ff.), and Gideon (Judg. 6f.) inspired a belief in succeeding generations that the way to achieve the mighty acts of God was by obedient response to God and a readiness to take up arms and fight a holy war for the Lord.²

Alongside this, the vanquishing of Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea is an example of the way in which God with outstretched arm slew the enemies of Israel (Exod. 15). In this act the tradition reports that the people were a passive recipient of the divine mercy and could only look on in wonder as God wrought victory for his people. The 'divine warrior' theme which underlies many of these ideas has received much attention in recent study.³ It could take the form of a direct intervention by God in human affairs such as we find, for example, in the Psalms (e.g., 18.7ff.) and in Isaiah 59.15ff., or through the processes of history as in the deliverance from the hand of Sennacherib (Isa. 37.36). In the prophecies of Isaiah of Jerusalem this tradition of dependence on God alone for deliverance reaches its peak. In the crisis over the invasion of Assyria the counsels of the prophet to his nation are clear.⁴ The people of Zion are not to resort to alliances with foreign nations (Isa. 30.1ff.) or to force of arms (Isa. 31.1ff.; 30.15). They have to learn that in the processes of history is the hand of the Lord to be discerned (Isa. 10.5ff.), that quiet trust and faith in God are the keys to salvation (Isa. 10.16; 28.14ff.; 29.5ff.; 31.4). This was a tradition which was taken up within the Isaianic tradition where the people of God are to be witnesses to God's mighty acts in history as a way is prepared for the exiles to return to Zion and the glory of God is revealed in the world (Isa. 40.3ff.).

The first century CE saw a considerable increase in the yearning for deliverance of the people of God, such as were told in the Scriptures. In the

middle of the second century BCE the Jews threw off the domination of the Seleucid overlord, who wished to impose Hellenistic ways on Israel by force. The heroic exploits of the Maccabean martyrs,⁵ and the success of the tiny nation against the might of the Seleucid empire, fired hopes that similar things could happen again. On the death of Herod the Great, who had kept the country under a degree of control, his sons were unable to continue to hold the line, not least because of the feuding which went on between them.⁶ The placing of Judaea under direct rule from Rome necessitated a census, which was regarded by many as an horrific encroachment on the rights of the holy land of God. The census involved the assessment of tribute of the land for a pagan, foreign overlord, and the outburst was perhaps to be expected. Judas the Galilean, who instigated the revolt against Rome, said that the census was tantamount to the reduction of the people of God to slavery (*Ant.* 18.4f.) and asserted that the Jewish people should accept no one as their master but God alone. Despite the disparaging remarks made by Josephus with regard to the Zealots (*War* 7.268), it would appear that they did look to the inspiration offered by the biblical zealots like Phineas as well as to the Maccabees. The election of the High Priest by lot during the First Revolt (*War* 4.47ff.) was probably an attempt to ascertain, by this age-old method, which member of the priestly family should exercise the office (e.g., *Neh.* 10.34). The execution of collaborators with Rome would be part of an attempt to purge the holy city of all defilement (*War* 4.138ff.). Also, their abolition of the sacrifice on behalf of Caesar would be the removal of an unnecessary contamination of the cultic activity (*War* 2.410). Thus, these activities probably reflect their concern to put right abuses in the Jewish commonwealth.

There has been much discussion over whether there was a Zealot party in existence throughout the first century.⁷ There were probably many groups and individuals, whose intention it was to oppose the presence of Roman power by force. That there was a degree of continuity between the *sicarii*, who were active in the middle of the first century CE and during the First Jewish Revolt, is confirmed by the fact that descendants of Judas took a prominent place in the movement. They were led by Menahem and eventually fled to Masada where they committed suicide in the face of capture by the Romans in 73 (*War* 7.320ff.). Such seem to have been convinced that the freedom of Israel and the redemption of the people of God could not come about unless, as in days of old, the people of God themselves worked actively for this goal.⁸ In this respect the War Scroll (1 *QM* cf. Psalms of Solomon 17.24) may give an insight into the beliefs of those who believed that the establishment of the reign of God on earth would only come about as the result of human participation in the struggle with the forces of the antichrist rather than passively leaving it to divine intervention (as in Psalms of Solomon 7.6–8; Assumption of Moses 10.1–9). Whether this utopian

tract ever became a catalyst for a last battle we shall never know for certain.

Debates recorded between rabbis who lived at the end of the first century reveal that there was a difference of opinion over the conditions which were necessary for the inauguration of the kingdom of God. On the one side, there were those who thought that the repentance of Israel was a necessary precondition, whereas on the other, there were those who thought that its coming did not depend in any way on human response.⁹ We may suspect that those who believed that it was necessary for Israel to repent before the Messiah came, would have viewed the uprising against Rome with considerable suspicion. Whatever the reason for the escape of Yohanan ben Zakkai from Jerusalem (*ARN* 22f.),¹⁰ it would appear that some of the Sages were deeply unhappy with the situation in Jerusalem and sought an opportunity to escape and start afresh elsewhere, though it is likely that at least some of the leading Pharisees supported the revolt initially.¹¹

On the whole, it would probably be fair to say that the apocalyptic literature evinces an essentially passive attitude. It is true that one or two passages seem to countenance the idea that the people of God will have a part to play in the final struggle (e.g., 1 Enoch 90.19; Syr. Baruch 72.2), but by and large, the picture which emerges of the eschatological events is of a vast struggle in which the people of God are spectators of a cosmic drama unfolding before them. Thus, we may find that the establishment of the kingdom of God comes about after a period of intense distress; God works through the complexities of human history to bring about his kingdom (Syr. Baruch 25ff.). Then there is the intervention of a celestial agent, like the heavenly 'Son of Man' in the Similitudes, who 'puts down the kings and the mighty from their seats' (1 Enoch 46.1ff.) and establishes a reign of righteousness. At the heart of this approach lies a definite caution with regard to those who claim to be on the point of establishing the kingdom by force of arms (cf. Luke 16.16). The apocalypses set out to reveal the totality of the divine plan as a reassurance to the elect and as the basis of their confidence that their obedience to the divine commandments and any suffering that may bring upon them are worthwhile.

It is very common to find students of Judaism polarizing Jewish attitudes between rabbinic devotion to Torah observance and eschatological expectation,¹² or priestly, cult-centred religion and the dynamic expectation of the apocalyptists.¹³ Such simple summaries of the nature of Judaism have their attractions and the approach has elements of truth in it. Emphasis on individual piety and on individual purity through the fulfilment of obligations relating to purity and tithing was central to the demand laid upon Jews to reflect the divine holiness.¹⁴ There were instances where change was urged by Jews, when the circumstances were such that it became impossible for Jews to practise their religion as they would have liked, such as Caligula's attempt to erect a statue of himself in the Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁵ There were

many instances when the Jews fell foul of the powers that be,¹⁶ but in fact this attitude meant that the *status quo* was accepted as part of the divine providence, whatever it was, that God had in mind for the future of the world. On the whole, eschatology was something which was left to God alone who would inaugurate the fulfilment of the promises in God's good time.

The Qumran community concentrated on holiness, but maintained that its fulfilment depended on *complete* separation. The creation of sufficient space within society itself was not adequate for some of them. They too did not lose their eschatological perspective; the War Scroll and the Temple Scroll indicate how important that was for them. Alongside that hope, however, are those passages which speak of the present communion with heaven enjoyed by members of the community.¹⁷ The eschatological bliss reserved for the new age was already believed to be a possibility for the members of the community. The closed life of the community in the desert was itself heaven on earth (on which more will be outlined below).

In contrast to this view, what we know of the zealot activists suggests a radically different attitude. They believed that, while the Romans were on the soil of *eretz Israel*, they were defiling the Holy Land, and it became essential to remove them from it by force.¹⁸ Personal piety was not enough. It was crucial to deal at once with the blight on that quest for holiness which was focused in the Roman presence in the promised land and the compromise of the hierarchy in Jerusalem. The consequences of this outlook were revealed in 66 CE, when internecine strife and anarchy followed the departure of the Romans (*War* 4.129ff.). Similar notions of humans involved as eschatological or salvific agents seem to run through the various prophetic movements which emerged in the first century CE (*War* 1.648; 6.281ff. and 301ff.; *Ant.* 18.55ff., 262ff.; 20.97ff., 167ff., 185ff.). In these, salvation was not a matter of leaving it to God's good time. These were individuals who claimed the authority and the power to repeat that which had led to the deliverance of God's people in the past. This meant a synergistic alliance between human and divine power (a sentiment which Paul may have shared if 1 Corinthians 3.9 is anything to go by: 'We are God's fellow-workers'). The underlying religio-political practice separates such activists from all the rest. However fervent their hope, Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees and the rest did not (as far as we know) think of themselves in terms of such mighty acts of deliverance. This is the world of the eschatological *kairos*, the opportune moment, fuelled by hope and vision, the world which characterizes earliest Christianity and one of the reasons it posed such problems for élites of the period.

(b) A Crisis for Eschatology?

One can imagine what the fevered mix of fear and expectation was like in the city of Jerusalem as the siege was intensified by the Roman legions. Josephus gives us a glimpse of it and the impossible hopes of deliverance, which circulated among the populace during those tragic days (*War* 5.400; 6.285, 364). With the destruction of Jerusalem and the cessation of the Temple worship in 70, one might have expected a profound shift in the attitudes towards eschatology; just as for Christians, the delay in the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the death of the eschatological apostles (Matt. 19.28) were the main reasons for a change in eschatological perspective. In rabbinic legends we find a saying of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, the great architect of rabbinic Judaism, which seems to indicate a certain reserve towards eschatological matters:

If you have a seedling in your hand, and they say to you, Look, here comes the Messiah, Go out and plant the seedling first and then come to meet him.
(ARN 31)

While the saying indicates that messianic claims should be treated with some degree of caution, there is in fact nothing here which indicates a repudiation of eschatology. Indeed, considering what problems it had caused, it seems surprising that there is such a positive piece of advice given by Yohanan. Such an assessment fits in very well with what we know of the attitudes which developed after the Revolt.¹⁹ Still included in synagogue prayers reformulated after the fall of Jerusalem, were several for eschatological fulfilment. Particularly worthy of note are Benedictions 7, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 16:

- 7 Look on our affliction and plead our cause and redeem us for thy name's sake.
- 9 Bless this year for us, Lord our God and cause all its produce to prosper. Bring quickly the year of our final redemption; and give dew and rain to the land; and satisfy the world from the treasuries of thy goodness; and bless the work of our hands.
- 10 Proclaim the liberation with the great trumpet and raise a banner to gather together our dispersed.
- 11 Restore our judges as in former times and our counsellors as in the beginning; and reign over us, thou alone.
- 14 Be merciful, Lord our God, with thy great mercies, to Israel thy people and to Jerusalem thy city; and to Zion, the dwelling place of thy glory; and to thy Temple and thy habitation; and to the kingship of David thy righteous Messiah.
- 16 Be pleased, Lord our God and dwell in Zion; and may thy servants serve thee in Jerusalem.

Nowhere is the continuing strength of the eschatological hope more evident than in these words, which formed a regular part of the worship of Jews. The fervent hope for redemption and the restoration of Israel's fortunes was kept alive in the bleakest days of all for Judaism. That these hopes loomed large on the Jewish horizon during this period is testified by the outbreak of a second revolt against Rome in 132.²⁰ Information about the causes and course of this revolt are scanty in the extreme, but the continuation in so firm a fashion of these beliefs may have had a part to play in fanning the discontent and the hope of liberation. Indeed, the fact that another leading figure of the early second-century rabbinic Judaism, Rabbi Akiba, identified Simeon bar Koseba, the leader of the revolt, as the messiah (*jTa'anith* 68d) is another indication of the level of support given to such expectations and their fulfilment by a leader of nascent rabbinic Judaism. The thing which strikes one most about early rabbinic Judaism is not the reserve which is encountered from time to time in these texts about eschatology, but the fact that such hopes continued to linger on; not in some attenuated form but in the full-blooded expectation of an imminent restoration of Israel's fortunes, despite the manifest failure of such eschatological fantasies in the débâcle of the First Revolt.

There does seem to be evidence to support the view that there was an increased emphasis in this period on what might be termed the 'vertical' dimension of the relationship with God, communion with the divine, i.e. mysticism.²¹ What is now becoming clear is that already, during the period of the Second Temple and extending back considerably into the early Hellenistic period, there was a developed mystical lore based on the study of the first chapter of Ezekiel, the *merkabab*. We have already noted that in the apocalyptic literature there is evidence of this interest, and the suggestion was made that some of these visions may reflect the actual experience of unknown mystics. Interest in the divine throne chariot (*merkabab*) continued in early rabbinic Judaism. If we can assume that the early rabbis continued the mystical-visionary praxis, then the study of the first chapter of Ezekiel would offer communion with the divine and reassurance in times of crisis just as it had for Ezekiel centuries before.²²

Communion with the divine in the life of the religious community is not something which was confined to mystics. After all, the rabbinic literature is full of evidence to suggest that rabbis believed that the Divine Presence, the *shekinah*, was with rabbis and indeed any group studying the Torah,²³ yet for the élite who were privileged to become part of the tradition of the exponents of the mysteries of theosophy and cosmology the mystical communion with God and God's world afforded a glimpse into a world which was cut off from ordinary mortals. The knowledge of the celestial mysteries and the contemplation of them were an effective antidote to the demoralizing effects of oppression and despair in the world.

Such a belief that it was possible to taste in the present age the glories of Paradise is attested in the Qumran Scrolls, as we have seen. In the *Hodayoth*, the Hymns, there are several passages which indicate that the community believed that it already participated in the lot of the angels, a belief which is to be found elsewhere in the literature of Judaism, particularly in the apocalypses. Inherent in apocalypticism is an interest in the world above, as it existed above the firmament, quite independent of any future expectation.²⁴ Not only did the apocalyptists see heaven as the repository of secrets about the world to come but also as a realm, which existed above and in which they could participate, albeit on a temporary basis. In the Qumran texts not only do we find in the War Scroll (1 *QM* 12.1ff.) that the community is said to be engaged in a cosmic struggle, but it also thought of itself participating in the life of Paradise, the life of the angels. The life of the community opened the secrets of heaven in this world. Like Isaiah who beheld the Seraphim proclaiming 'Holy, holy, holy' and, like Ezekiel, who beheld the divine *merkabab*, the Qumran sectaries shared in earthly liturgy which replicated that sung by the choirs of angels in heaven.²⁵

In a similar vein we find the writer of the Jewish(-Christian?) hymn book, the Odes of Solomon,²⁶ which has many affinities with Qumran theology, stressing that it was possible during the worship of his group for its members to participate in the glory of the end-time. In 11.16f. (cf. 20.7) the writer talks about being taken up to Paradise, and, like Paul (in 2 Corinthians 12.3), can enjoy the heavenly Paradise in the present rather than having to wait for the coming of the new age for that privilege (as in Revelation 2.7). Elsewhere the writer uses the language of the heavenly ascent to speak of the glories which he experienced in the life of the community:

I rested on the spirit of the Lord, and she lifted me up to heaven and caused me to stand on my feet in the Lord's high place before his perfection and glory (cf. 1 *QH* 3.20: I walk on limitless level ground, and I know there is hope for him whom thou hast shaped from dust for the everlasting Council).

Many years ago it was suggested that we should look for the origin of gnosticism in the frustrated eschatological hopes of groups like that found at Qumran.²⁷ There is in apocalypticism a 'vertical' dimension which, when loosed from the 'horizontal'-eschatological dimension, quickly becomes a form of spirituality, which is akin to gnosticism. Whether such Jewish theology ever took this path, we cannot at present be certain. There did exist within Jewish resources a ready-made compensation for the crisis over the fulfilment of the eschatological hopes in the apocalyptic tradition itself. It needed only a change of emphasis for the apocalyptic-mystical tradition to concentrate more on the 'vertical', heavenly dimension of its spirituality than the 'horizontal', with the latter's emphasis on the fulfilment of the divine

promises in history. The uncertainty of the times meant that a crisis for eschatological hopes was inevitable, but the support and sustenance which the mystical element of religion offered to Jews at this time tempered the worst effects of these disasters.²⁸

PART III

The Emergence of a
Messianic Sect

Section 1

Introduction

1

Early Christianity: What Kind of Religious Movement?

What were the factors which brought the Christian movement into existence? What kind of people were the early Christians? What were the dominant features of its belief and practice? Answers to questions like these may help us to understand what kind of religious development we are dealing with in the early Church.¹

From the material which we possess in the New Testament, it is apparent that early Christianity spread rapidly. The stories of the beginnings of Christianity in Jerusalem suggest that communities were fired by the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead, that the promised Spirit had been poured out on all flesh and that therefore the message of Jesus about the imminent reign of God had been confirmed by a mighty act of God. In the communities which were founded by Paul, there is little evidence of strict control by church officials, and the initial enthusiasm of the Jerusalem church seems to have been prevalent (Acts 2), particularly if the Corinthian correspondence is anything to go by. The opportunity for wider participation in religious activity by women as well as men (1 Cor. 11.5), poor as well as rich, was a factor working in favour of the spread of Christianity as a popular movement.

If Paul is to be believed, the adherents to the new movement were mostly (though not all) from the lower social classes.² The evidence of the infiltration of Christianity into the higher social strata by the end of the first century (and for a considerable time after that) is not great, though Luke makes every attempt to show what an appreciative attitude was shown to the new movement by Roman officials (e.g., Acts 13.12). According to the traditions in the Gospels, some of the disciples of Jesus themselves came from the lower strata of society and are described as uneducated and common people in Acts 4.13 (but cf. Mark 1.16ff. where the disciples are from artisan

groups).³ Although it is possible that Jesus and the Early Church were influenced by pharisaic ideas and practices (e.g., Acts 15.1), particularly in their attitude towards tradition and in the interpretation of Scripture, clear separation between clean and unclean, pious and common people, is hardly evident (Luke 7.34).

Early Christianity may be termed a millenarian movement, namely, a group which looked forward to the reordering of the world and its institutions.⁴ This is not inappropriate, given that the hope of the reordering of the cosmos by God was a central feature of early Christian experience. Groups who hold such beliefs have an understanding of their own God-given role in the climactic events taking place and the ultimate character of the message of hope. With such views, and, more importantly, a counter-cultural practice, their integration into society at large was difficult. The belief that the present order is passing away and the expectation that a new world will soon come into being means that there is bound to be an uneasy coexistence between the supporters of such a religious outlook and the rest of society. The information at our disposal from early Christian literature does not permit us to know precisely about the nature of this coexistence in the first century of the Church's life. From the pages of the New Testament there is not much indication that early Christians separated themselves from the world and avoided all social intercourse (though note 1 Cor. 5.9; 2 Cor. 6.14). A common life on the Essene model of the group, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, was not generally a pattern of life favoured by the earliest Christians.⁵ But they thought that the present order (note, it is present order of things, *not* the end of the world) was about to pass away (1 Cor. 7.26, 29, 31). Many early Christians were at odds in many respects with ideologies prevailing in society, while at the same time remaining to a considerable extent part of that society, practising trades and, within the limits tolerated by their beliefs, participating in the life of society generally (but note 2 Thess. 3.6).⁶ Involvement in the life of the world brought Christians into contact with pagans, and the reactions to Christians indicate the suspicion with which they were viewed. 'Hated by the populace', Tacitus says of them.⁷ Later on we find them despised for their 'atheism' (if Dio Cassius' comment in *Histories* 67–8 refers to them rather than sympathizers with Judaism), and their contempt for the traditional religion of Rome by their refusal to burn a small piece of incense to the genius of the emperor. However much they wanted to be fully integrated into society (a process which only really began in earnest with Constantine),⁸ there remained the suspicion that at moments of crisis early Christians would be bound to say 'we must obey God rather than any human authority' (Acts 5.29). The problem for groups with an eager expectation is that when fervent hopes become disappointed by events, the group which holds such beliefs has to come to terms with disappointment, for example, 1 Thessalonians 4.13ff.⁹ It is frequently suggested that the delay in

the second coming of Christ led to such a disappointment for early Christians that there was a need for reorientation in its attitude. There is evidence to suggest that hope for the future ceased to be the central feature of the early Christian outlook and instead other interests took over.¹⁰

2

The Centrality of Eschatology in Primitive Christian Belief¹

All too often eschatology has had the appearance of the final item of Christian doctrine, tacked on as an afterthought, concerned only with the ultimate hopes of Christianity. The reasons for this are manifold. Christian doctrine has tended to focus on the incarnation, atonement and resurrection as paramount. What is more, the eschatological beliefs of the New Testament are not readily appealing to modern believers. Eschatology seems to be an appendage, therefore, whose integration within the overall scheme of salvation is not always apparent. Such a view of eschatology seems rather strange, however, to those who have been involved in biblical scholarship, particularly over the last hundred years.² The fact is that there has been a widespread recognition that, whatever the consequences for theology, we have to grapple with the centrality of eschatology as a controlling and dominant theme in early Christian belief. The meaning of phrases like the 'kingdom of God' and the 'Son of Man' cannot be disentangled from the eschatological thread which runs through the pages of the New Testament.

The problem is that eschatology is a concept which is not easy to define.³ Strictly speaking, eschatology is to do with the study of the 'Last Things', those events which will bring history and this world to its close. Yet we have to recognize that we regularly use the word in a variety of different senses, some of which extend the meaning of the phrase so much that the connection with the original future orientation has virtually disappeared.⁴ Thus we can find the term being used to describe the critical nature of human decisions, the fate of the individual believer's soul after death, the termination of this world-order and a setting up of another, events like the Last Judgement and the Resurrection of the Dead and as a convenient way of referring to future hopes about the coming of God's kingdom on earth, irrespective of whether in fact they involve an ending of the historical process.

It is in this last sense that I want to use it, as a shorthand way of referring to this future hope and its fulfilment which was an important feature of many texts from the Second Temple period.⁵

For most New Testament writers there is still an unfulfilled element in the process of salvation. Believers may have tasted of the heavenly gift and participated in the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6.4), but that is not by any means the end of the matter. There is still what is called an 'eschatological reservation', a qualification which indicates that the fullness of salvation is still to be experienced by the individual and manifested in the world (Rom. 8.18ff.; 1 John 3.2).⁶ It is when we appreciate how pervasive this tension is between what believers have already experienced in Christ *now* and what they still have to wait for (the '*not yet*'), that we can begin to grasp that the early Christian view of salvation has an eschatological dimension, which is often lacking in later Christian schemes and is intimately linked with the understanding of the impact of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If one pauses to think about the matter, it becomes difficult to see how Jewish writers who believed that Jesus was Messiah could have conceived of salvation in any other than eschatological terms, the fulfilment of divine promises in history. The bulk of the Jewish literature which has come down to us views salvation in the context of history. Thus the dominion of God over all flesh is intimately linked with the belief in God as creator and liberator. Whether the urgency for deliverance was strong or not, the formative experiences of the nation, like the Exodus, spoke of the deliverance and triumph of the people of God, the manifestation of the mighty hand of God in human affairs. Thus it is impossible to imagine that salvation could be considered as in any way complete without reference to the fulfilment of that hope for God's kingdom on earth.

The eschatological dimensions of salvation are apparent in the early Christian writings. It is instructive to examine some of the most important New Testament concepts, for, by so doing, we shall find that it is impossible to understand their significance without taking account of eschatology. Take resurrection, for example. The resurrection of Jesus has become a cornerstone of the Church's faith, and is already important within the New Testament itself. What we are dealing with, however, is not just a dramatic intervention of God to vindicate Jesus but a conviction, whose meaning is governed entirely by eschatology. What is often lost sight of today is the fact that for Jews and early Christians the resurrection was an essential component of the future hope. To speak of the Resurrection of the Dead was to speak of the life of the Age to Come.⁷ From time to time in the New Testament we have hints that such a close link exists between resurrection and the eschatological events (e.g., 1 Cor. 15.20; Phil. 3.21). The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth was the first fruits, an anticipation, in which a key feature of the 'last days' (a phrase used in Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost in

Acts 2.17) becomes a reality in the old age. Thus insofar as the first Christians spoke of the resurrection of Jesus and made it a cornerstone of their existence, they were affirming that for them the future hope was already in the process of fulfilment and was not merely an item of faith still to be realized at some point in the future. By stressing the centrality of resurrection, the early Christian writers were making eschatology the key to the understanding of their lives.

The New Testament writers looked forward to an imminent manifestation of the righteousness of God, when Jesus returned as Lord to complete the process which had started in the events of his ministry, culminating with the cross and resurrection (though that may have meant them expecting the consummation of all things in decades rather than weeks or months, if the eschatological schemes of 4 Ezra 5.20–8 and Syr. Baruch 25 are anything to go by).⁸ The departure of the ‘Son of Man’ to God was only a temporary phenomenon, for he would be revealed (1 Cor. 1.7; 1 Pet. 1.7) and would bring about the times of restoration of all things foretold by the Prophets (Acts 3.21). That was an event not far distant (Rom. 13.11; Rev. 22.20), though the New Testament writers are uniformly unwilling to be too specific about the exact date (Mark 9.1; 13.32; 1 Thess. 5.1; cf. 2 Thess. 2.2f.). The return of Christ on the clouds of heaven was no arbitrary belief, plucked out of the stock of Jewish eschatology. It was intimately linked with the convictions about the resurrection, in that the coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven was the consummation of a promise of which the resurrection of Jesus was the guarantee.

The early Christians believed that the eschatological salvation was not wholly future, however, particularly since the new age had broken into the old in the resurrection of Jesus; for the experience of the Spirit, such a dominant feature of early Christian religion,⁹ cannot be understood apart from the eschatological perspective. In the New Testament the Spirit is frequently linked with prophecy.¹⁰ While there was no unified view of the Spirit’s activity in contemporary Judaism, there is evidence to suppose that some Jews thought of the Spirit’s activity as part of the past experience of God’s people.¹¹ Thus the inspiration by the Spirit was confined to the era of the Prophets in the past and would only be operative again when new Prophets arose, in the messianic age (though we should note that a writer like Josephus thought of himself as possessing prophetic powers). The present aeon was characterized by the absence of the Spirit, and the future age would be a time when the Spirit, and therefore prophecy, would return.¹² As we know from attitudes on the part of the wielders of ecclesiastical power down the centuries to groups who had a radical agenda, or a conviction that the world would be turned upside down, a standard reaction to the claims of such radicals is to suppress, and, at the level of ideas, to concentrate on the past or the future as the time of fulfilment rather than the present, thereby

undermining the importance given to the present, something which was central for the first Christians (e.g., 2 Cor. 6.2).

Paul hints that experience of the Spirit is closely linked with the eschatological hope. Thus, in outlining the present period of travail in Romans 8.18ff., he speaks of Christians being the ones who have the first fruits of the Spirit (v.23). The implication is that, despite having already tasted of that glory (cf. Heb. 6.5), even Christians long for a greater liberation still to be made manifest; Christians too, therefore, join in the travail of the messianic woes which precede the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 2 Cor. 1.22). Similarly in Acts 2.17, the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost is a fulfilment of an eschatological promise from the book of Joel. The quotation in Acts interprets the phrase 'afterwards' by the words 'in the last days', an indication that the phenomenon at Pentecost was a fulfilment of the eschatological promise of the return of the Spirit. The experience of the Spirit was seen as the present expression in the life of the individual and the community of that eschatological reality, which had been manifested in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

A central feature of Christology in the New Testament is the use in various ways of the title 'Christ', or Messiah, the anointed one, of Jesus of Nazareth. The exploration of the fast-growing doctrine concerning the person of Christ in the earliest period, culminating with the doctrine of the incarnation,¹³ should not lead us to ignore the important role the title 'Christ' plays in the New Testament writings. Even those documents, like the Fourth Gospel, which affirm that Jesus of Nazareth is much more than merely the Messiah, also indicate that he is the agent of salvation longed for by Jews (John 20.31; cf. 7.27, 40-4). It is not that Christians were saying that Jesus fulfilled *all* Jewish messianic expectations, which in themselves were many and various,¹⁴ but that he was the agent of eschatological salvation. Even Paul, who is sometimes said to use the title 'Christ' as little more than a proper name,¹⁵ on occasions uses the term to denote the fact that God has acted through Jesus to bring about salvation. Whatever else it may indicate, the fact that the title has passed into the common usage of the New Testament means that it was a primary category for early Christian expression of their convictions about the eschatological character of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth.

Whether early Christian reflection on Jesus marks the moment when eschatological categories began to dominate Christian views of Jesus is a much debated issue in recent New Testament scholarship. Much depends on whether one regards the main outlines of the gospel tradition as representing the outlines of Jesus' message, as attempts have been made to try and show that the original Jesus was completely detached from eschatology. There is probably continuity between the proclamation of Jesus and early Christian reflection upon him. The declaration that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 2.36)

raised from the dead is another way of affirming the reality which Jesus in his own mission and message set out to proclaim. Whatever the precise background of the phrase 'the kingdom of God', Jesus of Nazareth set out to proclaim its imminence, and perhaps even its inauguration. The early Christian kerygma that Jesus was raised from the dead may be regarded as an alternative way of expressing the conviction which confronts us in the teaching of Jesus: God's kingdom is at hand (Mark 1.15); in Jesus' resurrection the life of the age to come has drawn near. So, the book of Revelation, in the view of many an eccentric part of the New Testament canon, is much nearer to the centre of early Christian belief than is often allowed. Not only the thrust of its eschatological message but also its concern with fulfilment (e.g., Rev. 5) indicate how accurately it mirrors, albeit in the apocalyptic imagery, the central message of the New Testament. To understand the heart of the New Testament is to grapple with the message of hope in the pages of the Apocalypse.¹⁶

Christianity's origins in a form of messianism in Galilee, whose adherents expected the restoration of Jewish fortunes and the coming of a reign of peace and justice on earth by means of a divinely appointed agent, bestowed a measure of nonconformity, culturally and practically. The main difference about early Christianity compared with what we now know of these other movements in Second Temple Judaism, led by a prophetic figure, is that this was a messianic movement, which survived. While there appears to have been a movement which revered the memory of John the Baptist (cf. Acts 19.1ff.), which may have played some role within the Early Church's struggle for self-definition, the hopes surrounding other groups mentioned by Josephus were probably short lived. With Christianity we are dealing with a much more complicated phenomenon, probably unique among the groups of Second Temple Judaism: an example of a self-consciously messianic group which had managed to survive (in whatever way) the trauma of the death of its leader and the rejection of his message to become a relatively well-established group within the last decades of Second Temple Judaism. There is little in the extant literature which resembles the peculiar factors which determined the growth of Christianity. The Christian belief that the Messiah had come involved them in dealing with a range of issues which would hardly have affected those Jews who did not share their convictions. For most other Jews it would have remained a matter of theoretical interest only. For the first Christians it had become a matter of decisive importance as a necessary corollary of the coming of the messianic kingdom. One of the prime reasons for distinguishing the early Christian literature from the extant Jewish literature is that beliefs were not merely articles of hope but also believed to be in the process of fulfilment. The early Christians believed that either they were actually living in the eschatological age or were very close to it. Thus, the fact that hope was in the process of fulfilment gave that group a particular

distinctiveness which the mere citation of parallels from contemporary Jewish texts cannot adequately illuminate. The movement itself seems to have come to rather different conclusions about the meaning of the tradition compared with others of their contemporaries.

To illuminate the theological and social dynamics at work, one needs to be able to compare similar groups with similar kinds of expectations. The evidence concerning the seventeenth-century radicals and messianic claimants in Judaism and Christianity provides the requisite information for this kind of comparative study. They remind us that the expectation of God's reign on earth has a long history within the Church, and the development and problems initiated by such groups not only within their own organization and practice but also in relation to the parent body is a study which presents many typological similarities to early Christian messianism. Apart from the intensity of their hope for change there was also 'the experience of defeat' as they came to terms with disappointment and then the restoration of the monarchy which had been overthrown barely a decade before. The radicals had to learn to live with this and they evolved patterns of life which were an essential continuity with their radical origins but more suited to the harsher political climate in which they had to live. The development of the Quakers and other nonconformist groups in this period is a well-documented insight into the growth and development of millenarianism. All these are better analogies than the ideologically distinct documents from the first century which we currently use to shed light on the emergence of Christianity. The latter may be contemporary but do not evince the peculiar dynamics at work in an eschatological religion and do not offer real illumination of the New Testament texts, shot through as they are with the conviction that the messianic age had either arrived or was imminent. Too often historical study of Christian origins has taken a synchronic perspective, favouring texts which are contemporary with the New Testament, whether or not they have any particularly close affinities. A diachronic perspective is needed in biblical study, however, so that the more closely related theological and ethical texts from other periods of Christian history can shed light on the distinctive perspective of the New Testament sources. The reading of the major studies on Christian radicalism will only benefit the students of Christian origins as they seek to understand the complexities of its development on the basis of the scanty evidence available.

There are several characteristics of these movements. Hope for a new world is often found, but it is a hope for this world rather than some transcendent realm. There is an overwhelming conviction that the present marks a moment of crisis, the *Kairos*. The coming reign of God is in some sense already present, a reign which they are called to implement or proclaim, a present phenomenon to be discerned within the historical process and which demands the task of 'reading the signs of the times'. Prophetic charisma is

given priority and the visionary or prophet may see things which contradict received wisdom and claim authority to take decisions and inaugurate actions of a highly controversial kind. There is often an intense awareness of God's presence and a conviction that God or Christ indwells and empowers. The divine indwells the human as well as the process of human history and there is often an intimacy of interaction between the human and the divine in enabling the understanding of God's purposes to be known. There is also a use of the biblical tradition in which interpreters refuse to be content with the letter of the text but pierce the real meaning of the text. The meaning of Scripture is subordinated to experience of the Spirit. According to Acts 2, when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost it was about a promise of the Spirit being poured out onto 'all flesh', not just apostles. Women as well as men, old as well as young would prophesy, a reason for the visionary and prophetic vocation to women. The claim to be able to understand the Scriptures without recourse to the learned goes back to the words of Jesus and the remarkable testimony to Spirit-inspired exegesis, standing in no need of the insights of the learned. There emerges in the history of the use of the Apocalypse, for example, a difference between those who seek to extract significance out of every detail to be able to map out the narrative of the end of the world, and those who are inspired by the apocalyptic visions to see their own visions and to offer their prophetic challenge to the communities of their day. The latter position more closely approximates to what we find in early Christian messianism. What study of such movements offers is the possibility of understanding better the social and religious dynamics at work within the early Christian groups.¹⁷

3

The World of Jesus and the First Christians

The Christian religion was born in Palestine, though few of the earliest literary witnesses to the Christian faith were written there. Our earliest Christian sources are written in Greek and are addressed to Christian groups, which were, for the most part, outside Palestine. Yet it was the beliefs and social world of Palestine which gave the Christian movement its distinctive direction. According to our sources, Jerusalem was the place where Jesus of Nazareth finally perished at the hands of the Romans. While Judaea, the

Roman province, seems to have been the setting for part of his ministry (more evident in the Fourth Gospel than the Synoptic Gospels), a large part of it had been set in Galilee. That distinction is not without its significance, and a consideration of the social and political life in Galilee may help us to get into perspective the character of Jesus' ministry and that of his immediate followers, all of whom, according to our sources, came from this area.

Galilee was a region inhabited by peasants settled in villages, who occupied themselves in farming.¹ The large cities in the area (e.g., Tiberias and Sepphoris, which were Hellenized) seem to have exercised little influence on the rural area, which may be significant for the interpretation of the Gospels in which the cities are largely marginal to Jesus' activity (this is especially true in Mark). There was some tension between the cities and the rural inhabitants.² By and large the region fared better than Judaea.³ The long reign of Herod Antipas may have cushioned the worst effects of Roman rule, and there was a reluctance to interfere with the pattern of life of such a relatively settled society. There grew up a rural proletariat (consisting of day labourers, see Matt. 20.1ff.; 'hired servants' in Mark 1.20; Luke 16.1ff.; cf. Mark 12.1ff.). This rural proletariat had less to lose and had become more conscious of their lot, and was more likely to have made common cause with those who sought change.⁴ There was injustice in the province, with economic pressures on the small person in both urban and rural settings as the result of increased taxation, ambitious rulers and foreign exploitation.

It is often supposed that Galilee was a hotbed of revolutionary activity. Although Judas the Galilean led the uprising against Rome in 6 CE (*War* 2.118; *Ant.* 18.23f.; also 6–10; cf. *Ant.* 18.118), this uprising was based in Judaea. The attitude of Jews in Tiberias, who resorted to a peaceful agricultural strike rather than violent resistance in the affair of Caligula's statue, points to a rather different atmosphere in Galilee from that in the more politically inflammable Judaea (*Ant.* 18.274, 284). Galilee was much less susceptible to revolutionary fervour than Judaea. In Galilee the continual round of farming and the quest for subsistence meant that for a significant part of the rural population there was little incentive to revolt, when the need to stay alive dampened revolutionary ardour (*War* 4.84). The scattered Galilean hamlets did not provide the proper political and social environment for the revolutionary movements to flourish. Centuries of political isolation had made those who were able to maintain any kind of stable links with the land cautious about any large-scale movement that drew its inspiration from the religious and urban conditions of Jerusalem. Galilee was caught up in the First Revolt in 66 CE, but even in this it probably fared marginally better than Judaea.

In their religious attitudes Galileans seem to have been remarkably conservative. The Temple was held in high regard, though there was some antipathy towards tithing (*Ant.* 20.181; *bKethuboth* 105b); God dwelling in

the Temple ensured the fertility and prosperity necessary for subsistence (cf. Haggai 1.9–10). The regular round of pilgrimages to Jerusalem functioned as an emotional outlet for the deeply felt loyalty to the Temple. Pharisaic religion probably had only a marginal hold in the region in the settlements along Lake Tiberias. The majority of people were probably unaffected by its attitudes. Their religious attitude was the product of a 'Sadducean ethos'. It was centred on the Temple, and as long as it stood, it continued to be the focus of interest for the Jews there.

Alongside this fairly conservative pattern of religion, there emerged a tradition of holy men.⁵ Whereas in Judaea they would go to the desert and separate themselves completely from society, the holy men in Galilee probably tended to live on the fringes of society and highlighted an alternative lifestyle. Jesus' lifestyle as a wandering figure is reflected in his sayings, the preservation of which is indicative of the continuation of that lifestyle in groups which followed him.⁶ The Jesus-movement was first of all based in rural areas, and when it began to set foot in the urban centres, it began to attract opposition from the more established forms of Judaism (Matt. 23.34ff.). Jesus' condemnation of the Galilean centres of population suggests the rural setting of the original movement (Matt. 11.20ff.; Luke 10.13f.). According to our sources Jesus tended to avoid the towns. In the light of this, it is interesting to note that, according to Paul, some of Jesus' brothers continued this wandering activity (1 Cor. 9.5; *EH* 1.7), as did Paul, though, unlike the other apostles, Paul was not financially dependent on the churches (1 Cor. 9.4).

While it may be true that, like other areas, Galilee had its fair share of landless poor, it can hardly be said that this had the effect of making it a hotbed of revolution in our period. There is little to suggest that a message of the inauguration of the kingdom of God would have been more welcomed in this area than, say, in Judaea. A simple explanation of the eschatological message of Jesus merely on the basis of economic and social factors is, therefore, inadequate. Our information is so sparse that we are prevented from making any proper judgement about the nature of the relationship between ideas and their precise social context.⁷ It is true that we know little enough about Jesus' own background and the immediate prelude to his ministry. Probably Jesus did not himself belong to the rural proletariat, among whom the flames of revolution would have been particularly hot. The Gospels portray him as the child of an artisan (Mark 6.3), from humble circumstances to be sure, but not such as to promote an outlook which by itself initiated the demand for change.

While Galilee provided the background for the first seeds of the Christian movement, the ground in which those seeds were to grow was varied in the extreme. Rapidly an important group of Christians was centred in Jerusalem, as both Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles testify. The peculiar characteristics of the city, centre as it was of the cult and the focus of the fulfilment

of eschatological hopes (cf. Isa. 2), produced problems which would have been unparalleled elsewhere. The fact that Jerusalem was the focal point of the devotion of Jews throughout the Mediterranean world necessarily meant that special factors were at work here. What is more, it meant that the church in this city was held in special regard, which was not so true of other centres, at least until the growing ascendancy of the Church of Rome and other metropolitan centres. Tensions are evident in Acts between Jerusalem and other centres such as Antioch (Acts 15; cf. Acts 8). Once the Church moved from Palestinian soil, the factors which governed its growth and development differed with the centres in which it was found.⁸ What started life in Galilee as a movement among the rural groups and among itinerant charismatics came to take root in urban centres. What little we can glean about the expansion of the Church suggests that it did probably take root among the urban communities, and though not exclusively lower class, it tended to recruit mainly from that echelon of society. The changing social patterns in particularly important centres remains a necessary way of comprehending some of the factors which governed the expansion of Christianity.⁹

Sociological studies of early Christianity have enabled a different perspective on the social structure of the Christian communities and the problems which confronted them. As may be expected, it has been the Corinthian correspondence which has offered an opportunity for the development of this method. From the beginning of modern historical study of the New Testament there has been recognition of the importance of conflict, particularly in the Corinthian correspondence. This has often been explained by reference to doctrine, but there is now greater recognition of the importance of socio-economic factors.¹⁰ The Corinthian community probably contained people from a variety of backgrounds. The majority were the lower classes (1 Cor. 1.26ff.), though Crispus (1 Cor. 1.14; cf. Acts 18.8) and Stephanas (1 Cor. 1.14–16; 16.15–18) were probably of a higher social status.¹¹ Paul may have concentrated his work among the artisans and merchant classes, but the most important members of the congregation were people of some influence and wealth. Indeed, Paul claims only to have baptized those who came from the higher strata: Stephanas, Crispus and Gaius (1 Cor. 1.14–16), who, as God-fearers, were likely to have been of a higher social standing. The Church in Corinth, however, expanded with people from the lower end of the social scale. Such research into the class structure of the provincial cities and the earliest Christian communities can be of great benefit to our understanding of the development of the Christian communities.¹² Within the house-church, the patriarchal system of the family with its cultural habits made its presence felt within the structure of the nascent community. Whatever chance there was of the ideals of 1 Corinthians 12.13 and Galatians 3.26ff. being worked out in practice was severely restricted by the social forces at work.¹²

Section 2

Jesus

1

*The Quest for the Historical Jesus*¹

Jesus of Nazareth has always been central to the interests of Christians down the centuries. His words and deeds on earth were seen as those of the incarnate second person of the Trinity. With the rise of historical criticism from the eighteenth century onwards, however, such an ecclesiastical portrait was not immune from criticism. The interest in history and the interpretative change which saw the biblical books read like any other books from antiquity and compared with other ancient texts rather than the later theological texts of Christianity, meant that instead of viewing Jesus solely in terms of the history of salvation as told in the Bible, the world in which he lived, both Jewish and Hellenistic, gradually became the important reference for understanding of his mission and message. What is more, the attempt to ascertain what really happened and the tools of secular history had their effect on the method of New Testament research. The quest for the historical Jesus manifested a distinct unease, if not downright scepticism, with regard to the stories in the Gospels. The search for what really happened necessitated the use of patient study of the sources to get behind the Church's dogmatic presentation of Jesus to the original person and his message. This meant peeling away the layers of accretion added by early Christians as they sought to express their faith in the one who was seen by them as Lord and God.²

The quest for the historical Jesus went hand in hand with the emerging interest in source criticism. If one wanted to return to the Jesus of history, some attempt had to be made to assess which of the sources offered the nearest in time and content to Jesus himself. This meant in time the establishment of the hypothesis that the Gospel of Mark was the first canonical Gospel to be written.³ The story of this remarkable period in the study of early Christianity, particularly as it applies to the study of the quest for the historical Jesus, is told in that famous book by Albert Schweitzer, translated into English as *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. It surveys the nineteenth-century quest from its start in the fragments of the German scholar

H. S. Reimarus to its later manifestations in the work of the early twentieth-century scholar, W. Wrede. The book itself manifests many of the shortcomings of its predecessors, whose views are set out so eloquently, but it also established a fact, which has dominated New Testament study, and in particular the study of the life of Jesus, ever since. By stressing the centrality of eschatology and pointing out the way in which modern searchers for the 'real' Jesus tried to find a more acceptable Jesus who would be more preferable to modern sensibilities (e.g. universal human kinship and acceptance of God⁴), Schweitzer set the agenda for debate about the historical Jesus in the following 100 years.

What emerges in Schweitzer's work is the central importance of eschatology for understanding Jesus of Nazareth and the extent to which the quest for the Jesus of history tells us as much about the intellectual preferences of the researchers as about Jesus. George Tyrrell said that the nineteenth-century quest for the historical Jesus resembled the situation where a person looked down a deep well and saw his own reflection in the bottom.⁵ No doubt that there are insights a-plenty in the various attempts to pursue this quest, but the fact was, as Schweitzer's book indicated, that the quest was nothing like radical enough. It had only paid lip service to the application of the historical method. While few would want to defend all the details of Schweitzer's own reconstruction, the outline of that reconstruction has stood the test of time. That element which Schweitzer demonstrated so painstakingly was the centrality of eschatology in the ministry of Jesus. Not that the insight itself was anything new. In a book which had been published ten years or so before (which was itself heavily dependent on work done in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century), Johannes Weiss⁶ had established the central importance of the kingdom of God in the message of Jesus and the need to set that concept in the context of first-century Jewish eschatological beliefs. This was something which had become more easy to do after the discovery of various non-canonical Jewish works during the previous hundred years (e.g., *Ethiopic Enoch*) which had broadened the knowledge of contemporary Jewish beliefs.

For many, Schweitzer's solution is an unpalatable one. It offers us a picture of a Jesus whose whole outlook is dominated by a single-minded eschatological conviction, who shifts his perspective mid-ministry and goes up to Jerusalem believing that he has to undergo the messianic tribulations to enable the divine kingdom to come, and dies bitterly disappointed. Schweitzer's Jesus is a strange figure and one who does not fit easily into our world. This eschatological Jesus and the strangeness of his life and message have been the lasting contribution of Schweitzer and Weiss, and it is worth recalling those famous words with which Schweitzer started the closing chapters of his book; they are a reminder of the strangeness of the world we are entering:

The study of the life of Jesus has had a curious history. It set out in quest for the historical Jesus, believing that when it had found him, it could bring him straight back into our time as a teacher and saviour. It loosed the bands by which he had been riveted for centuries to the stony rocks of ecclesiastical doctrine, and rejoiced to see life and movement coming into the figure once more, and the historical Jesus advancing, as it seemed, to meet it. But he does not stay; he passes by our own time and returns to his own. What surprised and dismayed the theology of the last forty years was that, despite all forced and arbitrary interpretations it could not keep him in our own time, but had to let him go.⁷

In many ways Schweitzer's work marked a watershed in research into the life of Jesus. For one thing, it placed eschatology at the centre of the stage, from which it has been difficult to dislodge it. It was followed with a different and less optimistic theological ethos, the theology of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. There is a sense in which the theology of Barth, based as it is on the revealed word of God, is about a God who is unknown and unknowable, except through the definitive eschatological revelation from God. The belief that it was human intellect which could enable one to find out what Jesus was really like was given a severe jolt by Barth. Such an attitude could be regarded as a sign of human arrogance, an unwillingness to submit oneself to the revelation of God in Christ. In the aftermath of the First World War Barth's theology took root.⁸

There grew up the discipline of Form Criticism in New Testament studies. As practised by Rudolf Bultmann this involved a much more radical scepticism with regard to the gospel tradition.⁹ The Gospels, it was suggested, were the construction of the Church, and reflected the social interests and struggle of the nascent communities. The attempt to get behind our present texts to the kernel of the story was, in many cases, viewed as both a forlorn, but also an unnecessary, quest, as the origin of many of the stories was within the life of the Church. What mattered was not what the historical Jesus said; he, after all, was merely part of the preparation for the gospel and did not preach the gospel.¹⁰ It was Christ crucified and risen again as preached by the Early Church, and in particular by Paul, which was the heart of the Church's proclamation – not the reconstructions of modern scholarly analysis. The quest for the historical Jesus did not serve the elucidation of the gospel. Rather, it was an antiquarian quest which would prove relatively fruitless.¹¹ It should be said at once that Bultmann himself did not believe that it was impossible to find out anything about the historical Jesus.¹²

Such an approach was to dominate German New Testament scholarship for the best part of 30 years. Of course, there were exceptions to this approach.¹³ A reaction to the hegemonic Bultmannian position came from

within the ranks of Bultmann's own disciples, however. Ernst Käsemann affirmed that it was indeed necessary to search for information about the historical Jesus as a necessary presupposition of the kerygma about him; it was insufficient merely to assert that he had existed and that he had been crucified under Pontius Pilate.¹⁴ Käsemann's essay paved the way for what has been called the New Quest. In its wake another of Bultmann's pupils, Günther Bornkamm, wrote a book entitled *Jesus of Nazareth*.¹⁵ There is a marked difference about this particular life of Jesus compared with its nineteenth-century predecessors. The influence of Form Criticism, with its scepticism about the historical value of the chronological accounts of the Gospels, not to mention the eschatological dimension, is everywhere apparent. There is a widespread recognition that the structure of all the Gospels, with their isolated stories and sayings, rarely reflects the order of events and sayings in Jesus' own life, but is rather the responsibility of the early collectors and transmitters of the gospel tradition. Even those who consider that much can be said about Jesus' message and view of his mission, accept the basic insights of Form Criticism concerning the make-up of the Gospels. Even allowing for eye-witness testimony in the Gospels and the possibility of a loose framework for the sayings and stories, few today would want to maintain that we can know the exact relationship of the various pericopes to each other in the setting of Jesus' own life.¹⁶

The quest for the historical Jesus has assumed an important place in New Testament research, but all who embark on that quest are now convinced of the difficulties of that task.¹⁷ No commentator would underestimate the temptation to portray a Jesus who is acceptable to the modern mind. Perhaps Schweitzer's portrait of the eschatological fanatic remains shocking in its strangeness, but it reminds us that there can be no ignoring Jesus' setting in the confused world of Second Temple Judaism with its eager longings and frustrated hopes.

Differing approaches to the Jesus of history

There have been three major ways of construing the Jesus of history. First of all, and the oldest (although it is least typical of modern biblical scholarship), is the view that Jesus was a typical Jewish messianic pretender, whose political activity met with execution at the hands of the political establishment and whose message was then transformed into an other-worldly religion by his followers.

Second, there is the view in which Jesus is presented as a herald of the end of the world (the eschatological prophet of Weiss and Schweitzer). The future orientation of such a theory plays down the importance of the present as an opportunity for social change. The ethics of Jesus become merely a temporary expedient pending the end of all things. The emphasis in this kind

of eschatology is usually on the divine initiative: no human can do anything to bring in the kingdom of God. Jesus, the prophet of the end of the world, died without seeing the kingdom come, and it was left to the church to pick up the pieces of the failed eschatological expectation. A recent influential example of it is the version offered by Ed Sanders, who suggests that Jesus is the prophet of restoration eschatology.

Third, there is the picture of Jesus the teacher. This takes various forms, in one of which he is depicted as a Sage whose aphorisms tantalized and whose practices enraged the ruling élite (which is very much the position of Crossan and the members of the Jesus Seminar but has parallels in earlier reconstructions).

The rise of historical criticism saw a revolution in the fortunes of the New Testament's shortest Gospel, that of Mark. This text, rather than the Gospel of Matthew, for centuries the primary narrative text of the Christian Church, came to be recognized as the source of Matthew and Luke. At the beginning of the twentieth century the writing of W. Wrede on the motif of the messianic secret in Mark had raised questions about the confidence which earlier historians of Christian origins were putting in the Gospel of Mark. This suspicious attitude to Mark is at the heart of one of the major recent attempts to recover the Jesus of history. This tends to reject Mark as being the prime example of Christian gloss on the life of Jesus in which eschatological and apocalyptic elements have been inserted in favour of the hypothetical source Q which may lie behind Matthew and Luke. The picture of Jesus which can be recovered from the earliest version of the sayings source behind Matthew and Luke is that of a Sage, but one whose teaching is full of eschatological fire and apocalyptic symbolism. The Q source, at least in its earliest form, may have been akin to what we find in the Gospel of Thomas, a text discovered in the library from Nag Hammadi, and which is widely believed to contain versions of Jesus' sayings which are likely to be more authentic than those contained in the canonical gospels. This is a collection of over a hundred sayings of Jesus with no narrative content, in which Jesus appears as an enigmatic Sage full of ambiguous aphorisms, a nonconformist eccentric who sat loose to the values of many of his contemporaries and their conventions and found himself a victim of the paranoia and political machinations of the colonial power and its puppet state in Jerusalem. The eschatological teaching of the Gospels is an overlay, therefore, which was not part of the original Jesus' message.

Trying to find roughly similar figures to Jesus of Nazareth in Second Temple Judaism is not easy. The nearest we get is the figures about whom Josephus writes, who led the masses out into the wilderness promising them a repetition of God's mighty acts of old (*Ant.* 20.167f.). There is also Theudas (mentioned in Acts 5.36), who promised a repeat of the miracle of Joshua 3 (*Ant.* 20.97), the strange Jesus son of Ananias, who proclaimed a

message of doom on the Temple in 62 CE and was flogged for so doing, and the prophet who promised the crowd deliverance at the end of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 (*Ant.* 6.281ff.). Josephus has little sympathy with such movements, as he makes clear in his curt dismissal of the deluded prophet (*War* 6.281f.), though in *Ant.* 18.63f. (if authentic) Josephus offers a more sympathetic portrait of Jesus. In the passages where Josephus describes the crushing of popular prophetic movements there is no record of them having been led by someone who claimed to be messiah. From the brief comments made about their actions it is apparent that the leaders were claiming to repeat some of the distinctive actions which marked the formation and liberation of the people of God in the past: the crossing of the Jordan, the miraculous destruction of the city walls of Jerusalem, the desert experience and the like.

Among these accounts of the later-first-century CE historian Josephus we have a graphic description of what can happen when revolutionary idealism takes over and dictates the course of events. We can detect in his description of the last days in Jerusalem something of the frantic spirit which gripped some of the most hot-headed inhabitants, for example. When suffering for the populace had been enormous and the Romans were about to take over the city, some still clung on to the belief that somehow God would vindicate them. They hoped for a miracle. As a result they persisted with the armed struggle, ending their resistance with a last-ditch stand in the Temple in the conviction that divine deliverance would come even at the last; just as it had centuries before, when Moses, Joshua, Gideon and other heroes of Israel's past had experienced great deliverance when all the odds seemed to be stacked against them. The comment made in Luke 24.21 echoes such sentiments. Many may want to make a distinction between Jesus and the Jewish rebels against Rome in 70 CE, either to protect Jesus from the charge of subversion of the existing political order or, more disturbing still, from appearing to be yet another prophetic fanatic proved wrong by history. But Jesus was not the only prophet of his generation to meet a violent death for daring to proclaim imminent divine deliverance.¹

Using the Gospels to Establish the Character of Jesus' Life and Message

The research of the last century or so has cast doubt on the value of the Gospels for our understanding of the course, though not necessarily the character, of the life of Jesus. We live in a questioning age when the miraculous is not regarded as something commonplace.¹ Yet it is not only our scepticism of the miraculous which may impel us to question the authenticity of the Gospels. A glance at the Gospels themselves reveals differences between the accounts, in some cases of a relatively minor kind and in others of a more significant nature.² The most obvious discrepancy lies in the relationship between the Gospel of John and the other three Gospels, the Synoptic Gospels, so called because of the similarities which exist between them. The picture of Jesus which emerges in the former differs from that which emerges in the latter. Whereas in Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus hardly ever speaks about himself and the character of his mission, the recurring theme throughout the Fourth Gospel concerns the identity of Jesus and his mission from the Father. From the very first words of the Prologue the reader is left in little doubt that, as far as the Evangelist is concerned, Jesus of Nazareth is no ordinary person, nor is he merely a Prophet; he is the Word become flesh, the emissary from the Father who in his own person makes known the character of the Father (John 1.18). In the past, scholars have explained this discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels on the one hand and John on the other by supposing that John is a later, theological reflection on the significance of the life and mission of Jesus, what Clement of Alexandria called 'the spiritual gospel'. So it is to the Synoptic Gospels that scholars have gone to find their accounts of the character of Jesus' ministry.

At the heart of two of the Synoptic Gospels we have Johannine-type sayings (Matt. 11.25-7 and its parallel in Luke 10.21-2). The situation is not so straightforward, therefore. For one thing there have been many voices raised in protest over the treatment of John as an unreliable source for the reconstruction of Jesus' life and work. There are those who think that it would be a mistake to consign all the material in this Gospel to the reflections of later thinkers,³ without taking due account of the instances in the Gospel which may indicate that the Fourth Evangelist has access to tradition which is at least as reliable as that in the Synoptic Gospels, and possibly more so. Such an approach to the Gospel has been facilitated by the appreciation of the Jewishness of this Gospel and its themes.⁴ What is more, there has

been a growing appreciation that we cannot treat the Synoptic Gospels as the biographical accounts which would be so helpful to modern historians. In their very different ways the traditions in the Synoptic Gospels were possibly subjected to modification different from, but parallel to, what we find in John, and by their ordering may reflect the concerns of the final redactors.⁵ We are no longer in a position to ascertain with any degree of certainty what motivated, for example, the Evangelist Luke to write his Gospel and its companion volume, the Acts of the Apostles. That the choice of material does indeed reflect a specific purpose on the part of the Evangelist is evident from various hints throughout both works: the concern to stress the true Jewishness of Jesus and the early Christian movement, his innocence and that of his followers in the eyes of the Roman authorities, the concentration on the activities of Peter and Paul in Acts, and the sudden end to the narrative of Acts when the apostle Paul reaches Rome for the first time. Elaborate theories have been put forward to account for these phenomena.⁶ The phenomena are in themselves adequate testimony to the fact that Luke-Acts is a story whose composition betrays the concerns of its writer to present the Christian message of salvation in as attractive a form as possible to a, probably suspicious, pagan audience. This makes his account less of a history of early Christianity and more of an apology in which historical details are included. Indeed, if we go to Acts looking for information about the acts of the apostles, we shall be disappointed, because attention is concentrated on one whose claim to be an apostle was disputed by many, and only rarely recognized by Luke (Acts 14.14).

Even if an evangelist had wanted to write an ordered, chronological account of the ministry of Jesus, as Luke in his prologue may suggest that he intended (Luke 1.1), it would probably have been impossible to do so. The nature of the traditions which evangelists received was such that a chronological account was probably out of the question. The study of the history of the gospel tradition over the last century or so has shown that what we have in the Gospels is a series of sayings and stories which are often only loosely related to each other, with little indication of their chronological relationship.⁷ This seems to be borne out by the short reference to the composition of the Gospels written in the early part of the second century CE by Papias of Hierapolis, recorded by the fourth-century historian Eusebius of Caesarea (*EH* 3.39.15):

Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said or done by the Lord. For he [Mark] had not heard the Lord, nor had followed him, but later on, as I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded, but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them.

This is related by Papias about Mark, and about Matthew this was said: Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language and each interpreted them as best they could.

If we were to depend on the Synoptic Gospels alone, we would find that much of Jesus' ministry could be crammed into a very short period. Indeed, most reconstructions of the outline of Jesus' ministry tend to depend on the chronology in the Gospel of John which includes references to various Jewish feasts at various points in the story (e.g., John 2.13; 6.4; 7.2; 12.1) and has led scholars to the conclusion that the ministry of Jesus lasted for about three years. Apart from the account of the Passion, there are few chronological references in the Gospels, and the original setting of the sayings and stories is not readily apparent in the form we have them. Attempts to explore the history of the traditions and explain their development, often called the traditio-historical method, have suggested the kind of process which went on before the material finally reached its recent form in our Gospels.⁸ The comparison between parallel passages in different Gospels allows us to ascertain the extent to the alterations which went on and to assess what may have been the original form of a saying or story. Even well-known passages like the Beatitudes (Matt. 5.1f.; Luke 6.22ff.) and the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6.9ff.; Luke 11.2ff.) reflect the changes which have taken place in the sayings tradition, with minor developments and alterations apparent. These factors have to be taken into account in any assessment of the tradition for the quest for the Jesus of history.

Much has been written about the method of gospel criticism: form criticism,⁹ redaction criticism,¹⁰ criteria for separating authentic from inauthentic sayings, and the rest.¹¹ The central fact of gospel criticism is the phenomenon of the Gospels themselves, with their parallel accounts, variations and differing emphases. It is when one is confronted with, for example, the two versions of the Beatitudes in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that we need to formulate a way of explaining the relationship between these two versions. This is the heart of the traditio-historical method. It arises from the texts themselves and has not been unnaturally foisted upon them by the excessive attentiveness of scholarly activity.

The point may be illustrated by reference to a parable found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke: the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22.1–14; Luke 14.15–24).¹² Matthew has a much longer account of this story. Not only does his version contain the addition about the guest, who does not have the appropriate wedding garment (vv.11ff.), it also makes reference to the fact that the host sent his armies to destroy those who refused the initial invitation (v.7). Luke, on the other hand, has a more expanded version of the second instruction to the servant about the guests who would replace those who had been invited initially (14.21). His account tells us a little about the

kind of person who was summoned to the feast by the host: the poor, the maimed and the blind. These variations between the two versions may well indicate the concern of each Evangelist (or, more likely, the earlier tradition) to read into the story a deeper significance than it may have had in the first place. Luke's addition about the character of those invited is consistent with his concern, manifest elsewhere in this Gospel, with the outcasts. The good news of God's salvation comes to the Jewish nation, but it is the tax collectors and prostitutes who show most enthusiasm, and ultimately (in Acts) the Gentiles who are most responsive. We should remember that the story of the mission of the Church in Acts ends with the quotation from Isaiah 6.9f. (Acts 28.26), concerning the rejection of the message by the Jewish people and its acceptance by the Gentile 'outcasts'.

In Matthew the concerns are somewhat different. The addition about the wedding garment, whatever its source (and it may well be a separate parable rather than the creation of the Evangelist or his tradition),¹³ demonstrates the enormous concern throughout the Gospel of Matthew to ensure that there is to be no slackening in the pursuit of righteousness. Those who are invited to the wedding feast are allowed in on the understanding that 'their righteousness will exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees' (Matt. 5.20). The addition about the revenge taken by the king upon his ungrateful guests is probably symptomatic of a situation when the parable was interpreted by the Christian community after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. So the host at the feast becomes a king who is God; those invited to the feast initially are the members of the Jewish people. Their rejection of the invitation taken to them by the servants of the king (the prophets) brings upon them the judgement of the king and the destruction of their city (the fall of Jerusalem). Likewise the bad treatment meted out to the servants of the king (v.5f.) may be indicative of the rejection of the prophetic ministry alluded to elsewhere in the gospel tradition (e.g., Matt. 23.37; Luke 11.47f.). Thus in Matthew the parable becomes an allegory of the rejection of the offer of God by the Jewish nation, a concise history of salvation, the judgement upon the Jews and the consequences of that response in the Gentile mission. The Gospel of Luke probably preserves the original form of the parable, which is to be understood as a picturesque way of speaking about the crisis facing Jesus' hearers, as they listen to his message. Like the guests who were invited initially to the wedding feast (an eschatological image; cf. Isa. 25.6), Jesus' hearers need to grasp their chance. Now is the time for a decision; it is a time of eschatological crisis; there can be no procrastinating in deciding about the kingdom.

We are fortunate in having parallel versions of many of the sayings of Jesus, for this enables us to assess the degree to which the saying has been subject to change and development in the course of its transmission. Noting the differences which exist between the various versions is a fairly simple

task, but it is much more hazardous to move from such a comparison to decisions about priority, and about the authenticity of a particular saying or story. It must be admitted that with the investigation of the history of the tradition we are in the realm of possibilities, and the solution which is offered by one interpreter will not be accepted by all.

While we can make some assessment of the relative priority of the traditions contained in the Gospels, the question arises of the previous history of the earliest form of the saying or story. This has been the subject of considerable controversy and research. Underlying the form-critical method is the assumption that the primitive Christian communities were to a large extent responsible for shaping the bulk of the material now contained in the Gospels, so that original sayings of Jesus were subsequently expanded into controversies and stories.¹⁴ We have to face the fact that we are very much in the dark about the origin and development of the gospel tradition. Attempts have been made to argue that early Christian attitudes to the gospel tradition resembled the attitude of the later rabbis to the sayings of the Sages.¹⁵ There are problems, however, not least in the evidence from the Gospels themselves of expansion and development in the tradition and in the dangers of using later rabbinic material to illuminate the situation in the period of the Second Temple. The existence of careful oral transmission in the ancient world, and particularly in Judaism, might enable us to take some of the guesswork out of this period, about which we know so little, though we need to ask whether such attention to memory and the past were so important for groups infused with messianic enthusiasm. In due course, it seems likely that some kind of oral transmission was practised in the church. While recent research into rabbinic material has indicated that the kinds of development now familiar to us from the Synoptic Gospels were at work in the rabbinic materials also,¹⁶ it is not impossible that such patterns of careful transmission may have been operative in the primitive Church and the amount of creativity was nothing like as large as is often supposed.¹⁷ Hints that we do have suggest that there may well have been more reverence for the sayings of Jesus than some of the earlier form critics allowed for.

The approach to the historical Jesus taken in the following pages is by the standards of much modern study 'maximalist' in that the extent of material which is linked with the Jesus of history is much larger than in most comparable studies. There are two major reasons for this. First of all, the more one looks at related Jewish texts, the more plausible a case can be made for the authenticity of much of what is contained in the Gospels. Second, this approach is based on a presumption of authenticity of evidence unless there are strong reasons to doubt it.¹⁸

A maximalist approach reckons with the possibility that more account should be taken of the Johannine traditions, both sayings as well as stories; or at least they should form an additional body of evidence to be consulted.

Of course, no commentator can ignore the significant difference in form and content between the two sets of material. In such a comparison, the Gospel of John has invariably come off worse, as its presentation of a Jesus who is much more overt about his mission has seemed to make it useless as a reliable historical source. Nevertheless, the resort to it from time to time by those historians with little or no theological interest should give one pause for thought, as well as those who have questioned the over-reliance on the synoptic tradition, whether in the canonical gospels or in the related extra-canonical material. This cannot deny the problems posed by the differences, though it does raise the question whether one should regard these as alternative, parallel, developments of the Jesus material in what may have been relatively isolated situations. The closest analogy would be the way in which the biblical legal traditions and their setting found different, though related, expression in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Keeping these sources in play as several ways into the history of Jesus seems historically responsible and something which may help us avoid those reductionist traps which can easily ensnare us into creating an altogether less strange Jesus than the sources beckon us to contemplate.¹⁹

3

*John the Baptist*¹

According to all our sources, the preaching of John the Baptist played a crucial role in the initial stages of Jesus' ministry. The primitive preaching of the Church, as reported in Acts 10.37 and 13.24, includes reference to him and his teaching, though our earliest sources indicate that the Baptist probably had no personal commitment to Jesus as Messiah (Matt. 11.2 and par. and John 1.20–3). The New Testament portrays John as an eschatological prophet who looked forward to the coming of one mightier than himself (Mark 1.7); it is the one mightier than John who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is an eschatological judgement (Luke 3.16, cf. the cleansing function of the Spirit in the Dead Sea Scrolls, e.g. 1 QH 16).² Probably John expected either the great and terrible day of the Lord (cf. Malachi 4.5), or the cleansing function of the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit is consistent with the view of the purging function of the Messiah as it is found, say, in the Psalms of Solomon 17.24.

At the period, water rites were common in a number of religious groups, and occasionally, as in the case with the baptism of converts to Judaism (proselytes) (reflected in the much later *bYēbamoth* 46a) it marked the initiation into a new religious practice.³ We know that frequent lustrations formed part of the ritual of the Qumran community (e.g., 1 *QS* 3; *CD* 11; cf. *Ant.* 18.116ff.).⁴ There has been much debate about the origins and character of John's baptism. What we need to note is that, as far as the Gospels are concerned, it was a baptism of repentance, involving a change of life, and had a strong eschatological element. We do not know that those who were baptized felt themselves already to be part of a new age or, as the New Testament implies, underwent baptism as a preparation for the coming kingdom. The evidence from Josephus' account concerning the Baptist (*Ant.* 18.116ff.) suggests that there may well have been a significant eschatological component, as Josephus tells us that John was put into prison because Herod was afraid that his preaching would cause an insurrection;⁵ explicable if we suppose that John's preaching had a subversive element. We cannot be sure that the baptism was performed once only, but the implication of the New Testament writings, supported by the once-only character of Christian baptism, suggests that it may well have been a rite performed once only.

It is the eschatological element in John's message which is most significant according to the New Testament sources. Mark implicitly (9.12f., though this saying need not imply an identification of John with Elijah) and Matthew explicitly (Matt. 11.14; cf. Luke 7.27) identify John with the Elijah who is to come (Mal. 4.5), and all the Gospels quote the verse in Malachi 3.1 in connection with John the Baptist (Matt. 11.10; Luke 7.27).⁶ John is described as 'the angel who goes before the face of the Lord', echoing Malachi 3.1. There may be reflected in this verse ideas which were current that John may have been an embodiment of a person of prophetic zeal like an angel or the heavenly Elijah, just as Elijah himself was regarded as an embodiment of his ancestor Phineas (Targum, TJ1, on Numbers 25.12, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 47–8)

The earliest layers of the tradition record that there was contact between John and Jesus after the former had been put into prison. The Baptist sent his disciples to inquire whether Jesus was in fact the one who was to come (Matt. 11.2 and par.). Also, if the opening section of the Gospel of John is anything to go by, Jesus' first disciples were themselves disciples of the Baptist. John the Baptist was still revered long after his death,⁷ something confirmed by the story of the disciples of the Baptist met by Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19.1),⁸ and there have been those who would consider that the attitude taken towards the Baptist in the Gospel of John betrays evidence of an attempt to persuade his followers, contemporary with the writer of the Gospel, to accept the messiahship of Jesus.⁹

As far as Jesus is concerned, the tradition suggests that he saw a close link

between himself and John in his understanding of his ministry. Thus in Luke 7.31ff. he characterizes John and himself as part of the same mission. The little parable quoted in Luke 7.32 is intended to show that two different approaches of God's messengers are both rejected by the people. Indeed, at the end of this little section both John and Jesus are described as children of wisdom.¹⁰ Such a link is unlikely to have been made by the Early Church, which would have wanted to stress the difference between its Lord and John. The saying probably goes back to Jesus and indicates how closely he saw his ministry being linked with that of the Baptist (John 3.22, cf. 4.1).

The baptism of John was important for Jesus. His own call seems to have depended on it (Mark 1.11, cf. 11.27ff.). But the differences between the two should not be overlooked. The manner of life of the two differed (Luke 7.33). But while John can be called the greatest among those born of women, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John. John stands at the fulcrum of the ages; he is the hinge upon which the aeons move. He stands on the brink of the age of fulfilment, but is not himself part of it (Luke 16.16 and Matt. 11.12f.). Jesus sees the ministry of John the Baptist as initiating a decisive break with the old order of the Law and the Prophets; but Jesus asserts that the age of fulfilment, to which John bears witness, is inaugurated in his own ministry (Matt. 11.2ff.).¹¹

4

The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' first words are 'the time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel' (1.15). The phrase, 'the kingdom of God', is a central pillar for our understanding of the message of Jesus.¹ The phrase is not particularly common in the contemporary Jewish literature,² and for that matter is not found very often in other parts of the New Testament (e.g., John 3.3; Acts 8.12; Rom. 14.17; 1 Cor. 6.9; cf. 15.24). It is replaced in the Gospel of John by the words, 'eternal life' (the juxtaposition is found in John 3.3, 5).³ It probably refers to a future age of glory, when the divine will would be revealed in human affairs. As we have seen, it is a fundamental datum of Jewish eschatology that God would bring about an age of perfection in this world, when the dominance of foreign powers would be overthrown and God's righteousness revealed.⁴

The central importance of an eschatological understanding of the Kingdom of God has dominated New Testament scholarship throughout the bulk of the last century. Those who want to interpret the meaning of the phrase 'the kingdom of God' find themselves interacting with the work of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, whose presentation of the life and message of Jesus centres on the importance of eschatology for Jesus.⁵ Since Weiss' day there have been various changes of emphasis in the interpretation of the phrase. C. H. Dodd championed an interpretation which stressed realized eschatology in the ministry of Jesus.⁶ He played down the future elements in Jesus' proclamation, by transposing the future hope of a kingdom of God on to a transcendent plane and minimizing the this-worldly elements. In another position there is less stress on the eschatological dimension altogether. This is dependent on the rabbinic sources rather than the eschatological passages of the pseudepigrapha (e.g., *Sifra* on Lev. 20.26).⁷ The phrase 'taking upon oneself the yoke of the kingdom and setting oneself apart from wrong doing' is used in rabbinic literature to speak of obedience to the Law in the present by an individual. Its emphasis, therefore, is on obedience to God rather than the cosmic manifestation of the divine sovereignty in human affairs.

There has been a mix of the Weiss/Schweitzer and the Dodd positions, which has wide currency in modern scholarship.⁸ The kingdom of God is an era, which has already been inaugurated in Jesus' ministry (Luke 11.20), but still awaits a final consummation when the rule of God would extend over the whole universe, and the perfection spoken of in biblical passages like Isaiah 11 would be fulfilled.⁹ The phrase is not to be understood in a purely spiritual sense (cf. John 18.36), for God's rule and authority are ultimately to be manifested in the physical world. The Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer, with its petition that God's kingdom would come and God's will be done on earth as in heaven (Matt. 6.10), is an accurate exposition of the essential features of the Jewish (and Jesus') belief concerning the eschatological and this-worldly character of the kingdom.

In this interpretation much weight is placed on the interpretation of Luke 11.20 and 17.21. Jesus inherited from Jewish eschatology a belief in the manifestation of God's reign on earth in the relatively near future (Mark 9.1; 13.30 and 14.25). The question is whether, in addition to a purely futuristic hope, there exists in the Gospels evidence of an emphasis on the present as a time of fulfilment. Supporters of the view that Jesus thought of the kingdom as present as well as future point to Luke 16.16, but particularly to sayings like Matthew 11.5f. and to Luke 11.20 and 17.21b.¹⁰ Despite the fact that the consensus of New Testament scholarship accepts that Jesus believed that the kingdom of God had already in some sense arrived in Jesus' words and deeds, the fact has to be faced that the evidence in support of such an assumption is not very substantial. There are more sayings with a forward-looking charac-

ter than those that concentrate on the present. Nevertheless, the Gospels do suggest that Jesus differed from John the Baptist in discerning that the time of fulfilment had already come. Weiss was probably on the right lines, therefore, to stress the importance of the future dimension in Jesus' teaching and the fact that 'Jesus' activity was governed by the strong and unwavering feeling that the messianic time was imminent . . . and in moments of prophetic vision perceived the opposing kingdom of Satan as already overcome and broken'.¹¹

We turn now to consider some of the different aspects of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels on the kingdom of God, particularly as they are found in the parables.

5

*The Parables*¹

If we examine the teaching of Jesus, we find remarkably little detail about the character of the kingdom, the qualities expected of its members and the style of life which will be enjoyed by those who to enter it. His teaching is full of hints of various kinds concerning the fulfilment of the expectation, manifested particularly in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5.1f.; Luke 6.22f.). According to the gospel tradition, when Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God, he uses parables as the mode of communicating his message and the quality of that entity to which he refers. 'The kingdom of God may be compared with . . .' (Matt. 13.44) is an introductory phrase which is found frequently in the gospel tradition.

The parable was a common teaching device in Judaism and had its origins in the Bible (e.g., Isa. 5.1ff.; 2 Sam. 12.1ff.). Indeed, some of the later rabbinic expositions of the Scriptures are replete with examples of parables. In the Jewish literature the parable is called a *masbal*: a story which by way of comparison drives home the point which is being made. The function of a parable is to illustrate, and in doing this it usually has only one point to make. The various details of the story are, therefore, really incidental to the main point of the story. We should not feel compelled to give them such attention, however arresting these details may be in adding colour to the parable. Like the similes in English usage, the parable attempts to illuminate one particular point by its story. We should no more suppose that every

detail of a parable has significance than press a simile like 'that person is as stubborn as a mule' into making comparisons between a particular human being and other characteristics of a mule other than its stubborn attitude.

By contrast, an allegory is a story, all of whose details are made to yield points of significance. Evidence of an allegory in the gospel tradition may help to illustrate the point. In the parable of the wheat and the tares an interpretation is offered, which takes the individual components of the original parable and gives to these components a deeper significance (Matt. 13.36ff.).² Thus we find that in the interpretation the sower is the 'Son of Man', the field is the world, the good seed is the 'children of the kingdom'; the tares are the 'children of perdition' and the enemy, who comes to sow the tares, is the devil. The final harvest is the close of the age, when the judgement takes place (cf. Rev. 20.10f.), and the separation is parallel to the separation between the sheep and the goats spoken of in the eschatological parable in Matthew 25.31ff. In the critical study of the parables it is often assumed that such allegorization is a feature of the process of reinterpretation of the original parables of Jesus by the Early Church, as they sought to find new meaning in these texts in the changed circumstances of their day.³ To acknowledge that the primary method of teaching employed by Jesus is the parable does not exclude the possibility of subsequent private explanation, which in turn may have involved allegorization of parables.⁴ It would be dangerous to suppose that all allegory must be inauthentic. After all, the parable of the wicked tenants in Mark 12.1ff. is one which it would have been difficult not to hear allegorically given the story's allusiveness, not least passages like Isaiah 5, and the ease with which it was possible for at least some of the hearers to identify with particular characters in the parable (e.g., Mark 12.12). In addition, insofar as Jesus had disciples, it is likely that he offered extra teaching to them (Mark 4.11, cf. 4 Ezra 14.46). Parables might just as easily end up preventing insight as enabling it. So watertight characterizations of the function of parabolic forms in discourse are to be rejected. Hard and fast rules are out of place in investigating the history of tradition at any level.

Recurring Themes in the Parables

In two parables in Mark 2 we find Jesus contrasting the new with the old. The present cannot be a time of fasting and penitence, even though it does mean that Jesus' disciples differ markedly from their contemporaries in their religious practice (Mark 2.18ff.). Jesus explains the difference by comparing the situation with a wedding: the bridegroom and the guests do not fast on the wedding day; it is a time of festivity and rejoicing. So it is for the disciples who are tasting the first fruits of the harvest of the kingdom of God. In addition, the two parables about the different types of cloth and the

wineskins are making a similar point about the break with the past (Mark 2.21f.). There is little point in putting new wine into skins which are old and unable to carry the wine. New and good wine needs new skins. So it is with the present; a new situation has come about with the ministry of Jesus, which demands new initiatives and patterns of behaviour appropriate for that new situation (cf. Matt. 9.37f.; Mark 13.28f.; Luke 7.22; 10.23).

In Matthew 13.44ff. we find two parables which stress how important it was for those who listened to Jesus' teaching to recognize the significance of that which was confronting them. All other preoccupations and interests should be set aside. Like the merchant who came across a pearl which necessitated selling all to purchase it, so it must be for those who hear the good news of the kingdom: this is of ultimate value, compared with which all else must count as dross. Nothing whatever should come between the would-be disciple and his acceptance of the kingdom of God (cf. Luke 9.59ff.).

In many parables Jesus presents his hearers with a challenge (Matt. 5.25f.; 24.37–39; Luke 12.51; 13.6ff.). In the short parables we have already examined we have noted that the hearers are challenged to recognize the new situation which is before them. Several parables which in their present form are exhortations to believers to be ready for the second coming of Christ have been regarded as originally challenges by Jesus to his contemporaries to take decisive action in the face of the imminent catastrophe which confronts them in his person. Response in the face of God's imminent act is a frequently occurring theme (e.g., Matt. 25.1ff.; also Matt. 24.42–50; 25.14ff.; Mark 13.33ff.; Luke 12.35ff.; 41ff., 19.12ff.). The point is that the imminence of the kingdom of God demands of men and women a response which excludes procrastination. It is no use putting off the moment of decision, as the bridesmaids put off the moment of preparation and found themselves left behind when the wedding begins (Matt. 25.1). It is necessary to prepare now for the imminence of the full breaking in of God's reign. As the first buds on the fig tree show that spring is near, already the signs are present which indicate the coming of a new season of God's activity (Mark 13.28f.; cf. Luke 12.54f.).

The political authorities also had to be challenged to stir from their complacency, as parables like Matthew 24.45ff.; 25.14ff.; Mark 12.1ff.; Luke 12.41ff.; 19.12ff. may indicate.⁵ This demands of the hearers a readiness which does not pedantically stress preconceived ideas of what God's kingdom would involve. Complacency in the face of the coming judgement leads to death (Luke 12.16ff.). There would be no second chance for those who had received the invitation but had refused it (Luke 14.15ff. and par.); it was necessary to take every opportunity available while there was still time (Luke 11.24; 13.6ff.; and 16.1ff.), for the crisis had descended on this generation (cf. Luke 11.29, 50).

One theme which emerges from the parables concerning the growth of

seeds (e.g., Mark 4.3ff., 26ff., 31ff.) is the fact that however small the signs may be at the present that God's reign is on its way, it would be revealed in all its glory in due course. The parable of the seed growing secretly (Mark 4.31ff.) is an example of this. The seed grows without the farmer understanding how, or even doing much to cultivate it, yet it is ready for harvest at its due time. In the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4.30f.; cf. Luke 13.18f.) we have the contrast between the small seed and the large tree: small beginnings leading to, and contrasting with, a glorious ending. The stress here is on the inexorable growth and the contrast between the inauspicious beginnings and the final outcome (Mark 4.26). In both passages the eschatological dimension of the parables is evident, in that both evince influence from biblical passages dealing with the coming of the kingdom. At the end of the parable of the seed growing secretly (Mark 4.29), when the harvest is described, there is an allusion to Joel 3.13. At the end of the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4.32), Daniel 4.11f. and 21 are alluded to. A similar contrast to that found in the parable of the mustard seed is in the parable of the leaven (Luke 13.20f.), in which the difference made by the leaven in the flour is said to be illustrative of the contrast between the present and the glorious future manifestation of the kingdom.

The point is made, therefore, that God's reign has been heralded in the ministry of Jesus. Even if the signs are in the present only few in number, the manifestation of God's sovereignty on earth is sure and imminent. In spite of every failure and opposition, from hopeless beginnings God brings forth the triumphant end which has been promised.⁶ That conclusion comes at harvest when the judgement would come (Matt. 25.31ff., 13.24ff., 47f.).

But if the kingdom is coming, whatever the human response may be and however great the opposition to it, what difference does it make to respond in the present other than to guarantee one's status in the age to come? The disciple who follows Jesus accepts God's sovereignty, for it means that at the level of the individual God's reign is made manifest in human affairs. There is a subtle balance between human initiative (Jesus is, after all, the agent of the kingdom's coming) and the divine dynamic behind the Kingdom's coming.⁷ For the bulk of Jewish eschatology the inexorable tide of history was moving under the hand of God ever closer to the establishment of God's reign on earth: the challenge facing the people of God was to repent in the face of its advent.

What sort of attitude characterizes this present response? The responsive hearer is like the tax collector who went up to the Temple to pray, who accepted his sinfulness and humbly cast himself on God's mercy (Luke 18.9ff.; Matt. 21.28). When Jesus compares the disciple with a child, he is referring to the present disposition which will enable entry into the kingdom (Mark 10.13, 16; cf. 9.36). 'Becoming humble like a child' is to share the status of the insignificant, 'the little ones' (to use a term found in Matt. 18.5;

10.40–2). There is a theme which emerges that the ‘little ones’ are more likely to understand the mysteries of God (Matt. 11.25): the tax collectors, the prostitutes and sinners, rather than the wise and the politically powerful. Sharing the perspective of ‘the least’ offers a perspective and a position in society which enables a glimpse of the mystery of God’s reign. The child-like acceptance of salvation, and the obedience and dependence of the faith, is what is demanded by God (cf. Luke 14.7ff.; Matt. 20.28). The disciple who addresses God as ‘Father’, as Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Matt. 6.9ff. and par.), must show the same humility as that of a child (cf. Matt. 18.4).

In his parables Jesus speaks from time to time of God’s relationship with men and women. This is particularly apparent in the collection of parables in Luke 15 (e.g., vv.4ff., vv.8ff.; cf. Matt. 18.12ff.). It is in the parable of the prodigal son in particular that we find a picture of mercy and grace shown to the repentant sinner. The God of the kingdom is one who listens to the poor when they call (Luke 18.2ff.; cf. 11.5ff.), and the offer of mercy is open to all, whatever their present religious affiliations or lack of them (cf. Mark 2.17; Matt. 21.28ff., 22.1ff. and par.; Luke 14.13ff.) In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican we find not a condemnation of Pharisaism, but the use of hyperbole to describe the proper basis of a relationship with God. A relationship comes when men and women adopt an attitude of mind and a disposition of will which is humble and obedient. Jesus does not see his mission as a threat to the Pharisees (Mark 2.17). Rather, he is the eschatological prophet of the final reign of God, proclaiming the love and goodness of the merciful God of all. Yet it is the outcast who eagerly accept his message (Luke 7.41ff.; cf. 14.13ff.).

One of the characteristic features of Jesus’ mission is his consorting with sinners (Matt. 9.11, 13; 11.19; Luke 15.1f.); not just ordinary non-zealous Jews, but those who were regarded as outcasts. These too are included in the call of Jesus, a cause of great offence. What lies behind this call of the sinners is not clear. It may reflect a belief that in the last days all the twelve tribes of Israel would be summoned to participate in it, including the outcasts of Israel (Isa. 11.12; 60.4, 9; 27.13; Psalms of Solomon 17.26; 4 Ezra 13.40ff.).⁸ It is not just those who are not as pious as the Pharisees who are called, but those who according to the Law are sinners – called to participate in the kingdom without prior repentance and change of life (though once in, they discover a change in habit and perspective).⁹ The consequence of response to the kingdom has to involve repentance, sorrow and obligation (Luke 19.1ff.).¹⁰ The equality of opportunity offered by God is stressed in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. 20.1ff.). The nearness of the kingdom means that past religious affiliations do not count for anything (cf. Luke 13.28; 3.8). Like the workers in the vineyard who are given the same wage, however long they have laboured there, those who enter the kingdom enter on the same basis. Past devotion and self-importance count for

nothing. The terms of entry into the kingdom may be clear and uncompromising, but the offer is open to all.

6

Other Teaching

Several of Jesus' parables deal with the quality of life expected of the disciple. In the parable of the sheep and the goats which comes at the end of the eschatological teaching in the Gospel of Matthew (25.31ff.), discipleship is made to depend on the concern for Jesus' 'kinfolk' in this age rather than any specific religious action or confession (cf. Matt. 6.21ff.). Though there is a long tradition of interpretation which sees in Matthew 25.31ff. a reference to Christians in general or Christian missionaries in particular, the wider context in the gospel narrative suggests that the criterion of judgement is based on service of all the hungry, thirsty and imprisoned, who are in a real sense like the persecuted and executed Jesus. In the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18.21ff.) the disciple is taught that the kind of mercy shown by God is expected in dealing with others (cf. Luke 6.36). The demands laid upon the disciple are illustrated by the sayings in Luke, cf. Mark 10.25 and par.; Luke 6.20; 9.59; 12.16ff.; 14.26f.; 16.19ff.). Response to Jesus must be met by a demonstration of following him, else the last state of that person will be worse than the first (Matt. 12.43ff.; Luke 11.24ff.). To be a disciple cannot mean turning back to one's old life (Luke 9.62); the cost of discipleship must be counted before embarking on it (Luke 14.28ff.). There can be no dual allegiance (Matt. 6.24; Luke 16.13), particularly when it comes to a choice between God and idol Mammon, for the demands of God must take over the whole person.

The wandering, homeless life of Jesus, as it is reported in the Gospels, is itself a paradigm of discipleship (Luke 9.57f.).¹ It is those who are poor like him who inherit the kingdom of God (Luke 6.22). The rich will find it impossible (Mark 10.24; cf. Luke 16.19), because the accumulation of wealth is symptomatic of an alternative devotion and undermines that attitude of dependence and trust which is so central for the child of God (Matt. 6.19ff.). Wealth can lead to complacency (cf. Luke 12.16ff.); the person who amasses great wealth, pulls down his barns and builds even larger ones, is in no position to benefit from them when his life is forfeit (cf. Mark 8.35).² Jesus allied himself with the poor and the outcast and made them the specific focus

of his ministry (Luke 4.16ff.).³ It is not that the good things of the world were evil, for in the age to come the oppressed would be satisfied with those things (Luke 6.22ff.; Mark 10.29ff.). Jesus' good news for the poor was consistent with the biblical emphasis on God's vindication of the underprivileged.

Jesus commands his disciples to be perfect as God is perfect (Matt. 5.48; cf. Luke 6.36). This means that there is no end to the obligation laid upon the disciples; they can never sit back and say that they have done God's will, because that suggests a state of self-satisfied righteousness, which can never be the human response to God (Luke 18.14; cf. 17.10). It is this message which emerges from the parable of the good Samaritan which, in its present context, sets out to show what love of neighbour involves (Luke 10.29ff.; 12.29 and par.).⁴

The main points of the story are well known, but, like the dramatic tale of the Pharisee and the publican, the effect that it must have had is hard for us to imagine. It is only when we begin to recognize the implacable hostility between Jews and Samaritans stretching back centuries (cf. John 4.9)⁵ that the impact of the parable can be seen in a new light. In addition to the fact that the person who came to the aid of the traveller who had been robbed and left for dead is a Samaritan, the actions of the two priestly figures also call for some attention. We have to remember that, for the Jew, contact with a corpse would have involved ritual uncleanness (Num. 19.11). Thus he would avoid the risk of any unnecessary contact, particularly so if he were to be engaged on any divine service, which would have been true of the priest and Levite if they had been travelling in the direction of Jerusalem, for the likelihood is that they would have been going there to participate in the Temple service. Responsibility to one's neighbour does not depend on racial or religious ties, for there can be no limit put on the extent of the demand made by those in need.⁶ The fact that the Samaritan in the story did not stop to ascertain whether the person whom he had found half-dead was his co-religionist or a Jew, indicates the pattern of response of the disciple. Concern for one in need transcends such divisions.

Second, we have an implicit criticism of any religion which places obedience to the letter of the Law above the demands of those in need (cf. the Qorban controversy in Mark 7.9ff.). To some extent the decision of the priest and the Levite to walk by without going near the prostrate person, *in case* it was a corpse and they were defiled by contact with it, is understandable. According to the letter of the Law, any contact with a corpse would have disqualified them from immediate participation in the cult. Thus, they were acting within the bounds of what was permissible when they walked past the injured body. But Jesus, like some later rabbinic teachers, considered that some obligations of the Law were more important than others (cf. Luke 11.42) and demanded supersession of the less weighty matters of the

Law (e.g., see *mNazir* 7.1; cf. *Mekilta Shabb.* 1). The problem with any religion (Christianity included) which interprets its regulations literally is that, while one knows exactly where one stands with regard to correct behaviour, action outside a prescribed limit is excluded, even when the situation demands it. Jesus, in the parable of the good Samaritan, shows that his understanding of true love for one's neighbour can never be fully prescribed, and the demand upon the obedient child of God will continually take him beyond the limits of what is set down (cf. Matt. 5.27). A final point to note is the subtle change in the direction of the discussion. The scribe asks Jesus 'Who is my neighbour?', prompting the telling of the story of the good Samaritan. At the end Jesus asks the scribe, 'Which of these was neighbour to the one who fell among thieves?' (Luke 10.36). The issue of the neighbour has become a question about the character of the human subject rather than the quest to define which person 'out there' qualifies as a neighbour.

In the interpretation of the Law contained in the Sermon on the Mount we find both a stricter stance and an inclusion in the regulations of an inward disposition which makes the line between performance and negligence less clear-cut. It is probably fair to say that Paul's statement that love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom. 13.10) and the practical outworking of this injunction in 1 Corinthians 8 are an appropriate outworking of Jesus' teaching. Such an emphasis on the inward motives may find its antecedent in the prophetic hope of the new Law written on the heart (Jer. 31.31; cf. Ezek. 36.27f.; Gal. 5.22ff.).⁷ The ethical teaching of Jesus was not a replacement of the Law of Moses, therefore.⁸ Indeed, we find few legal or halakic statements in the Jesus tradition (Mark 10.11 is an exception). The teaching which is to be found in the Gospels, therefore, is not the minute regulations of the lawyer but more the ethical maxims of the Sage. The words are not prescriptive but intellectually and ethically taxing, from a teacher who offers puzzles to get one thinking. They are part of the challenge of the kingdom and the decisive crisis in history which has arrived.⁹

In his words about wealth (Luke 6.24ff.), Jesus leaves his hearers in no doubt about the need for the disciple to treat it with suspicion (Mark 10.17ff.). The disciples themselves in the mission-charge are instructed to carry only what is absolutely necessary (Mark 6.8f.; cf. Luke 10.4). Likewise, the call of the first disciples (Mark 1.16ff.) indicates that following Jesus is an extraordinary affair in which there was the expectation that there would be a radical reversal of the former style of life. Those who espouse this alternative pattern of living are the blessed ones (Luke 6.20ff.; Matt. 5.2ff.). The evidence of the itinerant ministry of Jesus is well known (Luke 9.58). The harsh saying to repudiate an important religious obligation (to bury a corpse, *mNazir* 7.1) is evidence of the challenge to established patterns of existence which Jesus both practised and preached (Luke 9.59). The challenge of the

hour is so great that established patterns of behaviour and social relationships are called into question.¹⁰

The question is whether Jesus allowed there to be any compromise of this radical ethic. Two passages in particular call for comment. First of all, there is the first occasion when he is confronted with the issue of the relationship between the Kingdom and the State (Mark 12.13ff.; Matt. 22.15ff.; Luke 20.20ff.). What did Jesus mean when he uttered the famous saying 'Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things which are God's' (Mark 12.17)? It is tempting to argue in the light of Romans 13.7 where the saying of Jesus is probably presupposed, and Matthew 22.15, that Jesus intended his hearers to understand that he wanted the tax to be paid and all due obedience given to Caesar as far as was consistent with obedience to God. According to Luke 23.2, however, the reply of Jesus was a reason for taking Jesus to Pilate. This divergence of response indicates the problems confronting the interpreter of the saying.¹¹

Three issues emerge from a consideration of the passage. First of all, Jesus does not himself possess a coin. Instead, he gets his interlocutors to focus on the fact they are the ones who have the coin, regularly use it, and in a sense have answered their own question: they already use Caesar's coinage and so are part of the Roman economy; their actions have answered their own question. Second, he gets them to focus on the coin which has Caesar's head and inscription on it. This is a bit of metal which in its form as coinage breaches the prohibition against images in Exodus 20.4. Not only are they part of Caesar's economic domain but they have (perhaps unwittingly) accepted his ideology too (indeed, in John's version of Jesus' trial before Pilate, the ruling élite pronounce that they have no king but Caesar, demonstrating their abandonment of fundamental Jewish values: John 19.15). These two factors are the essential context of the final saying. The saying is probably deliberately ambiguous. In a situation where Jesus finds himself in a tight corner, politically, an enigmatic response enables him to avoid having to utter a statement by which he would incriminate himself. If we also bring into the picture the perspective of the kingdom, a different view emerges. Jesus does not regard the Roman State as a final institution, for it is in no way to be equated with the kingdom of God. The State belongs to the age which still exists, but which will definitely vanish as soon as the kingdom of God comes.¹²

Luke 22.35f. reverses instructions which have been previously given earlier in the Gospel (Luke 10.4f.). Although several commentators have suggested that the passage is a creation by Luke,¹³ it could be argued that it does reflect a moment when it became necessary, through different circumstances, to reverse the rules of Luke 10, which after all relate in their present context to Jesus' ministry only. Whether we can take the saying back to Jesus or not, it indicates that, within the tradition of Jesus' sayings, a problem was

felt at some point with regard to the missionary commands of Jesus, with the result that an attempt was made to make them more realistic for changed circumstances.¹⁴

Finally, mention may be made of Jesus' attitude at the time of his arrest and death. In assessing these accounts, we find ourselves up against the problem of their historicity, yet it has to be said that a constant feature of this is the lack of evidence of any resistance by Jesus (at least) to his arrest and subsequent execution. It may be argued that such evidence of an armed reaction has been edited out of the accounts.¹⁵ It may be dangerous to attempt to say too much about Jesus' expectation at this time,¹⁶ but the cry of dereliction suggests a disappointment which would be entirely comprehensible if Jesus believed that, even at the last, God may have brought in the kingdom. What the gospel narratives do suggest is a pattern of life which evinced a pacific messianism in which the temptation to engage in a holy war along with the angels is eschewed in favour of a more subtle and ultimately personally costly confrontation with the ruling élite.¹⁷

7

*The Signs of the Coming Kingdom*¹

Due attention should be paid to the miracle-stories in the Gospels and the part which they play in stressing the manifestation of God's rule. Much has been written on the mythological and symbolic significance of these stories, and one would not want to deny the part which the tendency to embroider and develop has played in their transmission, nor the extent to which a less literal approach to them can help modern readers to find meaning in these allusive ancient stories.² Yet all strands of the New Testament bear witness to the fact that not only Jesus but also the Early Church experienced events of supernatural might. Thus Paul is in no doubt that events of divine power happened in his ministry which he classed as marks of apostolic authority (2 Cor. 12.12; 1 Cor. 2.4; cf. Rom. 15.19). Throughout the Gospels we find accounts of Jesus' miraculous deeds:³ the casting out of demons (Mark 3.23; 5.2ff.), the healing of various types of malaise (e.g., Mark 5.25), and miracles affecting the natural order (e.g., Mark 6.45ff.). Jesus' opponents do not deny that he performed miracles; they were suspicious of the origin of his power (Luke 11.15). In the Gospel of John these miraculous events are called signs, and the Gospel writers see them as signs of divine activity in the world. Such

an understanding of the miraculous deeds probably goes back to Jesus, who linked the casting out of demons with the coming kingdom of God and saw them as signs of the end to evil and oppression (Luke 11.20).

To eliminate the miraculous evidence in the Gospels merely because it offends our modern susceptibilities,⁴ is to be like some interpreters of the last century, who supposed that all miraculous material was to be consigned to the mythological embroidery of the Early Church; it is to ignore the weight of the New Testament evidence, not to mention that from an abundance of secular sources.⁵ That is not to suggest that we should credulously accept all the material of this kind in the Gospels without question. Rather, we should exercise the same careful and critical approach to the miracle traditions as we would to the tradition of Jesus' sayings, fully recognizing the varied theological presuppositions of our own, which may predispose us either to accept the possibility of the miraculous or have severe doubts about its theological viability. Not only that, but we should also recall that in Jewish tradition Jesus was remembered as a magician, a sorcerer who practised miraculous deeds and led Israel astray, a feature also of pagan polemic against Jesus.⁶

Miracle working and magic were very common in the ancient world.⁷ The exclusion of the miraculous element in the Gospels extracts Jesus from his own age where the performing of miraculous deeds would have been an important authentication of his right to speak and act on God's behalf (Luke 11.29; cf. Matt. 12.38ff.). The study of the history of religions has revealed many parallels between the gospel accounts and Hellenistic and Jewish material.⁸ There was a tendency, evident in the Gospels themselves, to increase the dramatic nature of the supernatural acts described (the coin in the fish's mouth in Matthew 17.24ff.⁹ could be a good example of a development in legend of the miraculous character of Jesus' deeds¹⁰). We know that the Hellenistic world was one of growing interest in the supernatural,¹¹ exemplified by belief in the demonic world as well as mystery cults and practices.

Jesus' actions are an important indication that he was the one ordained by God to initiate the kingdom.¹² Luke 11.20 plays a crucial role.¹³ In Matthew we find that the reply to John the Baptist's question whether he was the one to come involves a reference to the mighty acts performed by him as fulfilment of the scriptural promises (Matt. 11.2; cf. Isa. 35.5f.). As we have noted, even Jesus' enemies did not question the fact that he performed certain spectacular acts (cf. *bSanhedrin* 43a), though the tradition also reports a refusal by Jesus to perform authenticating signs to order (e.g., Matt. 12.38ff.; cf. John 2.18). Jesus' power to do mighty acts is, however, explained as being the result of a power derived not from God but from the powers of darkness, as Jesus' controversy with his opponents about the origin of his power makes clear (Mark 3.21ff. and par.; cf. John 8.48).

The miraculous element in the Gospels is important in Jesus' claim to be

proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom. Without it there can be little doubt that his claim would have seemed an empty one. The refusal by Jesus to perform signs caused problems (Matt. 12.38ff.; Luke 11.16; 11.29). The miracle in the desert (Mark 6.30ff. and par.) and the reports of healings all helped to convince his contemporaries that he was either the agent of God or a charlatan whose wonder-working threatened to undermine the order and stability of the Jewish nation just as the warning of the book of Deuteronomy 13 had foretold (Deut. 13.1f.; 18.20; cf. John 11.47f.; Balaam in Num. 22ff.).¹⁴ The problem of true and false prophecy was a difficulty in Jewish life (e.g., Zech. 13.2f.; *CD* 12.2ff.; *QH* 4.15f.; 2 Pet. 2.1; 1 John 2.22f.; *Didache* 11.5; 16.3 and *Dialogue* 7).¹⁵

Without the miracles it becomes more difficult to see why Jesus should have posed anything like the threat that he seemed to have done to the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The evidence suggests that they were not dealing merely with a deviant teacher (though there were elements of that in the reaction to him) but a claimant to divine power who had in various ways authenticated his right to be the prophet of God by his mighty acts.

Some recent discussion of the miracles has suggested that we may be dealing not just with individual deliverance and healing but signs of the repair of a wider disorder in society. Thus the exorcism of the man possessed by legion has been interpreted as a symbolic challenge to the consequences of social dislocation caused by the imposition of colonial power. The self-harm and antisocial behaviour of the Gerasene reflects the way that the man had internalized the damage done to an oppressed people by an occupying power. The casting out of legion (a significant word given its Roman military connotation), therefore, into the Abyss, is a sign that the reign of the Beast has come to an end (cf. Rev. 19.20).¹⁶

8

*Jesus and the Future*¹

Despite the attempts of various scholars to play down the future element in Jesus' teaching, the evidence is strong that he viewed the kingdom of God as beginning to draw near in his own ministry, and as a reality which would finally come in the not-too-distant future (e.g., Mark 9.1),² even if its precise date was unknown (Mark 13.32ff.; Matt. 24.42ff.). The conviction that the eschatological events had arrived did not necessitate the belief that the

consummation would be immediate. Jewish sources suggest that the 'end time events' could be very protracted (e.g., Syr. Baruch 25 and Rev. 6, 8–9, 16). The time of Jesus was the time of inauguration and *penultimacy*, therefore. Mark 9.1 suggests that the kingdom's coming would be during the lifetime of 'those standing here'. The place of the saying in the Gospel of Mark indicates that it is to be understood to refer to the demonstration of the glory of Jesus in the transfiguration vision which follows the saying (Mark 9.2ff.), though whether this is what Mark 9.1 meant originally is an open question.³

We find that Jesus speaks on several occasions about the coming of the 'Son of Man'. The Evangelists believed that Jesus was speaking of himself. Such an identification between Jesus and the 'Son of Man', who would come, has been denied by some commentators.⁴ Others argue that originally the coming of the 'Son of Man' meant a coming of the 'Son of Man' to God in heaven, as part of his exaltation (as in Dan. 7.13), rather than a coming of the 'Son of Man' from heaven to earth, to vindicate the elect (Mark 13.26) and to exercise judgement (Matt. 25.31ff.).⁵ This is an area of considerable difficulty and complexity, and one states particular interpretations with the full consciousness of the wide differences of opinion that exist on this subject. But it seems likely that Jesus would have considered that he would have had a part to play in the consummation of the kingdom, granted the link between himself and the reign of God. As a result, it is not implausible to suggest that, as he contemplated the future, he expressed the hope that he would return, after the death which he knew he would sooner or later have to suffer (Luke 13.33). Thus the return of the 'Son of Man' may well reflect part of Jesus' own beliefs about his future role in the kingdom of God.⁶

Elsewhere in the gospel tradition we find that Jesus does not describe the life in the future kingdom of God. This contrasts with some of the beliefs of Jewish-Christians in the later part of the first century CE, like Cerinthus (*EH* 3.28) and John of Patmos (Rev. 20), where explicit evocations of a this-worldly kingdom of God are to be found. Indeed, in a saying attributed to Jesus which Irenaeus reports to us from the writings of Papias, we find the belief that the whole of creation would be restored to its pristine condition and would even be in a more glorious situation than it had been at the beginning (*AH* 5.33.3f.). Some of these themes are to be found in the Beatitudes,⁷ where promises are made to the poor, the hungry and the oppressed that their position would be reversed in the future, when the kingdom of God came (Luke 6.22ff.; Matt. 5.3ff.). One picture which Jesus uses to speak of the kingdom is that of a banquet, a familiar figure in Jewish views about the future, going back to Isaiah 25.6ff. and reflected in Luke 13.28f.; 4.15–24 (cf. 1 Enoch 62.4; Syr. Baruch 29.5f.). The meal formed part of Jewish life and was central to Jewish rites like sabbath and Passover. Close groups used to meet together in fellowships as in the Qumran community. The picture

which Acts gives us of the life of the Early Church is rather similar (Acts 2.46). It is not surprising that a banquet should be used by Jesus to depict the end-time, when barriers are broken between humanity and God, and both exist together in close fellowship (Rev. 21.4; 1 Enoch 62.14). Some of his last words on the night before his death suggest that Jesus looked forward to participating with his disciples in that messianic banquet which was to come, when he would drink of the fruit of the vine from which he had vowed to abstain at the Last Supper.⁸ This vow indicates the hope on his part that there would be some great consummation of God's promises on earth (Mark 14.25 and par.), a hope which has a central place in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6.10).⁹

Jesus lived and worked mostly with Jews, yet within a decade the movement which he had initiated was spreading among non-Jews (Matt. 10.5; 15.24).¹⁰ In Jesus' meeting with the Syro-Phoenician woman in Mark 7.24ff. and par., we see that he was unwilling to let his presence be made known while in predominantly Gentile territory, and the little parable about the children's bread ('It is wrong to take the children's bread and give it to dogs') confirms that Jesus saw his ministry as primarily directed to Jews. Only in exceptional circumstances do we find him healing or having dealings with non-Jews. The case of the centurion's servant is a good example (Luke 7.1ff.). Jesus' final commendation ('I have not found such great faith, even in Israel') and the fact that in Luke Jesus deals entirely with emissaries from the centurion's house rather than with the Gentile soldier (Luke 7.6f.) suggests that here too we are probably dealing with exceptional circumstances in the ministry of Jesus.¹¹

Even if Jesus' ministry and message on the kingdom were directed to the Jewish nation and their call to repentance,¹² the use of the parable in Mark 7.24f. may suggest that the participation of Gentiles in the kingdom of God was to take place *after* the children of Israel had been given their chance (cf. Matt. 28.18ff.; Mark 13.10; Rom. 11.25). In line with the later prophetic literature (Isa. 2; 45.22; Zech. 8.20) and the views of the writers of some Jewish eschatology of the period (e.g., 1 Enoch 90.30),¹³ Gentiles would be given a share in the age to come, a hope which is just as apparent in the Jewish-Christian Revelation of John (Rev. 21.24f.; 7.9f.) as it is in the writings of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. Thus, when Jesus speaks of people streaming from all directions to sit and eat at table in the kingdom of God (Luke 13.28f.), there is an indication that, in line with the eschatological teaching of his contemporaries, Jesus looked forward to a time when the Gentiles would share in the glory of the age to come.¹⁴ Just as the offer of participation in the kingdom of God had been thrown open to all Jews, including the outcasts (cf. Isa. 11.12),¹⁵ so also some Gentiles would in due course be allowed to enter the kingdom of God and so fulfil the divine promises.

As Jesus preached the imminence of the kingdom of God, it has often been supposed that he would not, therefore, have had any reason to found an ecclesiastical organization.¹⁶ As A. Loisy put it, 'Jesus foretold the coming of the kingdom of God; and it was the Church that came.'¹⁷ There are, however, good reasons for supposing that Jesus did reckon with a period when his followers would carry on his work. Mark 9.1 implies a period, however short, before the kingdom will come in power. Also, some at least of the material in the final, sombre speeches of Jesus to his disciples (e.g., Mark 13; Matt. 24–5; Luke 21) may reflect a situation where, rejected in Jerusalem, Jesus predicts doom on a rebellious city and its institutions, 'which could not recognize the time of its visitation' (Luke 19.45). Likewise, the predictions of persecution for his followers in Mark 13 are not all the creation of the Church. There is no evidence that Jesus went to his death in Jerusalem believing that the kingdom of God was bound to come at that Passover.¹⁸ Indeed, if the words at the Last Supper are any guide, particularly in the version in which we have them in 1 Corinthians 11.24f., then Jesus interpreted the significance of his death and gave instructions for the repetition of the rite by his followers.¹⁹ Even if the Farewell Discourses in John (chs 14–16), where Jesus speaks of the time after his departure and the work of the Spirit, do not reflect the words of Jesus on the night before his death, it seems likely that Jesus would have promised his disciples a share in the eschatological spirit which he had experienced (e.g., Mark 13.11, cf. Luke 10.17), much as Elijah had passed on his prophetic role to Elisha (2 Kings 2.11).²⁰

We find Jesus using the imagery of the shepherd and his flock (Luke 12.32; cf. Mark 14.27 and par.; Matt. 26.31f.), and he compares the disciples with the throng of guests at a wedding (Mark 2.19f.). Other parables may indicate that he saw the disciples as a distinct group around him (Matt. 13.47; 5.13f.; Mark 10.29f.; Matt. 23.9; Mark 3.34; Matt. 11.25, 25.40), a well-defined fellowship with a particular style of prayer (Luke 11.1). Jesus seems to consider that it is important to share his own authority with those who had given up all to follow him (Luke 10.1ff.; Mark 6.7ff.). All these sayings are hints that Jesus saw his group not as an amorphous band of followers but as a group with an emerging identity of its own within first-century Judaism, which was the recipient of his teaching and wisdom.²¹

All our sources tell us that Jesus, like other teachers, attracted disciples (Mark 2.23; Luke 11.1), though the recruitment of the disciples was different from that of other groups (Luke 5.1ff.); this need not exclude the possibility of Jesus training his disciples.²² The disciples are regarded as the emissaries of Jesus with power similar to that which Jesus himself possessed (Luke 10.19). Indeed, Jesus explicitly links the task of the disciples with his own mission (Luke 10.16f.; John 20.21). Though the use of the word 'apostle' is rare on the lips of Jesus (Luke 11.49; John 13.16), he does *send* his followers out before him.²³ Luke 10.16 is an important saying in this respect.

The question remains whether the disciples were only appointed by Jesus as emissaries to act on his behalf during his own life or whether they had some continuing role after his death. The indications from the gospel tradition are few, but it seems that Jesus did see a role for a community of his followers after his departure (Luke 12.35ff.; Mark 10.39). Indeed, he promises to his disciples that they will have a share in the final assize (Matt. 19.28; cf. Luke 22.29). If the Luke version of this saying is original,²⁴ there may be an indication that already the twelve exercise an authority delegated to them by Jesus, something which is set out in John 20.21 and Luke 10.16f.

This saying indicates the importance of the number twelve. Questions have been raised about the authenticity of this number (and the fact must be faced that they play little part in the Fourth Gospel: two mentions only in John: 6.70; 20.24). Nevertheless they are referred to in ancient tradition in 1 Corinthians 15.5 and Matthew 19.28. It should not surprise us that Jesus called twelve. After all, we have seen that Jesus saw himself as a prophet to the Jewish nation (Matt. 10.6f.), calling it back from the brink before it was too late (Luke 11.32f., 50; 13.1f.), and thus it would be understandable if, in a situation where his message was rejected by the majority, he should have bestowed upon those around him a group of representative significance: the twelve were the faithful remnant of the twelve tribes, the first fruits of the people of God called to be part of the dawning kingdom of God.

Any discussion of Jesus and the Church must pause to consider the saying of Jesus contained in the version of Peter's confession in Matthew 16.17ff. Many have doubted the authenticity of the saying, not only because it is found only in Matthew's Gospel, but also because the saying concerning the primacy of Peter includes one of only two references to the word 'church' (*ekklesia*) in the Gospels. Nevertheless, behind the saying there probably lies a very ancient saying which betrays signs of its original semitic form, particularly in the promise to bind and loose.²⁵

The possibility that the saying may in one form or other go back to Jesus should not be lightly dismissed, therefore.²⁶ If it does, it should be pointed out that the use of the word 'church' in this context is to be understood in the light of contemporary usage, particularly in the Dead Sea Scrolls, where the word '*edah*' describes the eschatological community of Israel,²⁷ and we should not necessarily suppose that any extensive hierarchical organization is presupposed here (though this was certainly not excluded in the Qumran community). What the saying stresses is the blessedness of the one who confesses Jesus as the Messiah, as this is an indication of divinely bestowed insight (16.17), echoing sentiments expressed elsewhere, e.g. Matthew 11.25. Jesus intended his authority to pass to those who had persevered in their discipleship (Luke 22.29). In the light of other passages dealing with the nature of the authority of Jesus' disciples (Luke 22.25f.; Matt. 18.18) we should not assume that Jesus intended the prominence of Peter to exceed that of his

companions (Luke 22.31; cf. John 21.15ff.). What evidence is available from other parts of the New Testament (Gal. 1.18; 2.9) suggests that Peter did in fact have a prominent role in the life of the primitive community, though he had no primacy over the other apostles (Acts 10–11; 15; Gal. 2.11ff.);²⁸ James, the brother of Jesus, achieves such position in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15; *Ant.* 20.200), however.

As far as one can ascertain, Jesus did not envisage a religious system independent of the Judaism of his day, though in the last days of his life, particularly with the dire predictions about the Temple and city in mind, a rift might have been opening up which presaged the sort of split which was to emerge between the nascent Christian groups and other Jews. He may have prepared for the existence of an identifiable group as a necessary, if temporary, measure during the short period before the kingdom of God came, by delegating to his followers his authority to preach and act on God's behalf. Their task would be to continue to bear witness to the eschatological convictions, after his departure. This group had its identity through the sharing of a common meal (cf. 1 Cor. 11.23ff.) and the preservation of Jesus' sayings and deeds which were the basis for their continued witness to the kingdom of God. Probably there was a rite of initiation derived from John's baptism, for hints like John 3.26 and 4.1 (cf. Acts 2.38) indicate that John's practice was very quickly taken up by Jesus and his disciples. While it may have certain distinctive beliefs and practices, it would, for as long it remained in the vicinity of Jerusalem, be part of the fabric of Jewish life and one of a number of 'reform movements', however uneasy its relationship might have been with other factions and élites. The situation was very different when the movement moved out of Judaea and Galilee into the cities and towns of the Roman empire, however, where it quickly came to be differentiated from Jewish communities. To an outside observer (like Gallio in Acts 18.14–15), however, the group of followers of Jesus was another Jewish 'sect' (to use the term Josephus uses of the Jewish groups in his *Jewish War*), committed to the belief that the hopes for the future were being realized but in no way conscious of being outside the boundaries of Judaism.

*Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*¹

(a) The Basis of Jesus' Authority

Like any charismatic figure, Jesus of Nazareth elicited a variety of responses from his contemporaries. On the one hand, according to the Gospels, we find disciples being convinced that he was the Messiah (Mark 8.29) and, after his death, that he had been raised from the dead by God and exalted to his right hand, proving that messiahship (e.g., Acts 2.33ff.). On the other hand, we find hostility to him (though it would be a mistake to suppose that such hostility was typical of all). The Gospel of John may be correct to suggest that, even during his life, there were leading figures who were sympathetic and even became disciples of Jesus (e.g., John 3.1ff.; 7.50; 12.42; cf. Acts 5.34ff.). The growing hostility led to a situation later, in which Christians were excluded from the synagogues of non-Christian Jews, and Jesus became a target of polemic in emerging Judaism.²

As we have already noted, the religious scene in Palestine (and we may suspect that it was true of the Diaspora as well) was one in which no particular group could be said to have had complete control over the beliefs and practices of the Jewish people. At different times differing interpretations of the Torah achieved ascendancy. Groups like the Pharisees and Sadducees were all competing for the acceptance of their interpretations as authoritative. While the Sadducees confined themselves to the manipulation of political power in Jerusalem, and relationships with the Roman prefect, the Pharisees were more involved with the religious and social issues of the people at large (though we should not overestimate this. If Josephus is right, they represented a tiny minority among Jews at the time).³ There were many different interpretations of what constituted obedience to God; the common factor between the groups was the acceptance of the authority of the Torah, which itself led to animosity between the different groups over the conflicting interpretations of the sacred text. The question of authority was thus a pressing one in first-century Judaism.

According to Mark 1.22 (cf. Mark 11.28), Jesus' teaching differed from that of the Scribes,⁴ and the distinctive feature about it was its authority. At the heart of later rabbinic religion was the belief that their interpretation of the Torah was no novelty but could be traced back in its essentials to the Prophets and ultimately to Moses (*Pirke Aboth* 1.1): 'Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders and the elders to the prophets and the prophets committed it to those of the great

synagogue,' (cf. later tradition that Moses received the oral Torah on Sinai, *Exodus Rabbah* 47.7). This concern for tradition and the application of insights from the past to the needs of the present is absent from Jesus' teaching as we now have it. In the interpretations of the Law of Moses in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5.21ff.; cf. Mark 2.6) no reference is made to previous doctrinal authorities, but instead the interpretations are introduced with the emphatic 'I', indicating that Jesus considered himself to be an interpreter at least on a par with the doctrinal authorities of his own day.⁵

As far as we can ascertain, Jesus based his authority to speak in this way on a conviction, probably (if Mark 11.28 is anything to go by) based on the baptismal experience at Jordan. With this prophetic-type call (there is an echo of Ezekiel 1.1 in Mark 1.10), there is no record of Jesus submitting his message to any doctrinal authority for confirmation, for he believed that he had been commissioned by God to speak and act in the way he did.⁶ His assertion that the final revelation of God's kingdom was already effective, and the events leading to its consummation were imminent, was a critical interpretation of the Jewish traditions of such importance that its authenticity was likely to have been questioned by those who did not share his methods and interpretations. Perhaps we may see the significance of the saying against the Temple in Mark 14.58 in a new light if we realize that what Jesus presented was a threat to the authority of the Sanhedrin and the Temple: the former as the place whence the Torah went forth to the whole of Israel (*mSanhedrin* 11.2) and the latter the place where God's presence was said to dwell (cf. Matt. 12.6, 'one greater than the Temple is here').⁷ In his message Jesus was asserting that a more definitive experience of God was present.⁸

The question of Jesus' authority lies behind the Beelzebul controversy (Mark 3.22ff.; Luke 11.14ff.). In this story some suspect that his powers showed the influence of the powers of evil. This was a charge which continued to be of importance in Jewish traditions about Jesus (e.g., in *bSanhedrin* 43a, 'Jesus practised magic' – with the implication that he was possessed by an alien supernatural power – 'and led Israel astray'). The issue of authority is one which comes up particularly in the Fourth Gospel. Throughout the book Jesus claims the authority to speak of the things of God because of his direct experience of God (e.g., John 7.16ff.).

In this context mention should be made of the account, central to all the Synoptic Gospels, of when Jesus is transfigured before a select group of disciples (Mark 9.2). This extraordinary story, whose authenticity is often rejected, or which is explained as a displaced resurrection story, is a climactic, apocalyptic (in the sense of a revelatory), mark of Jesus' authority. It suggests that he is more than a mere emissary or spokesman but *in reality* divine in his character and nature. It is a story full of elements which are akin to accounts of angelic appearances in the literature of Second Temple Judaism (e.g., Joseph and Aseneth 14). Its central role needs to be taken more seriously

historically as well as theologically, particularly in discussions of the historical Jesus.

The Baptism and Transfiguration of Jesus have a central place in the synoptic version of the narrative of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We would like to know more, and the temptation to press beyond the fragmentary testimony to a strange and awesome world of mystical transformation and apocalyptic insight is tempting for the historian or theologian. The Gospels present us with a picture of Jesus speaking somewhat enigmatically, apparently about himself, as 'Son of Man'. The relationship between the human Jesus and the heavenly 'Son of Man' is never explained, and manifests the same kind of ambiguity as we find in the stark contrast between the dazzling figure on the mount of transfiguration and the 'one who came eating and drinking', apparently no different from the rest of those born of flesh.

In the immediate context of the Transfiguration stories in the Gospels we have a hint that Jesus possessed a sense of divinely foreordained vocation in the way in which he spoke of the necessity of the suffering of the 'Son of Man'. The emphatic '*must* suffer' (e.g., Mark 8.31; 9.31 and 10.33) suggests a possible link with the apocalyptic mysteries of Daniel 2.29, 45. According to the Synoptic Gospels that sense of destiny concerning the predetermined lot of the 'Son of Man' follows in the wake of the Transfiguration, which, according to Luke at least (Luke 9.31), was a time when the transfigured Jesus talked about his 'departure'. The path to glory proves to be one which is significantly at odds with what might be expected in the apocalyptic tradition where ascent to heaven, and transformation into a body of glory, is hardly ever through death and annihilation.

The apocalyptic dimension becomes apparent after the Transfiguration narrative in Luke's Gospel. Luke 10 is replete with terminology concerning the revelation of apocalyptic mysteries. First, Jesus hints at a decisive heavenly vision (Luke 10.18, cf. Rev. 12.5). The disciples are told that their names are engraved in the heavens. This parallels the way in which Enoch is offered information engraved in the heavenly tablets according to, for example, 1 Enoch 81.1; 93.2; 103.2; 106.19. Jesus rejoices in the Spirit, a moment of inspired utterance, asserting the insight of the 'babes' and the inability of the wise to perceive the things of God (Luke 10.21-2, cf. Matt. 11.25-7). The 'little ones' can understand, and the disciples after the 'vision' at the Transfiguration have an understanding of the identity and significance of the heavenly visitants not previously comprehended. In Luke the aftermath of the Transfiguration yields a variety of hints of the divine significance of the persons and purposes which have been unfolding.

Agnosticism with regard to the precise historical detail of Jesus' apocalyptic consciousness cannot mask the importance of recognizing such apocalyptic moments as a decisive part of the Christian memory of Jesus and in the historical study of Jesus. New Testament theology has had to confront

the problem posed by apocalypticism in Christian origins. The indications are, however, that in addition the mystical and experiential, rooted in the apocalyptic tradition of Second Temple Judaism, are equally, if not more, important for the Jesus of history.⁹

(b) Jesus and the Torah¹⁰

If we are right to suppose that Jesus believed that he had a commission direct from God, it is necessary to ask whether he considered the Law of Moses, the Torah, obsolescent. Sayings like Luke 16.16 ('the law and the prophets were until John') may indicate that he did, but a consideration of the disputes about the Law indicates that he did not differ too greatly from some contemporary teachers. Jesus may have taken a more lax attitude towards certain practices than many, but it would be wrong to mistake his interpretations of the Law as a rejection of the Law; we find him from time to time going out of his way to uphold it (Mark 1.44).

One of the issues to which the traditions point as an item of conflict between Jesus and his contemporaries was sabbath observance.¹¹ Sabbath observance was something of a problem within Judaism, as there were many different approaches.¹² There is evidence to suggest that some Pharisees were more willing than others to be flexible over the character of sabbath observance, though even within this group there was much divergence. In Luke 13.10ff. Jesus quotes an example of current practice (v.15) as a justification for his healing. Elsewhere in the gospel tradition, however, we note that according to Mark 3.1ff., it is *Pharisees* who ally themselves with the Herodians, because of Jesus' activities on the sabbath, possibly Pharisees with a stricter outlook.¹³ It is by no means clear in his healings that Jesus is guilty of a proscribed activity (cf. *mShabbath* 7.2). No action is reported of Jesus apart from the word of command in Mark 3.1ff., though in Luke 13.13 Jesus does lay his hands on the woman. The healing may have been taken as an indication that Jesus believed that God was at work on the sabbath (cf. John 5.17), contrary to some current assumptions (*Jub.* 2.30). In this respect the Marcan healing narrative differs from the healing on the sabbath in John 9, where an act of Jesus is reported (John 9.6f.), probably to underline the point that Jesus seems to be a sabbath-breaker.

More controversial, however, is the account of the disciples of Jesus plucking grain on the sabbath (Mark 2.23ff.). Though it is not stated in the account, the assumption is that they were plucking grain in order to grind it to make flour, an activity which is explicitly forbidden by the Mishnah (*mShabbath* 7.2). A teacher was bound to take some responsibility for the teaching and activities of his disciples, something which is recognized in the disputes in Mark 2.18.¹⁴ By reference to the act of David, Jesus sets out to justify the activity of his disciples (Mark 2.25ff.), by indicating that when

anyone is in need, there is justification for breaking the strict sabbath code. In a saying which has some marked similarities with Jesus' saying at the conclusion of this debate, R. Simeon b. Menasiah (mid-second century CE) said: 'The sabbath is given to you, but you are not surrendered to the sabbath' (*Mekilta Shabb. 1*; cf. Mark 2.27). Jesus probably went further than most liberal Pharisees, whose concern was mainly the preservation of life, which is hardly the case here. Yet this controversy makes plain that we do not have an instance of antinomian behaviour here.¹⁵ As Mark 2.27 makes plain,¹⁶ it is humanity that is important, not the keeping of a regulation at any price.¹⁷ The sabbath controversies show Jesus unwilling at any point to deny the validity of sabbath observance, but more than willing to interpret sabbath observance in such a way that it did not become a bondage for anyone. The opposition to his views probably came from those who took a rather rigid and literalistic view of sabbath observance (*CD 11.13ff.*).

Elsewhere in the gospel tradition, the saying of Jesus about divorce has been held to be an example of his opposition to the Law of Moses. Jesus takes the Mosaic injunction about divorce (*Deut. 24.1ff.*) and criticizes it, but there is no rejection of the Torah implied in this passage. As far as Jesus was concerned, the *whole* of the Pentateuch was from Moses. When we realize this, we see that his reference to the story in Genesis 1.27 and 2.24 is a reference to another part of the Torah and acceptance of that in preference to the Law in Deuteronomy (which is a later text and regulation for God's people). Jesus prefers a part of the Torah dealing with the situation as it was at creation, probably because the perfection of the universe at creation is often a paradigm in Jewish texts for the character of the world in the kingdom of God.¹⁸

The debate over what had priority in the Torah is an issue to which we find allusion in the rabbinic literature. Jesus' willingness to choose in this way might appear to suggest a relativizing of the importance of some parts of Scripture. Indeed, it is something which we have already had reason to mention in connection with the burial of a corpse (*mNazir 7.1*). Elsewhere in the gospel tradition, we find the issue coming up, particularly in the saying in Luke 11.42 ('But woe to you Pharisees for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others'). In this respect Jesus is in line with the prophetic challenge to the covenant people, drawing their attention to aspects of the Torah which their contemporary practice has managed to submerge.

It is in a similar vein that we should treat the Qorban controversy in Mark 7.9ff. It is often said that this story, in which Jesus rejects a contemporary practice, whereby a gift devoted to the Temple takes precedence over concern for one's parents, is a rejection of the oral tradition. Jesus did have some harsh words to say about particular details of the tradition of interpre-

tation (Luke 11.42; 11.46f.), not only in this story but also in the collection of sayings against the Pharisees as reflected in Matthew 23. Nevertheless, this criticism does not necessarily involve rejection of the oral tradition or the attitude to Scripture it presupposes.¹⁹ The gospel tradition indicates that Jesus was no literalist in his interpretation of Scripture (Mark 2.25; 12.26). When there is a conflict of interest between the written words of Scripture and the oral tradition, it must be Scripture which is allowed to have precedence. When the oral tradition is allowed to take precedence, it means 'making void the word of God' (Mark 7.13). A saying like Matthew 23.2 (if authentic)²⁰ confirms the impression that Jesus did not reject out of hand the oral Torah, however.

In one area of his activity, however, Jesus did seem to sit loosely to contemporary practice, and also to the laws of the Torah. This was in the area of uncleanness.²¹ Mark 7.14 comes nearest of all to a threat to the Torah, by asserting that nothing from outside a person can defile that person. If taken at its face value, this appears to threaten the importance of the food laws in the Torah (e.g., Deut. 14.3ff.) by saying that nothing which a person can eat can cause that person any defilement. It may well be the case that Jesus, like other charismatic figures, sat rather loosely to some inherited customs; but rather more seems to be at stake in Mark 7.14. A comparison of the Marcan version with its Matthean parallel may indicate a rather different emphasis in the latter. In the Matthean version it would appear that Jesus thought the issue of external cleanness trivial compared with moral uncleanness.²² If this emphasis is original (which has now been lost in Mark's Gospel because of concern for the Gentile Christians and their rejection of the food laws; see Mark 7.19), then what we have is an emphasis by Jesus on the words and deeds of an individual as being the important evidence of character rather than that which one receives from outside oneself. The Matthean version is not a rejection of the food laws, therefore.

The evidence of the Gospels does not allow us to conclude that Jesus was against the Law of Moses. The tradition shows him very occasionally interpreting the Torah (particularly when he is in Jerusalem and its environs), even though he frequently comes to very different conclusions from those which were commonly held. Even so, these conclusions are occasionally based on the words of Scripture and follow the traditional pattern of argument and exegesis.²³ The gospel tradition suggests that Jesus may have had some skills in exegesis, even if he did not use these often with his normal audience and preferred instead the parable and maxim. The real point at issue with other Jewish interpreters was Jesus' right to interpret the Law of Moses rather than the way he did it and the conclusions he came to. With some understandable justification, he was asked by his contemporaries, 'By what authority do you do this?' (Mark 11.28). It was Jesus' assertion that he had the right to proclaim the dawning of the age to come, which proved to

be a stumbling block. His teaching about the new age probably did not differ, as far as one can ascertain, from the bulk of contemporary teachers. Rather, it was the fact that he stated that the promised new age was imminent with himself the herald of it. To assert this without so much as the nod of approval from any recognized authority other than his own conviction was a potential cause of hostility.

(c) Jesus and Other Jewish Groups²⁴

In Luke 11.39ff. and Matthew 23.1ff. we find a collection of sayings in which Jesus criticizes Scribes (lawyers) and Pharisees. There is not much evidence to suggest that he rejected pharisaic piety.²⁵ Indeed, in Mark 2.16f. we find Jesus taking an eirenic attitude towards Pharisaism, as elsewhere he does towards John the Baptist: his and their approaches should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Jesus has come as a physician for the sick; the healthy need no medical treatment, though such an attitude presupposes mutual acceptance for its success. The evidence suggests that Jesus offers a place for the 'lost sheep' (Matt. 15.24), the outcasts of Israel who have their part in the age to come. It is in the light of this that Jesus' criticism of the preoccupation of the Scribes and Pharisees with the minutiae of the Torah must be understood (Luke 11.37f.). In the prophetic tradition he condemns the outward behaviour, which masquerades as piety. He criticizes a concern for the outward show of religion, when the intentions are so manifestly unholy (cf. Isa. 1.12ff.). Hence, in Luke 11.44 Jesus describes the Pharisees as white-washed tombs. Because tombs contain corpses, they are unclean, but since people do not know that they are tombs, they come into contact with defilement unawares.

The Scribes too are rebuked for their unwillingness to practise what they preach (Luke 11.46). They work out interpretations of the Torah but, according to Jesus, are unwilling themselves to practise what they themselves enjoin. This may be a criticism of some of the hypothetical character of Jewish *halakah* (laws), which emanated from discussions in the academies. The Scribes do indeed have authority as expositors (Matt. 23.2), but they steadfastly refuse to use their knowledge of the ancestral religion to pierce to the mysteries of God's ways and thereby allow others to follow them (Luke 11.52). Also, the activity in building memorials to the prophets of the past is in stark contrast to the attitude to the prophet who stands in their midst: one who is greater than all who had gone before (Luke 11.32). It is only when the prophets are dead that they are revered, and people listen to their voices. For 'this generation', the situation is critical (Luke 11.50).

Very little is said explicitly in the gospel tradition about the relationship of Jesus of Nazareth to the Jewish fight for freedom from Roman domination. Even if the Zealots²⁶ as a specific faction had not emerged in Jesus'

own day, there were probably already Jews who believed that the road to the kingdom of God lay in the superhuman struggle with the powers of evil, which would rid the holy land of Israel of the defilement of a pagan overlord (cf. Psalms of Solomon 17.24). The absence of explicit mention of this theme in the Gospels (though a hint of a contemporary problem with insurrectionism is found in Mark 15.7) should not be taken to indicate that it did not exist or that Jesus did not sympathize with it. At several points in the Gospels incidents are mentioned which suggest that suspicions of a link between the mission of Jesus and the violent struggle for freedom from Rome might have been a critical issue.²⁷ Pre-eminently, the discussion has centred on the question about tribute money (Mark 12.13ff. and par.), the triumphal entry and the 'cleansing' of the Temple (Mark 11.1–18); but mention might also be made of the saying concerning conflict (Matt. 10.34f.; cf. Luke 12.51), Jesus' reply to his disciples over the possession of swords in the garden at the time of his arrest (Luke 22.36f.; cf. 22.49) and the enigmatic saying in Luke 16.16.²⁸ Luke 13.1, however, suggests a degree of circumspection about rushing to find signs of divine judgement in recent historical events.

The gospel tradition does not support the view that Jesus actively supported the methods of the fight for freedom,²⁹ though there is a shared hope of the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. According to Luke 23.2, one of the charges laid against Jesus was that he had *prevented* the payment of tribute to Caesar, a typical Zealot, or 'Fourth Philosophy', act because it denies the dominion of Caesar.³⁰ Nevertheless, in the light of his exhortations to non-violence (Matt. 5.39ff.) elsewhere in the Gospels, and particularly Jesus' reported demeanour in his last days, we may suppose that Jesus would not have condoned the *methods* of the revolutionaries and their predecessors, namely a violent overthrow of the existing order initiated by the people of God. That is not to suggest that he did not expect the violent overthrow of that order, however, as Mark 13.2 suggests. In order that the age to come might be realized in all its fullness, when the poor would inherit the kingdom and the hungry would be fed, the might of Rome would have to be replaced.

Nor did Jesus' views resemble those of the apocalyptists who expected God's purposes in history to be worked out and a kingdom of righteousness to be set up without human hand (cf. Dan. 2.34; 4 Ezra 13.38f.). He is the human agent of the coming divine kingdom, pre-eminently in the challenge he engendered by going up to Jerusalem (Luke 9.51), even if he did not allow his followers to use violence to bring his hopes into effect (cf. Mark 14.47; John 18.10). Nevertheless, Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God probably raised hopes of deliverance for the people of God and attracted support from those who expected to find in Jesus a leader of the national liberation (cf. John 6.15; Luke 24.21). It is not surprising, therefore, that a

freedom fighter was to be found among Jesus' disciples (if that is what the word 'Zealot' means in Luke 6.15; cf. Mark 3.18).

According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' dealings with the Sadducees are confined to the time spent in Jerusalem immediately before his arrest and death (Mark 12.18ff.).³¹ Even if we are unwilling to follow Mark's chronology in its entirety, it is probably right to suppose that Jesus would only have come into contact with the Sadducees and other members of the priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem, though it is likely that the Sadducean understanding of Scripture probably was much closer to the actual practice of the majority of Jews.³² It is no accident that they assume a significant role in the last days of Jesus' life, and probably took the major role in bringing about his death. Like the Herodians, with whom Jesus is reported to have come into contact earlier in his ministry (Mark 3.6), one of their prime concerns was with relations with the occupying power. Indeed, their continued hegemony depended on adequate relations with the Roman prefect (John 11.47ff.).³³ In the debates recorded in the Gospels the issue centres on the question of resurrection. Jesus shows how close he is to the pharisaic belief in the Resurrection of the Dead which was denied by the Sadducees. Only in Daniel 12.2 do we have resurrection from the dead stated unambiguously.³⁴ What we find in Mark 12.18ff. is Jesus justifying the doctrine on the basis of the Torah (Mark 12.26). This probably would have endeared him to the Pharisees (cf. Acts 23.6; *mSanhedrin* 10.1). In this passage he also argued for a belief which spoke of the transformation of the body rather than participation by the resurrected in the kind of life that they had known before (cf. 1 Cor. 15.35ff.).

(d) Jesus and the Temple

At the centre of Jewish religious life before the First Revolt in 66 CE was the Temple in Jerusalem. The vast complex of cultic activity carried on there in fulfilment of the cultic regulations of the Torah was a focus of devotion for Jews from all over the world. All the Gospels record the fact that Jesus entered the Temple and drove out the traders from the outer court (Mark 11.15ff. and par.). In the Gospel of John the incident is said to have taken place at the beginning of the ministry (John 2.13ff.), though it may well have been placed here as part of the structure of argument of the Gospel as a whole (cf. John 4.22).³⁵ The 'cleansing' of the Temple may not (at least at this stage – the situation could have changed after Jesus' rejection by the hierarchy) have been a protest against the Temple as such, though the emphasis on it as a house of prayer (Mark 11.17) suggests a rather different emphasis than it being a place of sacrifice.

There has been much debate over the meaning of this incident.³⁶ In interpreting it, much depends on the weight one attaches to the quotations from

Scripture (Isa. 56.7; Jer. 7.11), and the implied fulfilment of Zechariah 14.21 in Jesus' dismissal of the traders. Several commentators regard them as later interpretations, because there seems to be no obvious connection between the acts and the scriptural passages. It is true that the Hebrew of Isaiah 56.7 has a rather different flavour from the Greek ('These foreigners I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer'), but even in this form the words are not inconsistent with the act performed by Jesus: the imminent end of the Temple, symbolized by Jesus' action, paves the way for a new Temple, to which the Gentiles would come, as predicted in Scripture (Isa. 2.3; Mic. 4.1ff.). The act is reminiscent of the dramatic prophetic acts in the Bible (e.g., 1 Sam. 15.27). The quotation from Jeremiah 7.11 is more difficult to explain. It has been suggested that it refers to the greed of the High Priestly family which profited from the lucrative Temple trade, though a prophetic symbolic act which contains an implicit criticism seems more likely.³⁷

The eschatological setting of Jesus' ministry recalls the belief found in some eschatological material that the new age would see a new Temple (e.g., 1 Enoch 90.29, if it is a reference to the Temple rather than the city as a whole). It is possible that the dramatic action against the Temple operatives may have symbolized the belief expressed in words elsewhere in the tradition (Mark 14.58; cf. John 2.17) that the old Temple had first to be destroyed to make way for the eschatological Temple. There may be a hint in John's version of the cleansing that it was a protest against the sacrificial system, for in this version of the story Jesus ejects the sacrificial animals from the Temple also (John 2.15). If, however, the Last Supper was a Passover meal, we may suppose that Jesus did accept the sacrificial system (Luke 22.15).³⁸ Like the Prophets before him (cf. Hos. 6.6; Matt. 9.13; 12.7), Jesus condemns the religious obligation which lays such great weight on narrowly conceived religious acts and neglects the more important aspects of the demand of God's righteousness in practice, of one human towards another (cf. Luke 11.42).

Jesus seems to have predicted the downfall of the Temple.³⁹ At the beginning of the eschatological discourse in Mark 13.2 we find him telling his disciples that there will not be left one stone of the Temple on top of another. This is the sort of prediction of the Prophet similar to Jeremiah's message of woe in Jeremiah 7. It is possible that in the last days and hours of his life, the lack of success of the journey to Jerusalem led Jesus from a more reformist position with regard to the institution of the Temple (it would be purified for a new age) to one of outright hostility, or even a sense of doom about its destiny (as seems to be reflected in Mark 13.2 and in the narratives of Jesus' death as told in the Synoptic tradition, where the rending of the veil is probably best interpreted as a sign of judgement, e.g. Mark 15.38). At the account of his questioning by the High Priest in Mark, witnesses report a

saying of Jesus, otherwise not reported in this form in the Gospels, to the effect that Jesus would destroy the Temple and in three days build a Temple not made with hands (Mark 4.58; cf. Matt. 26.61). There is a version of this saying on the lips of Jesus in the Gospel of John (2.19), but it takes a rather different form (cf. Acts 6.14; 7.50ff.).⁴⁰

The action against the Temple, and the words which Jesus may have spoken about its destruction, were probably deeply offensive (so Mark 11.18). The Temple in Jerusalem was the place above all where God had caused the divine presence to dwell (Deut. 12.5). How could a prophet from God speak of its destruction? According to Mark 15.29, Jesus was reproached with this prediction in the last moments of his life. While it is not easy to see how it could be regarded as blasphemy, except in an indirect sense, it was the kind of comment which was bound to cause, at the very least, deep suspicion (e.g., John 11.47ff.; cf. *War* 2.397). An action against the Temple may have been misconstrued, but a word against it would have been likely to have brought dire consequences for the one who uttered it. Indeed, we know of another Jesus who predicted the destruction of the Temple and suffered for his pains (*War* 6.300f.):

One Jesus, son of Ananias, a rude peasant, suddenly began to cry out, 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary'. . . The magistrates supposing, as was indeed the case, that the man was under some supernatural impulse, brought him before the Roman governor; there, although flayed to the bone with scourges, he neither sued for mercy nor shed a tear, but, merely introducing the most mournful of variations into his ejaculation, responded to each stroke with 'Woe to Jerusalem!' (Translation from the Loeb edition)⁴¹

10

*The Death of Jesus*¹

According to all our sources, Jesus was crucified by the Romans. According to the Gospels, hostility towards Jesus arose very soon after the beginning of his ministry, and the investigation into his activity was probably not confined only to the last hours of his life (cf. Mark 3.6f.; John 5.18; 8.58; 10.39; 11.47ff.).² Indeed, from the charges which are brought against Jesus according to at least to Luke 23.2, it is apparent that words of Jesus uttered earlier in

his ministry form a part of the case made against him (the reference to the tribute to Rome). Such an ongoing investigation about Jesus' teaching, the basis of his authority and his conduct probably continued throughout his activity as an itinerant prophet and preacher, and what is described in the accounts in the Gospels is a continuation of that process, in which the main participants are those based in Jerusalem.

It was the plot against Jesus when he travelled to Jerusalem (not for the first time during his ministry, if the Gospel of John is to be believed; see also Luke 13.34) which led to his arrest and death. According to our sources Jesus went up to Jerusalem as a prophetic act (Luke 9.51; 13.33; cf. John 7.3f.) to make his challenge in the metropolitan religious centre, an event which seems to have coincided with Passover. His arrival in Jerusalem was marked by a messianic demonstration on the part of his supporters and a prophetic act in the Temple (Mark 11.15ff. and par.), if the Synoptic chronology is to be believed. While it is true that in the earlier attempts to destroy Jesus mentioned in the Gospels (e.g., Mark 3.6; cf. Matt. 22.15), the Pharisees may have had an important part to play, they are hardly mentioned in the traditions concerned with Jesus' death (except two late references in Matt. 27.62; John 18.3).³ It would appear from the Gospel accounts that the initiative to kill Jesus was taken by the priestly group responsible for exercising authority in Jerusalem, in the way which was usual with the colonial power (cf. Mark 11.18). At the Sanhedrin 'trial' in the Gospels, the main questioning comes from the High Priest, Caiaphas. It is likely that at this stage, at least, the plot to get rid of Jesus was in the main the responsibility of the priestly faction (Mark 15.11). The activity of Jesus in the Temple, his claim to proclaim the imminence of the kingdom of God, and his presence in Jerusalem at Passover, when hopes for a national deliverance ran high (and when there was at the time of Jesus' death an uprising, according to Mark 15.7), made him an obvious target for those who wished to maintain stability in the city and to avoid any outbreak of insurrection (cf. Mark 15.7).

Before embarking on a consideration of the difficulties connected with the accounts of the trial and death of Jesus in the Gospels, let us look in a little more detail at the three versions of the arrest and Jewish trial of Jesus which we have in the New Testament: the accounts in the Gospels of Mark (Matthew is probably substantially dependent on Mark), Luke,⁴ and the Gospel of John.⁵

According to the Gospel of Mark, after Jesus' arrest (Mark 14.43ff.) he is taken to the High Priest, Caiaphas, where the chief priests, elders and Scribes assembled; it appears to have been a meeting of the Sanhedrin (14.55). In the hearing there was much inconsistent testimony, including the quotation of a saying of Jesus against the Temple (14.58; cf. Mark 13.2; John 2.19ff.). Jesus does not reply until the High Priest asks him if he is the Messiah, the 'Son of the Blessed One'. Jesus replies, 'I am, and you will see

the “Son of Man” sitting at the right hand of power’ (14.62). On hearing this the High Priest tears his mantle, speaks of Jesus’ blasphemy, and the Council finds him to be guilty of a crime deserving of the death penalty (14.64). Jesus is then mocked and asked to prophesy (14.65). This is followed by Peter’s denial of Jesus, a story which Mark has already begun to tell before recounting the Sanhedrin trial (14.54ff.). When it is daylight, the Sanhedrin discuss the matter and resolve to take Jesus to Pilate, presumably on the charge that Jesus has tried to make himself a king (though this is not explicitly stated); hence Pilate’s question in 15.2. Jesus is interrogated by Pilate, who offers to release Jesus (15.6ff.). To satisfy the crowd, Pilate releases Barabbas and sends Jesus to be crucified (15.15ff.).

According to the Gospel of Luke, after his arrest Jesus is taken to Caiaphas’ house, and at this point Luke relates Peter’s denial (Luke 22.55ff.), which takes a slightly different and more poignant form in this Gospel: Jesus turns to look at Peter after the denial takes place (22.61). Then Jesus is mocked and asked to prophesy (22.63). At daybreak the assembly of elders, Chief Priest and Scribes meet (22.66); they lead Jesus to the Sanhedrin. At this Jesus is asked whether he is the Messiah (22.67). Jesus’ reply is evasive (22.67b–8) but is then followed by a variant of the ‘Son of Man’ saying we find in Mark’s Gospel (‘But from now on the “Son of Man” shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God’ (22.69; cf. Mark 14.62)). After this, Jesus is asked whether he is the ‘Son of the Blessed One’, and Jesus replies ‘You say that I am’ (cf. Matt. 26.64). This is enough to convince his accusers of his pretensions. Arising out of this, they take Jesus to Pilate and accuse him of three offences: perverting the nation; forbidding the payment of tribute to Caesar; and saying that he is Christ a king (Luke 23.2); only the last of these has been ascertained at the recently completed hearing.⁶ Pilate interrogates Jesus but finds no fault in him (23.4). The charge is repeated that Jesus was stirring up the people (23.5). When he finds that Jesus is from Galilee, Pilate sends Jesus to Herod Antipas who, after questioning him, sends Jesus back to Pilate (23.11). Pilate then calls together the chief priests and rulers of the people and states that he finds no fault in Jesus (23.15). The response is a request for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of Jesus (23.18ff.).

The Gospel of John is most explicit of all about the plots and attempts to kill Jesus throughout his ministry (e.g., John 5.18; 8.59; 10.31; 11.8), and includes an account of a meeting of the Sanhedrin convened for the purpose of discussing Jesus’ ministry before the fateful events surrounding the last Passover (11.49). This meeting discusses the threat to the community posed by the activity of Jesus and by the possibility that the Romans would remove the religious privileges if he was allowed to continue unhindered. The arrest of Jesus is conducted by a band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests (18.3). Jesus is then taken to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, himself once a High Priest (18.13). At this point there follows the

first part of Peter's denial. Meanwhile Annas asks Jesus about his disciples and his teaching: in other words, it is his position as a teacher rather than a messianic claimant which concerns Annas (18.19). Jesus' reply stresses the openness of his teaching (cf. John 3.1ff.). He is struck because of his apparent arrogance in answering the High Priest. After this, Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas (nothing is said about this hearing), and then the rest of the account of Peter's denial is completed (18.25ff.). Jesus is taken to the praetorium from Caiaphas' house at daybreak, but the Jews are unwilling to enter because they did not want to be defiled (18.28) and so be debarred from eating the Passover that same day. The events in John take place 24 hours earlier than the chronology of Mark's Gospel suggests (cf. 19.4; though 19.31 may reflect the Synoptic chronology).⁷

The Gospel of John has a long account of a conversation between Jesus and Pilate, in which the issues of the Gospel (contrast between God and the world, truth and falsehood etc.) feature and in which the apparently inferior partner in the dialogue (Jesus) ends up in a position of moral superiority over Pilate. Pilate asks why the Jews have brought Jesus to him and is told that Jesus is considered an evildoer (18.31). Pilate tells the Jews to judge Jesus by their own laws. It is then pointed out that the main reason for the Jews' inability to carry out the just demands of their own law is because it is not lawful for them to put anyone to death (18.31ff.). The Fourth Gospel implies (18.33), as Mark does, that the Jews had brought a charge against Jesus of making himself a king and therefore a threat to Rome, but there is an implication in John that if the Jews did have the right to carry out a capital punishment, they would have used it. Pilate interrogates Jesus (18.33ff.). Discussion centres on the nature of Jesus' kingship (v.36). Pilate finds no fault in Jesus and wants to release him, whereas the priests ask for Barabbas.

A comparison between these three different accounts reveals the following points of interest:

- 1 Only Mark mentions the charge of blasphemy and an official judgement by the Sanhedrin against Jesus on a capital charge (Mark 14.64).
- 2 Only Mark has Jesus give an unequivocal response to the High Priest's question (14.62). Even in Matthew (26.64), which follows Mark's account quite closely, there is a more ambiguous response.⁸
- 3 In John's account of the Jewish hearing (nothing is said about what happened before Caiaphas), there is no mention of an official Sanhedrin hearing and the emphasis in the interrogation is on Jesus' teaching rather than his messianic pretensions. It is possible that the meeting which took place in Luke 22.66ff. could be construed as an unofficial hearing rather than a full meeting of the Sanhedrin.⁹
- 4 Only John tells us that the main reason for taking Jesus to the Romans was the lack of right to carry out the death sentence (18.31).¹⁰

Over the years, the accounts of the arrest and trial of Jesus, particularly that which took place before the Jewish authorities, have been subjected to a great deal of critical examination. As they stand, the Gospel accounts do present us with historical problems, particularly when they are considered in the light of Jewish sources, which discuss the procedure for the trial of capital cases. In addition (though this is a matter which will not be examined in great detail here), some of the aspects of the story concerning the Romans have not found parallels in contemporary provincial legal procedure. Among the major problems in reconciling the Gospel accounts with the external sources, the following points may be noted:

- 1 According to the earliest codification of Jewish law concerning the procedure of the Sanhedrin (*mSanbedrin* 4.1), cases concerned with capital offences could not be tried at night, on the eve of a festival, nor could a verdict of condemnation be reached on the same day that the trial was started. Thus the account of the Jewish trial in the Gospel of Mark betrays several major discrepancies with Jewish legal procedure.
- 2 According to the Mishnah, a charge of blasphemy could only be upheld against an individual if the divine name (the *tetragrammaton* YHWH) was pronounced (*mSanbedrin* 7.5, cf. Lev. 24.16). It is by no means obvious from our sources that Jesus *was* guilty of pronouncing the divine name.
- 3 The correctness of the assertion in John 18.31 that the Jews did not have the right to put anyone to death has been challenged by reference to several episodes in the New Testament and contemporary Jewish sources, e.g., the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7.57ff.), attempts to stone Jesus (e.g., John 8.59), the killing of James, the brother of Jesus (*Ant.* 20.200 and Hegesippus in *EH* 2.23), the stoning of the adulteress (John 8.1ff.), the execution of the priest's daughter related in *mSanbedrin* 7.2 and the right to put to death a non-Jew apprehended in the Temple (*War* 5.194). All have been offered as evidence that the Jews did in fact have the right to execute those guilty of religious offences at this period.¹¹
- 4 The release of Barabbas to the crowd by Pilate, recounted in all four Gospels, has caused surprise to those familiar with Roman provincial legal procedure.¹² There is not much evidence from secular sources which would confirm the occurrence of this practice.
- 5 The character of Pilate as it is portrayed in the Gospels, weak and vacillating, and easily swayed by the leaders of an alien nation, is said to contrast greatly with what we know of him from elsewhere. Philo in particular (*Embassy* 299ff.) presents a picture of a determined and ruthless individual, who did not go out of his way to do any favours for the Jews.
- 6 If John 18.12 is to be understood as a reference to Roman soldiers participating in the arrest of Jesus in the garden, it seems strange that

Jesus should have been taken to the Jewish authorities, as the Romans would already have been involved at this early stage and could well have dealt with him themselves.

These issues have persuaded many scholars that the accounts of Jesus' arrest and trial in the New Testament Gospels cannot be regarded as being in any way accurate accounts of those events. Critics of the Gospel accounts have questioned in particular the historicity of the Sanhedrin trial and the inability of the Jewish authorities to put offenders to death. If John 18.31 is incorrect, and the Jews did have the right to execute those convicted on capital charges, why was Jesus crucified by a decision of the Roman prefect? Perhaps the Roman execution of Jesus signifies that his offence was thoroughly political.¹³ If so, then the Gospels might be seen as an attempt to play down the political nature of Jesus' activity by placing the blame for Jesus' death on the Jews and removing as much blame as possible from the Romans. This would have been done by inventing a Sanhedrin trial. If the Acts of the Apostles is anything to go by, one early Christian apologist wanted to show how little hostility there had been towards the Christian cult from Roman administrators (e.g., Acts 13.12).¹⁴ In the light of these considerations it is probably not surprising to find that over the years there have been attempts to show that Jesus' death by crucifixion was his penalty for his part in subversive activity against the Roman overlords. The Gospels are, therefore, regarded as later fabrications by the Church to cover up this embarrassing fact, by stressing the Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus.

Despite the problems posed by the Gospels' accounts, several comments must be passed on the criticisms made of the Gospel accounts in the light of the external sources:

- 1 It is uncertain whether the regulations governing the procedure for a capital trial, as laid out in the Mishnah,¹⁵ were in force at the time of Jesus. In the first place, the Mishnah was only written in its present form at the end of the second century CE, and while it contains much material going back to the time of Jesus and before, we cannot be sure that the procedures outlined in the Mishnah reflect actual regulations from the early part of the first century and are not rather the idealized picture of later legal codifiers.
- 2 Even if we could be sure that the regulations were in force in Jesus' day, we have had reason to suggest that the forerunners of the rabbis, whose laws are found in the Mishnah, may not have been intimately involved in the final hearings which preceded the taking of Jesus to Pilate. We cannot be sure that the regulations which we find in the Mishnah would have been accepted as the basis for the procedure accepted by the group

- which was responsible for the arrest of Jesus. There is little reason to suppose that *pharisaic* procedural rules (should any have been needed for an informal hearing) would have been accepted as the basis for the procedure of this court (if such it was).¹⁶
- 3 We assume that the hearing before the High Priest was in fact a formal trial. Such a supposition can only be gleaned from the Marcan account (though it is hinted at in Luke), for Mark alone records the charge of blasphemy made against Jesus and a formal condemnation. In the versions in Luke and John there seems to be evidence that we are not dealing with a formal *trial* of Jesus, but an informal hearing,¹⁷ which would precede a deputation to Pilate. Indeed, a consideration of the Johannine version, with its continued process of inquiry throughout the Gospel, would lead us to the conclusion that what we have on the night before Jesus' death was a final, informal gathering, part of a much longer attempt to incriminate Jesus and take action against him.
 - 4 Although we do not have any statement in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus pronounces the divine name, Mark (14.62) has Jesus say, 'I am', the great statement of divine revelation familiar to us from the Bible. Indeed, it is on the basis of a similar saying in John 8.58 that Jesus is almost stoned to death (cf. John 18.6). We should probably not attach much weight to this usage in Mark and to the profound *Ego Eimi* Christology in the Fourth Gospel as the basis for Jesus' condemnation.¹⁸ Rather, the ambiguous response to the messianic question in Matthew and Luke more likely reflects Jesus' own words, and the more explicit response found in Mark is a later explication by the Evangelist.
 - 5 If indeed we are to look for any evidence of Jesus' being guilty of a quasi-blasphemous utterance (though once more we cannot suppose that the precise regulation for blasphemy, which we found in the Mishnah, was in force in Jesus' day, cf. Mark 2.7), then it is probably to be found in the saying about the 'Son of Man'. Once again there has been much discussion about the authenticity of this saying, not to mention about the relationship between the variant forms in Mark and Luke. If, however, we suppose that all that Jesus was claiming was the messianic office, then it seems unlikely that he would be guilty of blasphemy. Even the contumacy in claiming to be the Messiah would not be regarded as blasphemy. Whatever Jesus may have been saying about himself in this saying, the point which comes across in it to his *bearers* is that another figure will sit at God's right hand. There is no *necessary* self-identification here of Jesus with this figure, unless the phrase 'Son of Man' was *widely* accepted as a means whereby the speaker could refer to himself. Thus it may not be the identification of himself with the heavenly 'Son of Man' which is the point at issue in this saying, but the theology implicit in Jesus' statement. Jesus asserts that there are *two* figures sitting side by side in the heavenly

world: God and a human. This could well have been taken as a threat to Jewish beliefs and, therefore, as a form of blasphemy. This may be illustrated by reference to a story in the Babylonian Talmud, where the distinguished Jewish teacher of the beginning of the second century CE, Rabbi Akiba, interprets the two thrones in Daniel as being thrones for God and David, an interpretation which earns for him a rebuke from his contemporary R. Jose the Galilean (*bHagigah* 14a).¹⁹ What the statement about the 'Son of Man' offered Jesus' priestly interlocutor was confirmatory evidence, gratuitously offered, that here was a subversive force, whose views were capable of causing dislocation and leading the people astray – exactly what they might have been trying to avoid (John 11.49).

- 6 More attention should be paid to the fact that an issue which preoccupied the authorities was Jesus' right to be a teacher or, even more, a prophet. It has been suggested, for example, that Jesus was on trial as a rebellious elder (Deut. 17.2).²⁰ Jesus' silence during his trial may indicate a rebellious attitude and a defiance to the High Priest (though the motif of silence may be indebted to Isaiah 53.7). This suggestion points us to the importance of the character of Jesus' teaching, particularly in the light of the problem of authority and eschatological fulfilment, as a feature of the investigations carried on. Indeed, they help us to understand better the question about the Temple raised at the hearing in Mark (14.58), and the suggestion about the heterodox character of the theological statement in Mark 14.62 may fall into this category.
- 7 One interesting suggestion is that it would have been blasphemy had Jesus called himself Messiah, and when the Sanhedrin was convinced that he had in fact done so, it condemned him to death. If such were a live issue in Jesus' day, it would coincide with the issue of authority already discussed: what right did a person have to proclaim the ultimate rule of God and claim a central place in it?²¹
- 8 Discussion of the correctness of John 18.31 has been very important for those who want to support the historicity of the hearing before the priests. There is some valuable external material which seems to confirm John's statement (cf. *jSanhedrin* 1.1; *bSanhedrin* 41a; *bAbodah Zarab* 8b). One example is a Jewish source called the *Megillat Ta'anith*.²² In it we find a list of days on which it was not lawful to fast (*Megillat Ta'anith* 6). The text mentions two dates in the month of Elul: one when the Romans withdrew from Judaea and Jerusalem and the five days following when Jews once again were permitted to kill the evildoers. This source seems to indicate that during the Roman rule, before the withdrawal, Jews did not have the right to kill those guilty. In addition, in the Jerusalem Talmud (*jSanhedrin* 1.1 and 7.2, sources which are, admittedly, much later than the New Testament), there is a reference to the fact that the right of Jews to put to death offenders had been taken away 40 years

before the destruction of Jerusalem; another indication that there was a recollection in the Jewish sources that the right to punish offenders with death had disappeared for a time.

As far as the other examples are concerned, the death of Stephen, while taking place in the context of an official trial (Acts 6.12), does not come as the result of an official decision by the Sanhedrin but a spontaneous reaction to Stephen's speech (Acts 7.54). The death of James, the brother of Jesus reported in Josephus, takes place during an interregnum between the prefectures of Festus and Albinus. Indeed, Josephus actually comments on the fact that Annas had acted illegally in the eyes of some of his contemporaries. Finally, the reference to the execution of the priest's daughter in *mSanhedrin* 7.2, while taking place before 66 CE, possibly occurred during the period 41–4 CE when Agrippa was king of Judaea.²³

- 9 Finally, the alleged inconsistency of the picture of Pilate in the Gospels compared with other sources is probably not great. Indeed, even Philo (*Embassy* 304) indicates that after the incident with the shields, when Pilate deliberately provoked Jewish wrath by flouting Roman insignia in the city and with other incidents of maladministration, Pilate's position was by no means strong (*War* 2.169–75). Incidents like that might have made him suspicious and, what is more, made it difficult for him to ignore the pressure of the priestly authorities, however much he may have hated having to give in to them.²⁴ As far as the release of Barabbas is concerned, the odd piece of evidence may be mentioned which suggests that the practice is by no means as outlandish as was once thought. A passage in the *mPesahim* 8.6 speaks of the release of a prisoner at Passover time, though nothing is said about a Roman procurator being involved in this. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.215) refers to the action of another Roman procurator, Albinus, who brought out of prison those who were imprisoned for trifling offences and released them.²⁵

Many of the problems connected with the trial of Jesus can be dealt with if we give more attention to the accounts in the Gospels of John and Luke. It seems likely that the pattern of informal hearings hinted at in Luke, and found explicitly in John, corresponds more nearly with the situation than the formal trial we have in Mark. We may surmise, therefore, that there was no formal legal process during the last fateful Passover of Jesus' life leading to an official condemnation, *though the possibility should not be excluded that some sort of official inquiry had been in action over a much longer period of Jesus' ministry.*

The reference to Jesus' saying against the Temple (Mark 14.58 and par.), Annas' inquiry about the nature of Jesus' teaching (John 18.19), as well as the possibly heterodox implications of Jesus' saying found in variant forms in

Mark 14.62 and Luke 22.69 suggests that one of the features of any inquiry concerned the nature of his teaching and the authority which he claimed to teach as he did. His claim to speak on behalf of God and his decision to come to Jerusalem at Passover and act as he did was a threat to public order.²⁶

There is sufficient evidence for us to suppose that the Gospel accounts concerning a hearing before the priestly élite, though not a trial, on the night before Jesus' death, should not be written off. To say this, however, is not to deny that there may well have been some later retouching of the account of Jesus' trial in the Gospels, in order to minimize the offensiveness of Jesus to Rome. Such factors would have been particularly necessary when Jewish and Christian relations were becoming strained; there was a need for Christians to loosen the ties which linked them too closely to the deeds of an increasingly despised Jewish nation, and an accommodation with society became more pressing.

But however much we stress the importance of a priestly hearing as part of the process which led to Jesus' death, and stress the interest in Jesus' teaching, it is likely that Jesus said or did something which enabled the priestly faction to take him to the prefect on grounds which would persuade the prefect that Jesus was a political threat. Jesus' refusal to deny messianic pretensions, even if we suppose that the Marcan form of the response to the High Priest is secondary, may have confirmed the impression which his Galilean activity, entry into Jerusalem, and action in the Temple had already given, namely that he was a dangerous threat to the interests of the priestly group just as much by his (implicitly) subversive sentiments as his action against the Temple. Satisfactory coexistence was of great importance both to the priestly aristocracy and Roman colonial power, because it enabled the priests to perform their duties and because the continued Roman presence guaranteed their livelihood and privileges.²⁷ The political implications of the message of Jesus are well brought out in the discussion in John 11.49f. Jesus' teaching and prophetic vocation were intensely political, insofar as they not only pointed forward to the overthrow of the present order, but also the present attempt to bring this into effect. Even if Jesus renounced violence, his goal of a new age was deeply disturbing to those who preferred the compromises of the present age to the uncertainties of the new.²⁸

*Jesus' Personal Claim*¹

Assuming that Jesus did indeed claim that in his ministry the kingdom of God was already dawning, there is an implicit claim about the unique importance of his person in the divine economy. Thus, even if we consider that the titles which are used of Jesus in the Gospels reflect more the beliefs of the Early Church rather than Jesus, in the light of the eschatological character of his claim it should not cause us surprise that Jesus' followers rapidly made such extravagant claims about him. Even the most sceptical of gospel critics would want to assert that a Christology is already implicit within the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels.² Jesus' activities in claiming to forgive sins (Mark 2.6f.), his teaching with authority (Mark 1.22), his conviction that God had sent him (Luke 10.16; cf. John 7³) all point to a claim of ultimate significance. So, the whole association of Jesus with the kingdom of God is by itself sufficient to make a christological claim of great weight without any recourse to the titles. Nevertheless, it is likely that some further indication of the character of Jesus' personal claim may be gleaned from a survey of the titles which are ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels.

(a) The Prophet⁴

We have already noted the great importance which the baptism had for the beginning of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God, confirmed in sayings such as Luke 12.50 and Mark 11.30. The baptismal experience provides a clue to Jesus' ministry.⁵ The baptism accounts have affinities with the call-experiences of prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel and Second Isaiah (Isa. 6.1; 42.1; 64.1; Ezek. 1.1). Mark's version presents it as a personal experience, in which a vision of the Spirit and a divine voice proclaim the nature of his relationship with God.⁶ During this experience Jesus seems to have come to a new understanding of his vocation, and to have received the Spirit. Despite the suspicion which surrounds the references to the Spirit in the gospel tradition,⁷ there seems to be no good reason why Jesus should not have believed that he had been filled with the Spirit of God.⁸ In rabbinic sources there is some evidence that the return of the Holy Spirit to the people of God was considered to be a mark that the new age had in fact dawned. In *tSotah* 13.3 the prophetic Spirit had departed from Israel with the last of the prophets to return in the last days (cf. Acts 2.17). Such a belief was based on passages like Deuteronomy 18.15 and Malachi 4.5 (cf. Mark 8.28). There are other parts of the tradition which seem to suggest that inspiration by the Spirit was

important for Jesus, for example, Mark 3.28 and Matthew 12.28 (though the Luke parallel does not mention the Spirit; cf. Acts 10.38).⁹ The account peculiar to Luke of Jesus' preaching in the synagogue in Capernaum (Luke 4.16ff.) is based on the fulfilment of Isaiah 61, and the temptation narrative, whatever its original form may have been, is typical of the experience of one undergoing the testing of a vocation.¹⁰ Other material in the Gospels seems to indicate that Jesus thought of himself as a prophet and lends greatest weight to the view that he was inspired by the Spirit (Matt. 13.57; 12.39; Luke 13.33f.). He was thought to be a prophet by his contemporaries, as certain reports about reaction to Jesus indicate (Matt. 21.11, 26; Luke 7.16; John 6.14). Indeed, it is significant that at his trial Jesus is asked to prophesy by the soldiers, as if there was a view abroad that he had claimed to be an inspired person with a claim to a divine commission (Mark 14.65).¹¹ Like the Prophets, Jesus challenges his generation for their unbelief and places himself in the long line of Prophets who have done the same (Luke 11.49ff.). He comes from rural Galilee, crying woes on the towns (Luke 10.13ff.; 13.34; 22.27ff.).¹² Like Elijah and Jeremiah, he is rejected by his contemporaries (Mark 6.4; cf. Jer. 15.10; 20). His criticisms are directed at those who have made obedience to God a sham (Luke 11.46). He preaches doom (Matt. 11.20ff.), and with authority (Mark 1.22), and his speech resembles the authoritative divine pronouncement of the Prophets, 'Thus says the Lord', prefaced as it is with the solemn 'Truly, truly I say to you.'

The conviction that he has to speak God's word to the people takes Jesus up to Jerusalem (Luke 13.31ff.; cf. Luke 9.51). In doing this, he expects suffering and death as the Prophets had suffered before him (Luke 11.49). Jesus might have reckoned with death, particularly if the prophetic element is authentic, as there had probably been brushes with authority long before the journey to Jerusalem (Mark 3.21). The bulk of the sayings dealing with Jesus' suffering, death and vindication in their present form seem to reflect the beliefs of the Church and the detail of what actually happened (Mark 8.31; 9.31; 10.33ff.); but the sayings concerning the continuation of the prophetic line by Jesus indicate that he reckoned with the possibility of rejection and suffering, like the Prophets before him (Matt. 23.34–9). A saying like Luke 9.44 may well contain the original form of Jesus' conviction that he must die, which was later reformulated in the extended Passion predictions, which we find in Mark 8.31; 9.31; 10.33ff.¹³

In addition to the fact that they show Jesus facing the possibility of suffering, as the Prophets had before him, the Gospels indicate that he also may have interpreted the significance of this suffering. All the Synoptic Gospels, as well as 1 Corinthians 11.23ff. and John 6.51b, preserve sayings of Jesus where he interprets his imminent death as a vicarious suffering sealing the new covenant (cf. Exod. 24).¹⁴ Like the unknown figure of Isaiah 53, whose suffering was regarded as a sin-offering having benefit for others, so Jesus'

blood, poured out for many, would seal the new covenant (Mark 14.24). Whether Jesus regarded himself as fulfilling the role of the figure prophesied in Isaiah 53 is not as clear as might appear. With the exception of Luke 22.37 (cf. Matt. 12.17–21), there is no explicit quotation from Isaiah on the lips of Jesus, though scholars have pointed to passages like Mark 10.45 as one possible example of an implicit influence.¹⁵ While the influence of Isaiah is nothing like as prominent in the New Testament as one might have expected (see, e.g., Acts 8.32; 1 Pet. 2.24f.), it is hard to believe that somewhere in the background Isaiah has not influenced the ideas of vicarious suffering found in the Gospels. Jesus may have been influenced by Jewish martyrology (e.g., Wisd. 2–3; 4 Macc. 6.28f.),¹⁶ though it is likely that the belief that the death of the righteous would be vicarious did owe something to Isaiah 53.¹⁷ On the night before his death Jesus explained the significance of his death as the sealing of a new covenant. The significance he attached to his death was the sealing of a covenant and not a sacrifice dealing for sin. As such, Jesus saw his death not as a new dimension to his life but as the culmination of something which had already been initiated in his life with the inauguration of the kingdom. His death sealed the new relationship between God and humanity already started: the new aeon of the kingdom of God. It is the sign and seal of the establishment of God's new eschatological covenant which the earlier activity and teaching have set in motion.¹⁸

One other theme which should be considered under the heading of 'Jesus the prophet' is a concept which makes only an isolated appearance in the Synoptic Gospels, but is very frequent in the Gospel of John: Jesus as the emissary of God (e.g., 12.44; 13.20; 5.23; 7.16; 12.45; 14.9; 15.23). In Luke 10.16 (cf. Matt. 11.25ff.) Jesus speaks of himself as the one sent by God. The institution of agency in the Jewish sources concerns a situation where an individual is sent by another to act on the sender's behalf: an agent is like the sender with the latter's full authority (*Mekilta* Ex. 12.3; cf. *mBerakoth* 5.5). Thus, to deal with the agent is to deal with the sender, for example *Sifre* on Numbers 12.8:

With what is the matter to be compared? With a king of flesh and blood who has an agent in the country. The inhabitants spoke before him. Then said the king to them, You have not spoken concerning my servant but concerning me.¹⁹

Exactly the same formula makes its appearance in the Synoptic tradition (Luke 10.16; Matt. 10.40ff.; cf. Matt. 18.20), and it may go back to Jesus. Such an understanding of his role would coincide with Jesus' belief that he was the herald of God's eschatological kingdom, and indeed the one to give effect to its realization.

The complex of traditions associated with the Prophet, rooted as it is in

the Torah (Deut. 18.15ff.) and in prophetic pronouncements, is of great importance for understanding the figure of Jesus.²⁰ The visionary revelation as the basis of authority, the tradition of rejection and suffering, the hints that this suffering might be vicarious, and above all the eschatological character of both Spirit and prophecy, indicate how many themes converge on this term. The complex of ideas concerned with prophecy continued to exercise a profound influence on New Testament Christology and ministry, as recent studies of the Fourth Gospel and Paul's letters have shown.

(b) 'Son of God'²¹

Because the phrase 'Son of God' has become such a central part of Christian confession, considerable suspicion has been aroused when suggestions have been made that Jesus may have thought of his own relationship with God in these terms. Nevertheless, it is possible to see how Jesus may have used this idea.²² Jeremias famously characterized the use of this word in the Gospels as a distinctive mark of the voice of Jesus of Nazareth. It is, he argues, the word which a small child would use to speak of its father and indicates that degree of trust and dependence which are so characteristic of Jesus' relationship with God. The extent of the distinctiveness of such usage should not be stressed, however.²³ Nor should great weight be placed on what are in fact only a handful of references (Mark 14.26 and Luke 11.2, though in the latter it is part of a prayer taught to the disciples). In the Bible the father/son image is used occasionally to speak of the relationship between a human being or a group of human beings and God.²⁴ Thus we find that the relationship between Israel and God is compared to the relationship between a father and a son (Deut. 8.5 and Hosea 11.1). The same is true of the relationship between God and the king (2 Sam. 7.14f.; cf. 4 Ezra 13.32). The point to note about this usage is that the image is primarily *descriptive* and points to God's care and protection for the child, and the obligation to obedience and faith on the part of the latter. It is probably in something like this sense that we may comprehend Jesus' understanding of the term.

Jesus *did* see himself standing in a special relationship with God as the agent of the coming of the kingdom of God, and his teachings had the authority of God. Nevertheless, the idea of 'sonship' used by Jesus of his relationship with God is not common in the gospel tradition. While the phrase 'Son of God' is found occasionally, 'son' by itself is not so common.²⁵ Even in the Fourth Gospel, examples are surprisingly infrequent. Two examples of the use must suffice: one of them is the 'Johannine thunderbolt' (Matt. 11.25ff. and par.). It is so called because it is a saying which resembles some in the Gospel of John and yet is to be found in one of the oldest layers of the Synoptic tradition. The other is the small section in John 5.19f., where

Jesus speaks of his relationship with God. Both of these sections have a similar phraseology and meaning and may be treated together. We can best understand them if we take the meaning of the father/son relationship in a comparative sense. Thus it is a way of speaking about the intimacy of relationship which enables such a unity of will between Jesus and God in the fulfilment of the divine purposes.²⁶ One should also note the apocalyptic flavour of a passage like Matthew 11.25ff.,²⁷ whose authenticity deserves to be taken seriously.²⁸ The claim to intimate knowledge of the things of God is typical of apocalypticism (Rev.; 2 Cor. 12.2ff.; Rom. 11.25; 1 Cor. 15.51).²⁹ If Jesus claimed authority from God to proclaim the imminence of the kingdom, that presupposes a knowledge of God's purposes of a special kind. It is in the light of this Jewish apocalyptic background that support for the authenticity of the saying may be given.

(c) Messiah³⁰

'Messiah' or 'Christ' is perhaps the most familiar of all titles applied to Jesus. It has its background in Second Temple eschatological expectation.³¹ Such hopes were very diffuse. Indeed, the dominant eschatological expectation centred on the conviction concerning a new age rather than the agent of its arrival. Yet some groups did look forward to the coming of some kind of messianic agent, usually human (but not always, e.g., 1 Enoch 37–71), who would help to inaugurate the new age. Perhaps the most typical example of contemporary expectation is that which is found in the Psalms of Solomon 17 and 18, which look forward to the coming of a descendant of David, who would purge the land of Israel of all defilement and overthrow the enemies of God. Elsewhere, for example in the Dead Sea Scrolls, we can see some of the variety in contemporary expectation, when we note that this community expected not only a Davidic messiah but also a priestly messiah and eschatological prophet.³²

Recently published material from Cave 4 (4 Q 521) from the Dead Sea Scrolls indicates a degree of similarity with parts of the gospel tradition, especially Luke 4.16 and Matthew 11.2ff.:

. . . [the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones.
 Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service!
 All you hopeful in (your heart), will you not find the Lord in this?
 For the Lord will consider the pious (*Hasidim*) and call the righteous by name.
 Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with his power.
 And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom.
 He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent].
 And f[or] ever I will clea[ve to the h]opeful and in His mercy . . .

And the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been . . .
 For he will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the
 poor . . . (Translation Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 391–2)

Thus, if Jesus claimed to be Messiah, it was probably the hope of a descendant of David which was dominant, the coming of one who would free Israel from all her oppressors (cf. Luke 24.21). Evidence of Jesus accepting the title is very rare in the Gospels, not least with the military 'royal' overtones implicit in the expectation concerning the 'son of David'.³³ There are three passages in the Synoptic Gospels which we shall examine briefly to see whether Jesus saw himself as Messiah: Peter's confession, the triumphal entry, and the confession before the High Priest.

In Mark's version of Peter's confession (Mark 8.27ff.; cf. Matt. 16.13ff.; Luke 9.18ff.; John 6.66ff.), Peter responds to Jesus' question about his person by stating quite simply that Jesus was the Messiah (v.28).³⁴ According to Mark, this does not seem to have been met with a great deal of enthusiasm by Jesus, who goes on to talk about the suffering which the 'Son of Man' would have to endure (8.31ff.). Peter is unwilling to accept that Jesus must suffer, and he is rebuked by Jesus and called 'Satan' (8.33). In Matthew's version, Jesus greets Peter's confession with enthusiasm and promises that Peter will be the rock on which the Church will be built (Matt. 16.16f.). If we concentrate on the Marcan version, however, we are faced with the two possibilities: either Jesus refused to accept Peter's confession of him as the Messiah and, as a result, implicitly denied that he was the Messiah, or he accepted it but, by his reference to suffering, subtly qualified the meaning that he wanted to give to the title. One of the problems of putting too much weight on this episode in its totality is that we cannot be sure that the sequence of sayings in Mark reflects the situation in the life of Jesus and is not an artificial construction by the Evangelist.³⁵ What we can say is that there is little enthusiasm manifested for the title 'Messiah', at least without qualification. If we attach some weight to the variant form of the confession in Matthew, Jesus does not reject the title, though even here a supernatural revelation is required for a human being to have the insight into Jesus' identity (Matt. 16.17).

In the Synoptic accounts of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem just before Jesus' Passion (Mark 11.1ff.; Matt. 21.1ff.; Luke 19.29ff.),³⁶ Jesus takes the initiative in sending his disciples to find the animal(s) and engineers the 'messianic' demonstration. The crowd quotes from Psalm 118.25, a psalm which was used at Passover and which speaks of salvation and deliverance. The link with Zechariah 9.9 is made explicit in Matthew 21.5 and John 12.15. It has been suggested that Jesus was here trying to interpret his messiahship in the light of this verse, rejecting the warrior messiahship of contemporary expectation and preferring the humble 'Messiah' (cf. Mark

8.31ff.). Such a symbolic act would be of the same kind as that performed by Jesus in the Temple. Unlike the Synoptic version, however, the version in John (John 12.12ff.) gives a rather different impression of the event. In this the crowds respond to Jesus and hail him as the one to come, *before* he begins to ride upon the ass. In John, the spectacle of Jesus riding on an ass is seen as a reaction to the cries of the crowd rather than a deliberate premeditated act on his part. Thus the account is represented as being an attempt by Jesus to defuse the inflammatory expectation of the people by seeking to fulfil Zechariah 9.9. It is difficult to be sure which of these two versions is more original. The version in John helps us to understand the event, without our having to explain why Jesus should have initiated a potentially inflammatory act, though on the other hand the version in Mark does not explicitly quote the text from Zechariah 9.9, and it could be that it was an event which was given added messianic significance only subsequently. But to evacuate the event of all messianic or eschatological significance would be to ignore the wider eschatological context of Jesus' proclamation and the importance of his visit to Jerusalem (Luke 13.33f.).

Mark records Jesus as explicitly accepting the title 'Messiah' at his trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14.62; cf. Matt. 26.64; Luke 22.69). Despite the fact that the versions of the saying in Matthew and Luke retain a more ambiguous reply, it is unlikely that even they indicate a rejection of the title.³⁷ Jesus did probably make some kind of statement, which led his priestly interlocutors to suppose that he had accepted that he was a messianic pretender; otherwise we could not explain the charge against Jesus of being king of the Jews (Mark 15.26; 32; Luke 23.2). In Mark and Luke acceptance of the title 'Messiah' is again qualified by reference to the enigmatic 'Son of man'.

In the light of all that we know about Jesus' attitudes to violence it is unlikely that he accepted the current Davidic messianic categories without qualification, as they would have pointed mainly in the direction of a militant Messiah, a view which the tradition gives us no warrant for accepting. That Jesus accepted a qualified view of messiahship seems to be suggested by the discussion of the Davidic sonship in Mark 12.35f. Here messiahship, which is tied closely with the Davidic hope, is questioned by reference to an interpretation of Psalm 110. The point which is being made here is that because David, who was believed to have written Psalm 110, called the Messiah 'Lord' in this psalm, he could not have been referring to one of his descendants but one mightier than himself. It is an implicit denial of the close link between messiahship and Davidic descent which may cast light on Jesus' own understanding.

In the light of the eschatological character of Jesus' message, the messianic issue would have come up either for Jesus or his contemporaries. At the very least, Jesus' claim to be the agent of the coming of the kingdom of

God placed him on the same level as the Messiah of Jewish hope, whose task it was to be the agent of God's reign of righteousness. The reluctance of Jesus to accept the title 'son of David', or to use the title 'Messiah' of himself may lie with the bellicose connotations of that title and its related concepts in current usage. That Jesus was the anointed one, to be the agent of the good news of the kingdom of God, is suggested by Luke 4.16ff. and confirmed in early Christian preaching (Acts 10.38). 'Messiah', or 'anointed one', is linked not only with royal personages but also with prophets. So, if we to look anywhere for Jesus' messianic consciousness, it should be in that group of passages which speak of Jesus as the one anointed with the Spirit,³⁸ whose mission heralded the kingdom (Luke 4.16f.; Matt. 11.2ff. and par.; cf. Isa. 35.5f.; 61.1f. and 4 Q 521 quoted above). It is probably in this sense that we may say that Jesus saw himself as the anointed one.

(d) The Human Figure or the 'Son of Man'³⁹

One of the problems in contemporary study of the Christology of the New Testament is the origin and meaning of the phrase 'Son of Man', found so frequently in the Gospels but hardly at all in other parts of early Christian literature (Acts 7.56 is an exception). Opinions about the significance of the phrase vary widely. Some think it offers the key to Jesus' messianic consciousness, as the only title frequently found on his lips in the pages of the Gospels, and hence to the foundation of the Christian doctrine of the person of Christ. Others consider the phrase is never used as a title of any significance by Jesus, even if it was used in this way for a short time by the Early Church. They argue that even where its usage by Jesus can be established, it is a phrase devoid of theological significance.

It is hardly possible to cover the whole gamut of scholarly debate, or even to evaluate all the different interpretations offered, so what follows is a brief survey of possible approaches.

The 'Son of Man' sayings in the Synoptic Gospels can be divided into three categories:

- 1 Sayings dealing with the present situation of the 'Son of Man' on earth (e.g., Luke 7.33; 9.58; Mark 2.10).
- 2 References to the suffering of the 'Son of Man' (e.g., Mark 4.21; 8.31; Luke 9.44).
- 3 Sayings which speak of a future role for the 'Son of Man' in vindication, glory and judgement (e.g., Mark 8.38; Matt. 25.31; Mark 14.62).

The Johannine sayings cover rather different themes:⁴⁰

- exaltation (3.14);
 - pre-existence (3.13; 6.62);
 - eschatological (5.27; 6.27);
- (the last two probably referring to the role of the 'Son of Man' in providing eschatological food for the elect)
- confessional statement (one only, 9.35).

The pattern of the Johannine sayings coincides most closely with the third category of the Synoptics – namely the glorious 'Son of Man', though in the understanding of exaltation and glory in the Fourth Gospel, the cross plays an important role (cf. 3.14), and there may be some influence from the Suffering Servant passage of Isaiah 53.⁴¹

In its present form the Greek phrase 'the Son of Man' (*ho uiuos tou anthroponou*) looks like a christological title, yet there is little evidence in contemporary Jewish sources that it was a messianic title. (Much has been written about the Aramaic phrases which might lie behind the phrase.)⁴²

So what are the different ways in which this phrase has been understood? We can set out the various approaches under two major headings – non-titular and titular:

1. Non-titular/non-theological interpretations

- (i) 'Son of Man' is a poetic way of referring to a human being (cf. Ezek. 2.1; Ps. 8.4) common in the Bible, and its use in the Gospels is a continuation of this.⁴³ The possible link with the prophet Ezekiel is significant, given the recourse to Ezekiel's call-vision (Ezek. 1) in the accounts of Jesus' Baptism, and his role as a prophet of judgement on Jerusalem.
- (ii) The phrase is a well-known circumlocution in Palestinian Aramaic for the first person singular, used either as an indirect self-reference or to refer to humanity in general, including the self.⁴⁴

2. Titular/theological interpretations

- (i) Jesus is identified with the 'one like a son of man' of Daniel 7.13, interpreted as a symbol of suffering Israel, vindicated by God.
- (ii) Jesus is identified with the 'one like a son of man' of Daniel 7.13, but interpreted as a heavenly being.⁴⁵
- (iii) Jesus used the phrase 'the Son of Man' of a heavenly figure different from himself, but who would come to vindicate his own ministry (Mark 8.38).⁴⁶
- (iv) Jesus identified himself with the glorious heavenly figure spoken of in Daniel 7⁴⁷ but by it referred to his future glory.

Non-titular/non-christological/non-theological interpretations⁴⁸

It is not easy to offer a unified explanation of all the sayings in the Gospels in the light of a particular messianic title or of a first-century CE idiom, so let us start with the second of the non-titular views – ‘Son of Man’ as a circumlocution for the first person singular. The explanation of the phrase in the Gospels by reference to a familiar idiom, whereby speakers referred to themselves as ‘son of man’, is not without its difficulties,⁴⁹ but probably in Aramaic speakers did use a general statement about humanity in which speakers themselves were included.⁵⁰

Such interpretations make it easy to explain those sayings dealing with the present role of the ‘Son of Man’ and his suffering – the problem comes with the sayings about the future glorious role of the ‘Son of Man’, particularly where there is an explicit or implicit allusion to Daniel 7.13 (e.g., Mark 13.26; 14.62; cf. Luke 22.69). These are often explained as secondary formulations reflecting early Christian attempts to relate the phrase ‘Son of Man’ to Daniel 7,⁵¹ reflecting a high level of interpretative activity in early Christian communities.⁵² Relatively little use is made of Daniel 7.13 in the ‘Son of Man’ sayings, yet arguments against the authenticity of sayings like Mark 14.62 do not seem to be strong enough to rule out the possibility of the influence of Daniel 7.13 on Jesus. Jesus would surely not have denied any part in the establishment of the kingdom of God, particularly if he was its inaugurator. If the twelve were to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19.28), surely Jesus would have been there too?

Titular/christological/theological interpretations

In the interpretations of the phrase where theological content plays an important part, much attention is devoted to a consideration of the Jewish background to the sayings in the Gospels. Daniel 7 is the object of most attention, as opinions are divided about passages like 1 Enoch 37–71, and to a lesser extent 4 Ezra 13: uncertainty concerning the date of these passages reduces their value for a study of the New Testament. In 1 Enoch 37–71 the ‘Son of Man’ is without doubt a glorious heavenly figure, and if pre-Christian (as seems likely) gives evidence of a belief in a heavenly Messiah. It is possible that there may be an allusion to 1 Enoch 69.29 (or the traditions behind it) in Matthew 25.31ff.

Daniel 7 has been the focus of more attention as it is clearly quoted in the Gospels, but this chapter has provided problems enough for interpreters:

1. Jesus interpreted as a symbol of suffering Israel, vindicated by God

In this interpretation of Daniel 7.13, ‘one like a son of man’ is merely a symbol of the saints of the Most High mentioned in the interpretation of the

vision (vv.18, 21f., 25, 27) and has no independent existence in the heavenly world. As a symbol of the righteous of Israel the human figure suffers at the hands of the beasts, just as the righteous suffer at the hands of the kings (vv.20ff.) (though in the vision itself nothing is said about the suffering of the 'one like a son of man'). The vision, therefore, is said to be a way of asserting that suffering and humiliation of the righteous will be followed by vindication and glory for the faithful.⁵³

It is argued that Jesus chose this picture to describe his ministry of suffering, rejection and humiliation as a prelude to glory, because he saw himself as the embodiment of the righteous of Israel. Thus there is no heavenly 'Son of Man' who comes with the clouds of heaven: this is merely a pictorial way of referring to the vindication of the suffering righteous.⁵⁴ This interpretation supposes that all the 'Son of Man' sayings in the Synoptic Gospels can be understood in the light of this Danielic background. The pattern of suffering followed by vindication and the bestowal of authority neatly covers all the material contained within the 'Son of Man' sayings.

2. Jesus interpreted as a heavenly being

Others suggest that Daniel 7 fits into a pattern of belief evident in other sources, including the section from 1 Enoch (37–71) where a heavenly figure is compared with a human. Daniel 7.13 is a reference to a heavenly, angelic being who acts as God's viceregent and the heavenly representative of the people of God. He is probably to be identified with the archangel Michael and functions as a representative of the saints of the Most High.⁵⁵

The relevance of this interpretation is limited to those sayings which speak of the 'Son of Man' and his glorious heavenly activity. It cannot explain the humiliation and suffering of the 'Son of Man'. So we need other ways of explaining this group of sayings.

3. Jesus as a heavenly figure different from himself, who would come to vindicate his ministry (Mark 8.38)

Mark 8.38 and parallels show there was a close link between Jesus in his earthly life and the glorious 'Son of Man' ('Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them will the "son of man" also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his father and of his holy angels.') This is unlikely to be a reference to different figures. Rather, we should see this apparent separation as a way of differentiating between Jesus' earthly existence and the glorious role he was destined to occupy in the future. Therefore,

4. *Jesus as the glorious heavenly figure spoken of in Daniel 7, referring to his future glory*

Jesus speaks of the Son of Man as an office which he is destined to enter as a result of his earthly activity, but an office in which he is already proleptically engaged: the kingdom is dawning, but has not yet come. So, also, Jesus is not yet the Son of Man (which is essentially a triumphant figure), but he acts as the one destined to be so during his ministry and humiliation. The kingdom and the Son of Man 'spill over' or 'jut out' as it were, on to this side of the cross and humiliation.⁵⁶

Conclusion

When there is more clarity elsewhere in the study of the Jesus tradition, it is surprising that this phrase, the 'Son of Man' has assumed such importance as an interpretative key.⁵⁷

The phrase is part of the complex of ideas associated with the establishment of the kingdom of God, and the teaching about the new age, which is so central to the message of Jesus of Nazareth as it appears in the Gospels. The problem comes when the dominant thrust of that message is subordinated to the interpretation of a christological title whose origin and meaning is surrounded by so much uncertainty.

It has become unfashionable to attach much significance to the order of events in the Gospels. Nevertheless, it seems possible that the rapidly changing circumstances at the end of Jesus' life altered his perspective – not only on the Temple, but on the 'Son of Man'. Just as we see him determinedly setting out for Jerusalem to face at best a lukewarm reception and at worst hostility, so also we note that, particularly in Mark, there is a concentration of 'Son of Man' sayings in the second part. Such a preoccupation with future vindication is entirely comprehensible when the possibility of immediate fulfilment of the promise has receded. The initial optimism, when the present seemed to be a time of fulfilment (e.g., Mark 2.10), becomes less and less plausible. All that remained in Jerusalem was the hope of divine vindication of Jesus' claim to be the emissary of the divine reign, nowhere more defiantly asserted than in Mark 14.62: 'You will see the "son of man" sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' This, linked as it is to Daniel 7.13, is a defiant political statement, drawing on a text which had by the first century CE become a key part of Jewish political discourse (e.g., 4 Ezra 11–13; Rev. 13). In the interrogation by the High Priest, Jesus resorts to the apocalyptic vision of Daniel: the days of the beasts of empire are numbered, while the destiny of the Human Figure is to replace them.

So we are left with a phrase in some of whose authentic occurrences there is reference to a figure who will come in glory. In identifying himself with

this figure, albeit in a veiled way, Jesus asserted the conviction that the vital role which he played in the proclamation of the kingdom of God would continue in the final consummation when sorrow and sighing would flee away and he would sit on a throne with his twelve closest followers judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19.28; Luke 22.30, cf. Rev. 20.4; 1 Cor. 6.2).⁵⁸

12

*The Resurrection Narratives*¹

Modern discussions of the resurrection have tended to concentrate on the historicity of the events described in the Gospels.² The resurrection of Jesus pervades many of the earliest sources in one form or another, though, with the possible exception of 1 Corinthians 15, little need was felt to offer an reasoned explanation or apology for the resurrection faith until well into the second century. Resurrection faith had profound ramifications for the way in which those first Christians understood themselves and the world in which they lived. In considering the teaching of Jesus the eschatological dimension of his message is of central significance. We noted that the future hope of the restoration of the created order was regarded by Jesus not merely as hope but as also near to fulfilment. The early Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus confirmed this belief. He was considered to be 'the first fruits of the harvest of the dead' (1 Cor. 15.20); his resurrection was a sign that the last days had indeed arrived (Acts 4.2). Through Jesus' resurrection the inexorable process towards the new age had indeed made its start (Rev. 5; Rom. 8.11).

The meaning of resurrection in the New Testament lies in the future hope of Second Temple Judaism.³ Early Christianity shared with the Pharisees the belief in the resurrection of the dead but regarded this as fulfilled in the case of the Messiah but awaiting completion for the rest of humanity. In Acts 23.6 Paul faithfully represents pharisaic doctrine over against the teaching of the Sadducees. Indeed, according to the Mishnah (*mSanhedrin* 10.1) belief in the resurrection from the dead had become something of an article of faith for the pharisaic-rabbinic tradition. The origins of that faith are difficult to determine, as the Bible is by and large silent on the subject, the clearest evidence coming from the late book of Daniel (Dan. 12.2). There are hints to be found elsewhere (e.g., Isa. 26.7; Job 19.25), but the likelihood is that belief in the resurrection from the dead emerged in a situa-

tion of political impotence when the ultimate vindication of God's purposes for humanity, particularly for the righteous people, was placed firmly in the future.

Resurrection from the dead speaks of transformation and the demonstration of God's righteousness in human history. This is explicit in Paul's writings, e.g. Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15.20, where the future consummation and present fulfilment are linked by the experience of the Spirit as a way of enabling the followers of the Messiah to maintain their assurance that already they were in some sense participating in the glory of the age to come. Just as the resurrection of Jesus indicated that the final purposes of God had already started (1 Cor. 15.20ff.), so the coming of the Spirit indicated the return of prophetic era. It was the foretaste of a new age (Rom. 8.23; 2 Cor. 1.22; Luke 1.67; Matt. 10.21; John. 16.13; Acts 2.17; 14.2; Rev. 19.10; 22.6). In Romans 8 the present is a time of tribulation and travail, evoking the language of Jewish eschatology and the longing for liberation, but there is a compensation in the activity of the Spirit as a present demonstration of the glory to come. In the book of Revelation in an apocalyptic mode the visionary writer uses the contrast between appearance and reality to establish the hidden reality of the lordship of Christ which is a temporary phenomenon awaiting the demonstration of divine justice and the judgement of all that stands opposed to it in history, a pattern which in more abbreviated form we find in 1 Corinthians 15.

The resurrection faith, therefore, is not just a question of what happened to Jesus. The new start which Jesus' resurrection signalled was confirmed in the experience of the first Christians themselves. 'If any one is in Christ, there is a new creation' (2 Cor. 5.17; Gal. 6.15). The life of the new creation (Rev. 21), of which the resurrection of Jesus was a sign, was known to be true by the Christians themselves. They had tasted of the first fruits of the new age, the pledge of something more to come (Rom. 8.23; 2 Cor. 1.22) through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit itself was a sign that the last days had finally come (Acts 2.17), and the first Christians linked the experience of the Spirit very closely with the resurrection (Acts 2.35ff.; John 7.39). Linked with the experience of the Spirit was the rebirth of the prophetic gift, a new experience of communal life appropriate to a new age (Acts 2.42; cf. 1 Cor. 12.13) and a conviction that the prophetic community (cf. Rev. 11) had the task of carrying on Jesus' witness to the dawning of God's reign (Matt. 28.18f.; John 20.21).

The resurrection confirmed the claim that Jesus had made that the kingdom of God, the life of the age to come, was imminent. The first Christians expressed this conviction by affirming that the resurrection proved Jesus' messiahship (Acts 2.36; Rom. 1.3) and vindicated his message (Acts 2.24). It was Jesus who was the key to the eschatological salvation of God (Rom. 10.9). The resurrection gave christological reflection an impetus

which took up the essential theme of Jesus' own ministry and necessitated the explicit formulation of the character and work of the eschatological agent of God. The assertion that in Jesus was the first fruits of the harvest of the dead was an alternative expression of his own conviction that in his work the kingdom of God had already drawn near (Mark 1.15; Luke 11.20). For the early Christians to have asserted that Jesus had been raised from the dead was to make an assertion also about God's ultimate purposes for creation. The resurrection of Jesus was a sign of the new age (1 Cor. 15.20; Col. 1.18; Rev. 1.5) and the hope of a similar glory to come (1 Cor. 15.51ff.).⁴

Nearly all modern treatments of the resurrection tradition start with the account in 1 Corinthians 15, which gives a list of witnesses to the resurrection.⁵ The chapter was written in the mid-fifties, and it refers to a list of witnesses as being part of a tradition, which Paul himself had received. Inclusion of James the brother of Jesus (cf. Gal. 1.19; Acts 15) may point to the fact that the list may have had its original in the Jerusalem church. In its present form the passage antedates the final written form of our earliest Gospel by about ten years, and its formulation may well take us back to the early years of the Jerusalem church.

Paul seems to place the appearance of the risen Lord to himself on the same level as that to the other apostles. Exactly the same Greek word is used to describe the appearances (*opbthe*, 'he appeared') suggesting that, at least in Paul's view, the character of the resurrection appearances to the first disciples was of the same kind as his own. It is likely that the tradition, which he had received, also used the same Greek word, which Paul used of his vision on the Damascus road. Like Paul, therefore, who saw the risen Christ in a vision (Gal. 1.12, 16; cf. Acts 26.19), this account seems to suggest that *all* the resurrection appearances were of a similar kind. From what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 and elsewhere it is apparent that he thought of the resurrection not as the resuscitation of a corpse of flesh and blood (cf. 1 Cor. 15.50) but as the transformation into a new realm of being (1 Cor. 15.42; Phil. 3.21). What Paul saw in his resurrection appearance, therefore, and what by implication all those mentioned in the tradition of witnesses in 1 Corinthians 15 saw, was the risen Christ in a vision transformed into a body of glory, the glory of the age to come (cf. Mark 12.25; Luke 20.36).

On the basis of 1 Corinthians 15, which lacks any explicit reference to the empty tomb, it has been suggested that the earliest testimony dealing with the resurrection are appearances asserting that Jesus appeared alive to his disciples ('I have seen the Lord', 1 Cor. 9.1; cf. John 20.18). The fact that Paul puts all the appearances, including his own, on the same level indicates that these appearances were likely to be *visions* of the glorified Christ. Absence of any reference to the empty tomb tradition, such as we have in the Gospels, has suggested that this might have been a later development invented to prove the conviction of the first Christians that Jesus *was* really

alive. This means that the earliest tradition consisted of appearances of Jesus alive to the disciples, which were refracted through contemporary beliefs about resurrection from the dead, so that the conclusion was reached that this eschatological event must have occurred in the case of Jesus. There then developed the assumption that Jesus' body could not have remained in the tomb. To put it another way: the disciples had been convinced that they had seen Jesus alive, and the only appropriate terminology available to them to express this conviction was that he had been raised from the dead, even if his body had still remained in the tomb.

There are several problems with this particular interpretation, however. One can see that it would have been appropriate for Paul to have included an explicit reference to the empty tomb in his discussion in 1 Corinthians 15, particularly in the light of 1 Corinthians 15.12, in order to demonstrate the fact that there is resurrection from the dead. It may have been implied,⁶ particularly in 15.4 where the references to burial and being raised only make sense if it is presupposed. A mere vision of Jesus would not have justified the very concrete verb 'raise' (*egeiro*).⁷ Appearances of Jesus alive after the resurrection need not have necessarily suggested that Jesus had been raised. After all, the tradition of exaltation to heaven (Enoch in Gen. 5.24; Elijah in 2 Kings 2.10 and Moses *after* death)⁸ was an available way of explaining Jesus' destiny after his death. But the earliest documents stubbornly use the language about resurrection. Even if the original experience was that Jesus was alive,⁹ it does not follow that the subsequent reflection on this experience would *necessarily* have led to the conviction that Jesus had been raised from the dead. When Paul writes of the resurrection of Jesus, therefore, he presupposes that the tomb was empty (how else can we understand the words in Romans 6.4, 'Christ was raised from among the corpses?').

There is a second matter which needs to be considered when using 1 Corinthians 15 as primary evidence; namely, the character of Paul's presentation. Paul himself has an apologetic purpose in his presentation of the tradition in 1 Corinthians 15, especially in 15.8, and it is apparent whenever he speaks of his relationship with those who were apostles before him. Even a superficial acquaintance with Paul's letters will show that throughout his ministry Paul felt acutely the difference between his apostolic office and those who had been followers of Jesus during the latter's lifetime; hence his attempts to place himself on the same level as the twelve (e.g., Gal. 1.1f.). Paul would never want to confess too readily that he was inferior to the other apostles, especially as far as the commissioning call-vision was concerned (cf. Gal. 1.12). Paul is likely to have insisted that the appearance of the risen Christ to himself did not differ *qualitatively* from those to other apostles, though even he is forced to admit that in some sense at least the appearance of Christ had a distinctive character to it (1 Cor. 15.8: 'last of all, as to one untimely born'. . .).¹⁰ While this tells us nothing about the difference in the

mode of appearing, it recognizes that there was something unusual about Paul's apostolic call, which did in some way set him apart from those who were apostles before him, however painful it may have been for Paul to have admitted this fact. This is the picture which is brought out for us in the Acts of the Apostles, where the call to Paul comes after Jesus has ascended into heaven and is only seen by his followers through visions. Similarly, when Paul speaks of his conversion in Galatians 1.12, 16, he describes it as the unveiling of a being hidden from human gaze, the revelation of a glorious heavenly being. Consideration of 1 Corinthians 15, therefore, does not allow us to conclude with any certainty that the character of the resurrection appearance to Paul was exactly the same kind as those to the other witnesses, despite the similarity of language. The possibility should not be excluded, therefore, that the particular formulation of the resurrection-tradition received by Paul is the result of the apostle's own formulation.

Let us turn now to the gospel material.¹¹ In most recent discussions of the evidence for the resurrection, the material in the Gospels fares badly compared with 1 Corinthians, because, in its written form, the material in the Gospels is later than that in 1 Corinthians. Nevertheless, we know that the traditions included in the Gospels were formulated long before their written form. In the Gospels we find two types of material: that concerned with the empty tomb and that concerned with the resurrection appearances. The reasons for denying the historicity of the former, even leaving out of consideration the angelophanies, seem to be unconvincing, particularly if doubts are expressed about the use of 1 Corinthians 15 for this end. The narratives as they stand are hardly the invention of a community wanting them to be the cornerstone of its faith, particularly as all our accounts have women coming to the tomb and finding it empty (Mark 16.1ff.; cf. Luke 24.2ff.; John 20.1ff.). The value of women as witnesses (*mShebiith* 4.1; *Sifre Deut.* 19.17; *bBaba Kamma* 88a; *Ant.* 4.219) was questionable,¹² and their role in both Mark and John (the last likely to represent an independent tradition) is crucial. Anyone wanting to create material to validate the resurrection belief would not have had such insubstantial witnesses.

The Gospels are largely silent about the mode of resurrection itself. Although Matthew has a legend about the glorious angel who comes down and rolls the stone away from the tomb (Matt. 28.2), the other Gospels say nothing at all, a deficiency which is remedied by the second-century Gospel of Peter (ch. 10). By the time that Matthew was written, there was a need being felt to counteract rumours that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus; hence the addition of the story about the guards at the tomb and the bribery of the guards (Matt. 27.62ff.; 28.11ff.). In the resurrection appearances themselves, with the exception of the sudden appearing and disappearing of Jesus, there is nothing remarkable (quite surprisingly so) about the appearances of Jesus, and the conversations differ very little from

conversations which had taken place during his earthly life. Instead of the glorious heavenly being spoken of by Paul (as in Rev. 1.13ff.) we have an apparently ordinary human person. Indeed, it is not without significance that the one narrative which might have been most appropriate as a christophany, the Transfiguration, is not included among the appearances of the risen Christ in the Gospels.¹³ The differences between it and the appearances of the risen Christ are quite marked.¹⁴

It has been usual to explain the 'down to earth' passages, where Jesus eats (e.g., Luke 24.42f.), as the latest stratum of the tradition, when it became necessary to stress as unambiguously as possible the physical character of the resurrection in the face of questions about the veracity of the accounts (we know from second-century gnostic texts and the reaction to them in Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, Book 5 that there was a strong tendency to spiritualize the body of Jesus). 'Down to earth' descriptions of Jesus' appearances would be moving in the opposite direction to trends we find in other parts of the New Testament, for there is a tendency to play down the material in favour of the spiritual (e.g., 1 Cor. 15.35ff.). Thus, if we suppose that Paul's doctrine of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 marks a step in the direction of a more spiritual belief, it is likely that these materialistic passages fit in much better to a Palestinian milieu of Jewish eschatological expectation than some of the other developments which were taking place in the resurrection belief.¹⁵ Accordingly, due consideration should be given to the possibility that they represent an earlier rather than a later part of the resurrection tradition.¹⁶

The emergence of the resurrection faith solely on the basis of 1 Corinthians 15 is unlikely, and the empty tomb material should be taken more seriously as part of the oldest stratum of tradition. If we take seriously the stories of the empty tomb, this does not mean that we are bound to assume that the body of Jesus was raised; there may be other explanations of the phenomenon of the empty tomb. The finding of the tomb empty on the first Easter morning by the women may have been one of those 'signals of transcendence', that first, important stimulus to suggest to those first witnesses a doctrinal background within which those experiences could be interpreted.¹⁷

By emphasizing the centrality of 1 Corinthians 15, with its all-male list, and downplaying the importance of the empty tomb material, modern scholarship colludes with the diminution of the importance of the testimony of the women who on the first day of the week found the tomb empty and fled in fear. The implication of what they had found only slowly dawned on them. Or, more likely, their assumptions about what they would find were shattered by the appearance of Jesus, not immediately recognizable to minds so conditioned by previous assumptions (John 20.16; Luke 24.31). Our explanations of the phenomenon of the first Easter will depend very much on our own theological pre-understanding too. Indeed, nowhere does the necessity

of a careful recognition of the character of our philosophical assumptions so impinge on biblical interpretation as in the discussion of resurrection narratives. It is in this context that the biblical interpreter is particularly in need of help from the philosopher of religion.

From the perspective of the historian of early Christianity, the tradition of the empty tomb deserves more prominence in our discussion of Christian origins, however:

When every argument has been considered and weighed, the only conclusion acceptable to the historian must be that the opinions of the orthodox, the liberal sympathizer and the critical agnostic alike – and even perhaps of the disciples themselves – are simply interpretations of the one disconcerting fact: namely that the women who set out to pay their last respects to Jesus found to their consternation, not a body, but an empty tomb.¹⁸

Section 3

Paul

1

Introduction

In the New Testament, Paul is the central figure of early Christianity, the pioneering apostle, who took the gospel of the Messiah 'to the ends of the earth'. Despite the fact that Paul has been the focus for religious renewal in the history of Christianity, the extent of his influence on Christian thought has been overestimated.¹ While it may be true that Paul's writings take up a large part of the canon of the New Testament, Paul was probably not the dominant voice in early Christian theology. There was a great variety in the doctrinal exploration of the early Christians.² Equally, Pauline thought was not at one extreme within the early Christian movement while other (perhaps dominant) streams of thought were fundamentally opposed to the Pauline interpretation of the Christ event.³ Paul's concern for tradition and shared patterns of belief and practice (at least by the time he was writing his letters)⁴ should warn us not to assume that Paul was a lone voice and that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, or its equivalent, was an unparalleled new interpretation of the Jewish inheritance.⁵ There are radical innovative strands in what Paul writes which need to be kept in balance with the attempts to establish uniformity of belief and explain continuity with the past. Nevertheless, if Paul's words are to be believed, there was a basic agreement between Paul and the leaders of the Jerusalem church (Gal. 1–2).

The event on the Damascus road⁶ was not so much the transference from one religion to another but the transference of an individual from one form of Judaism to another, from the pharisaic sect to the people of the Way (the description used in Acts 9.2). Initially, it was a change within Judaism, parallel to the change which might have taken place when an adherent of the Essene group became a Pharisee (cf. Josephus' account of sectarian transfer in *Life*, 9ff.).⁷ Even if Paul was not radically different in his ideas, in his *practice*, both personal and communal, he was effectively a major influence in separating the nascent Christian groups from Jews. All the letters of Paul bear witness to the existence of identifiably different communities, with (as

far as the letters suggest) little or no contact with local synagogues. In his own life he considered he had a prophetic-style vocation to bring the nations the gospel (e.g., Gal. 1.11–17) rather than that task being left to some kind of divine intervention.⁸ Suspicion of Paul probably was just as strong among fellow Christians as among Jews, not so much because of what he said and believed but on account of his actions.

The two major differences which characterized Paul's change of mind and habit centred on Jesus of Nazareth and the Jewish hope for the future.⁹ If the accounts of Paul's life in Acts are to be believed (and they receive some confirmation from Paul himself, e.g. Gal. 1.13; Phil. 3.6; cf. Acts 8.3), Paul's attitude towards Jesus before his conversion was extremely negative (Acts 9.2; 22.4; 26.10f.). Thus the dramatic vision on the road to Damascus meant that the original pattern of beliefs, in which Jesus had been an object of contempt and his followers subject to hostility, had to be completely reorientated. Perhaps Paul gives some hint of the sort of process which went on when he speaks of the sacrifices he had to make in Philippians 3.7f. and the radical transformation in assessment in Galatians 3.13. Under the Law, Christ was accursed.¹⁰ If Galatians 3.13 is anything to go by, it would appear that Paul's new view of Jesus of Nazareth caused him to assess the place of the Law in the divine economy. This is why recognition of messianism is so important. There is no evidence from the Jewish sources which suggests that the position of the Law of Moses was to be altered in the messianic age – indeed, quite the reverse. While passages like Acts 10–11 suggest that others in early Christianity found themselves challenging its pre-eminence, the far-reaching character of the appraisal contributed to Paul's departure from the dominant understanding of the Jewish inheritance. In Paul's thought, Christ had replaced the Law as the key to God's dealings with humanity in the present, but the reason for this lies at the heart of the Jewish religious tradition.¹¹

Paul believed that Jesus was the Messiah. It is no accident that Christ is Paul's favourite christological term, and even if at times his use of it may resemble a proper name, there are occasions when he does indicate its Jewish background and speaks of the eschatological agent of salvation.¹² His convictions about Jesus were linked with the fact that he now believed that the pattern of convictions concerning the future, to which the Scriptures bore witness, was not simply a matter of belief but also of fulfilment; the present time had become the age of eschatological fulfilment (2 Cor. 6.2). Thus his transference from one Jewish group to another had involved him in moving from a group which still accepted beliefs concerning the future as an article of faith, to one which claimed that those promises were already a matter of fulfilment and influenced practice. The dramatic vision and vocation which led to this transference was backed up with a new slant on the meaning of the shared Scriptures (as Galatians 3–4 indicate).¹³

The problems which he wrestles with in his letters were a consequence of his experience; that is, what he and others were living through as they sought to understand their place in Christ's story (cf. Gal. 3.3): the position of the Law of Moses now that the age to come had dawned; and the consequences of the experience of the new age for the life and practice of the Christian groups. Paul's solution, even if rooted in the Pharisaism¹⁴ and the Judaism which had formed him, had significant difference and consequences. Paul seems to have abandoned the practice of Judaism as we find it expounded in rabbinic and non-rabbinic texts alike, except when on pragmatic grounds he deemed it appropriate to keep it (1 Cor. 9.20; cf. Acts 21.21).¹⁵ Interpretation of the Law and the application of it to the everyday situations which confront the individual are not the approach Paul adopts in the letters, though there are hints at the emergence of a similar ethical approach in dealing with cases in 1 Corinthians 7–8 as he would have learned from his Pharisaic teachers, albeit with a significant christological twist.¹⁶

The point at which Pauline Christianity and the bulk of contemporary Judaism parted company was over the precise place of the Law of Moses: was it possible to have an interpretation of Judaism which claims to remain a part of that religious tradition without accepting the *literal* implementation of the laws (e.g. circumcision) for matters of belief and practice, and use it as a general guide for life, as Paul seems to suggest in Romans 15.4?

Paul seems to have identified Christ with the Torah, enabling him to assert that continuity between the new and the old obedience could be affirmed (this is probably behind a passage like Romans 10.4 and 1 Corinthians 8.6 and does not depend on accepting the Pauline authorship of Colossians 1.15ff., where this influence is most marked).¹⁷ The conviction that Jesus was the Messiah and that in him the resurrection of the dead had already taken place meant that the possibility of a transfer from one (old and passing) age to another, new age, was already a reality: the cross and resurrection had been the hinge upon which the fulcrum of the ages had swung (cf. 1 Cor. 10.11). Those who through baptism transferred into a new aeon were delivered from the values and practices of an obsolescent life and culture (Gal. 1.4). Thus what Paul was experiencing and trying to articulate was a new situation, uncharted territory, to which the Jewish traditions had borne witness as a promise, but few, if any, had dared to speak of as a promise fulfilled. Accordingly, it becomes appropriate for him to ask: what now becomes of the Law of Moses, given that the age to come has already dawned? Where do the nations of the world fit in to the divine economy, if the last days have come upon all flesh? There is no clear evidence that any of Paul's rabbinic contemporaries considered the possibility that the Law may have been superseded in the age to come.¹⁸ In the Pauline correspondence we have the articulations of a person who is struggling to probe the significance of his traditions and their meaning within a situation where few had

been able to offer any guidance. Paul had forsaken an interpretation of the Law which was common within *non-eschatological* Jewish groups (the vast majority), for one which is to be understood in the light of the conviction that the age to come is part of the present experience of humanity. In such a situation it need not surprise us that he should have considered a new attitude appropriate, which still retained the connections with the old but in which previous practice and belief were seen as witnesses to the fulfilment of which he and his communities were the first fruits. Paul appears to have considered that he was working within the Jewish tradition, though for most of his contemporaries he had pushed beyond the bounds of tolerance, not least in his radical readings of biblical texts which in some ways anticipate the deconstruction of the Bible found in some of the Gnostic texts in the Nag Hammadi library (e.g., the interpretations of Genesis in the *Hypostasis of the Archons*).

Students of the Pauline epistles will read of the new look on Paul, which refers to the turn in Pauline scholarship which set aside the lens of Augustine and Luther as a way of reading Paul as a convert to a religion of grace from a religion of oppressive legalism. Paul is less of a theologian in the modern sense and more of a mix of charismatic enthusiast and pragmatic community organizer. Paul's particular genius was as an organizer, whose extraordinary skill in creating and maintaining a network of communities with the fundamentals of a common practice, despite being separated geographically and culturally, is his major contribution to the history of Christianity. One should also remember that the members of these communities may have had relatively little that held them together, coming as they did from different strata of society and from different religious and often ethnic backgrounds, and that they were being encouraged to accept habits of life which in general terms resembled Judaism even if there were significant differences which meant that Jews in the communities found difficulties in relating easily to those from other backgrounds (this is the issue in 1 Corinthians 8, 10 and Romans 14).

The Pauline letters indicate that the new converts, particularly those in the urban environment of the cities of the Empire, had to learn a degree of accommodation with the world as it was, without, somehow, abandoning the radical call to share in the life of the new age. In his letters Paul sought to balance the counter-cultural identity of these isolated groups by visiting and writing to them, with the need to survive in an environment which did not accept many of the values. There is at the heart of the emerging Christian identity in the letters a distinctive approach to the common life in which elite goods and privileges (wealth, power, holiness and knowledge) ceased merely to be the prerogative of an elite but were open to all within the common life of the Christian communities.¹⁹ Thus, the collection sees a mutual sharing of material goods. The innovatory character of the collection for the poor in

Jerusalem has few obvious parallels in the ancient world. The collection is mentioned in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians as well as Galatians 2.10, and there is a parallel item of mutual support noted in Philippians. The discussion in 2 Corinthians is a piece of administration, which attracts less comment than the enigmatic wrestling with the apostolic life in the early chapters of the letter. Closer examination of these chapters reveals how he justifies it theologically (2 Cor. 8.7, 9). The exercise of power, patterned on the humility of the crucified Jesus, did not mean the false notion of powerlessness but an appropriate 'other-centred' action. Holiness had become the basic prerogative of all those baptized into Christ who shared the one spirit of holiness. Likewise, knowledge was not just the possession of the learned. Communities who treasured the words of Jesus recalled that the divine wisdom was always apparent to the wise and intelligent, but was revealed to the 'little ones' (Matt. 11.25f.; 1 Cor. 1-3).

Evidence of his influence on Christian writings is sparse before the middle of the second century when his radical challenge to the Hebrew Scriptures captured the theological imagination of Marcion of Sinope, who used Pauline ideas to uncouple nascent Christianity from Judaism, by denying validity to the writings of what other Christians came to regard as the Old Testament. Among emerging orthodox writers it was Irenaeus at the very end of the second century, well over a hundred years after Paul's death, who turned to Paul. Nevertheless this was not on account of Paul's gospel of justification by faith but because of the handle he gave Irenaeus to understand the totality of human history from the Fall to the eschatological redemption. It was Paul's Adam theology which, at this stage at least, was more influential. This is not to deny the theological genius of Paul so much as to underline that it was other, more practical genius which laid the foundations of a religion which was independent of Judaism with its pattern of life and worship and distinctive ideology.

One final thing to remember is that the zeal of the convert shines through every page of the authentic letters. That zeal, which Paul himself admits was as characteristic of his life as a Pharisee as his life as a Christian (Gal. 1.10), is also a reminder that Paul was an activist whose energy was rooted in an experience and conviction first and foremost and only secondarily the result of a carefully systematic theological reflection. No writing of Paul, not even the apparently more systematic Romans, suggests the system of the later theological thinking. All are better seen as collections of discrete blocks of tersely written articulations of an eschatological conviction and a related ethic which loosely combine to form a case for Christian distinctiveness which, while it owed its ideas and inspiration to the Jewish Scriptures, was in key respects rather different, and, what is most important, involves converts to it belonging to a different organization from the local Jewish groupings (with which other, non-Pauline Christians may have had closer relationships).

Paul's dramatic moment of vision when he began the remarkable journey away from his ancestral religion is the foundation for understanding the life and work of an apostle for whom immediate experience of the indwelling Christ and the divine spirit are critical: such experience which continued to be fundamental for his life and work, which he communicated to his churches and which was, in part at least, the cause of some of the problems he then had to confront, particularly in 1 Corinthians.²⁰

2

Christianity Before and Apart from Paul

From what we can see in the New Testament itself, Christianity in Antioch and Rome emerged before Paul had any contact with either city.¹ The problem is that we are not in a position to say much about Christianity apart from Paul. It is true that in the last twenty years or so commentators on the Gospels have attempted to demonstrate the way in which the traditions were used and moulded at the pre-canonical stage, but we often have to resort to patient and imaginative reconstruction to say much with any degree of certainty about the Christian faith and practice of the communities from which and to which the New Testament documents were written. There are several areas which need to be mentioned briefly: the account of the life of the Jerusalem church in the Acts of the Apostles and Jewish Christianity; the pre-canonical gospel tradition as a source for our knowledge of Christianity apart from Paul; Stephen and the Hellenists; and the church in Antioch.

In dealing with the church in Jerusalem we have to rely almost exclusively on the material in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Acts has been the subject of considerable disagreement among historians of early Christianity, for there is a substantial body of opinion which argues that we cannot rely on the material in Acts for knowledge of the life and beliefs of the primitive community in Jerusalem.²

Detailed examination of the speeches in Acts suggests that we may be in possession of some early material, however,³ even if we attribute the present composition of the speeches to the author of the work. There is no evidence of a developed doctrine of the atonement (though this is largely absent from Luke–Acts generally; the one exception being in Acts 20.28).⁴ Jesus is the one unjustly put to death, yet vindicated by God, who will come again when the times of refreshment come from the presence of God (Acts 3.17ff.). Sophisticated christological doctrine is also absent. Jesus is spoken of in ways which

have few parallels elsewhere in the New Testament.⁵ The account in Acts leaves us in the dark about the beliefs and practices of the disciples of Jesus elsewhere in Palestine. Luke–Acts concentrates on Jerusalem; it says nothing, for example, about resurrection appearances in Galilee (unlike the hints in Mark, and Matthew 28 and John 21). We can conjecture what may have been the situation in Galilee, supposing that some of the gospel material reflects Galilean ideas, but this is a hazardous enterprise.⁶ Likewise, apart from Acts 8 and the hints we can glean from John 4, we are no better placed with regard to Samaritan Christianity, which in the light of what we know of later Samaritan tradition, was probably a potent source of theological innovation.⁷

When we do hear about the Jerusalem church later in Acts, it is apparent that it contained elements which disapproved of some of the developments which had taken place in the early Christian movement. The account of the Apostolic Council in Acts 15 (which, some argue, is reflected in Galatians 2.1–10)⁸ and the statement of James in Acts 21.20 indicate a wide divergence of views on the issue of the condition whereby Gentiles were to be admitted to the messianic community. The way to acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision had, according to Acts 10–11, already been opened up both by Peter and the elders of the church in Jerusalem. What we find in the account of Acts 15 is a degree of hostility (Acts 15.1), however, and a compromise between the radicals, represented by Paul and Barnabas, and the more conservative, Jewish Christians: Gentile converts were to be accepted without circumcision, but only on condition that they accepted the basic requirements sufficient to satisfy the susceptibilities of the stricter Jews (Acts 15.20; cf. 21.25, both of which passages evince important textual differences reflected in the marginal notes in most modern translations).

We know from other early Christian sources that Jewish Christianity had a significant life of its own for a considerable period.⁹ Even within the New Testament we see evidence of it in the letter of James,¹⁰ Jude¹¹ and possibly 1 Peter¹² (or at the very least, traditions incorporated in them), and of course, Hebrews.¹³ The Gospel of Matthew may reflect in the choice and ordering of the Jesus tradition the outlook of a Jewish community.¹⁴ For example, the infancy narratives in Matthew indicate a concern to reject polemic against Jesus.¹⁵ Elsewhere in the Gospel there is ample evidence of specifically Jewish Christian concerns (e.g., Matt. 17.24ff.).¹⁶ Also, recent study of the Gospel of John has stressed its Jewish Christian setting,¹⁷ and there have been those who have considered that such a setting is most appropriate for the Gospel of Mark.¹⁸ Outside the New Testament, information from early Christian writers shows that there was a continuing and vital Jewish Christianity, in which the developing Christology of the mainstream was rejected, as well as one which had a more sophisticated doctrinal outlook. Figures repudiated by the later Church, like Cerinthus and Elchesai (about whom,

unfortunately, far too little is known), indicate the ongoing importance and doctrinal ingenuity of Jewish Christianity.

Study of the Gospels in recent years has been concerned to explore the character of the communities from which the Evangelists wrote and to which the Gospels were addressed.¹⁹ In exploring this dimension of the Gospels there has been a concern to lay bare the situations in which the Jesus tradition was handled and used. To this end the Gospels have been treated with enormous exegetical sophistication, in order to ascertain the life of the particular communities hidden behind the peculiarities of the text. Care needs to be taken, however, not to see texts as being too closely related to historical contexts which prompted them. The – sometimes fanciful – reconstructions of the life of individual communities which are supposed to be reflected in the New Testament Gospels come close to replicating a modern version of allegorical exegesis which may not do justice to the wider appeal of the Gospels.

There has been a widespread belief that the material which is designated as the *Q* source (sayings and stories common in one form or other to Matthew and Luke alone) represents the religious outlook of a particular Palestinian Jewish group, whose beliefs at some stage of its existence centred on the returning 'Son of Man'.²⁰ Behind the Gospel of Mark it has been suggested that there lies a concern to repudiate a view of Christ which concentrated on his mighty works as the paradigm for true discipleship, at the expense of more important parts of the gospel, particularly the cross and suffering.²¹ If this was in fact the case, there may be some justification for supposing that Paul's opponents also, particularly those in 2 Corinthians 10–13,²² may have had similar christological beliefs, which the author of the Gospel of Mark seeks to correct.

The attempted reconstruction of the problems dealt with by Paul in his letters will enable us to catch a glimpse of the kind of Christianity which the extant documents left largely unrecorded.²³ What Paul writes about the opponents in Galatia and Colossae, for example, suggests the kind of spiritual and ethical ideas which were current in the Pauline churches (and we may expect elsewhere also in the early Christian movement).²⁴ Colossians in particular, with its stress on certain Jewish practices and angelic beliefs (2.18), indicates the kind of Jewish Christian beliefs and practices which may have been widely held in Asia Minor. Elsewhere in the New Testament, 1 John gives evidence of a Jewish Christian false teaching (2.22f.; cf. 4.2), which had its effects on Christology and against which there were polemics, using Jewish typology (1 John 3.12).²⁵ This letter indicates that, in common with many religious movements of a sectarian nature, the consequences of disagreement and separation led to vitriolic attacks and hatred against those who dared to disagree and separate themselves (e.g., 1 John 2.19ff.).

While the Acts of the Apostles tends to play down the extent of division in the Early Church, its record does, as has already been noted in the case of the

issue of circumcision, include hints of significant disagreement. The earliest example of such a disagreement is that described in Acts 6 between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, which is followed by the account of the death of Stephen in a riot. There has been much dispute over the identity of the Hellenists.²⁶ We are probably dealing with a movement whose outlook included much more radical ideas than was probably the case elsewhere in the Jerusalem church. Some appreciation of this fact may be gleaned from Stephen's speech in Acts 7, where the emphasis on a continuous rebellion of Israel against God and the hostility against the Temple (Acts 6.13) seems to mark him off from other Christians (even allowing for the idealization of Luke's portrait of early Christian support for the Temple and its worship, e.g., Acts 2.46). There are distinctive elements in the speech, which call for examination as evidence of early Christian thought.

The powerful speech which had provoked the hostile reaction to Stephen involves a highly selective telling of the story of the people of God in such a way that it brings out the negative aspects of that story so that the rejection of Jesus is seen as typical of a pattern of behaviour found throughout Scripture. It is a device with a long pedigree. In the books of Kings, for example, we have a telling of the story of the Hebrew kingdoms in such a way that the justification for divine judgement in the exile and in the destruction of Solomon's Temple is vindicated. In a much more closely related passage the Prophet Ezekiel offers a retelling of Jewish origins which portrays in the sharpest and most pungent way the rebellious nature of the people of God (Ezek. 20, especially v.25). In Stephen's speech the implicit suggestion that the construction of the Temple marked an actual act of rebellion is a daring use of Scripture which might have been seen as a monstrous act of sacrilege verging on blasphemy.

We may be tempted to dismiss this as merely anti-Jewish polemic from the pen of a later Christian writer (and Luke goes out of his way to shield Jesus from anti-Temple sentiments in his presentation of the 'trial' in Luke 22.66-71, where the word against the Temple of Mark 14.58 is omitted). Nevertheless, we need to remind ourselves of the anti-Temple strand within Jewish literature of the period. This took two forms: dissatisfaction with the organization of the Temple as at present constituted and with its present sacerdotal overlords; and dissatisfaction with the Second Temple as an institution. The writings of the Qumran community and the presence of an alternative Temple in Egypt at Leontopolis in defiance of the Deuteronomic law founded by a renegade priest in the second century BCE offer an example of the former, and occasional hints such as 1 Enoch is an example of the latter. Like many other venerable institutions, the Temple had become so much part of the fabric of Jewish life, both in the land of Israel and as a symbol of their religion for Jews in the Diaspora, that its validity was rarely questioned. But provision for the Temple itself is not offered in the law code

of Moses, where the sacrificial system is linked to the presence of God above the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. It was the conquest of Jerusalem and the establishment of the kingdom by David there that paved the way for the building of a Temple by his successor (presumably in conformity with the pattern found in other Canaanite cities). This decision, backed up by divine sanction through a prophetic oracle (2 Sam. 7.4–17), explains the identification of the laws of the tabernacle to be transferred to the Temple. Of course, we cannot now be sure whether the cultic laws in the Pentateuch were formulated for the Temple in Jerusalem rather than being a retrojection into the Mosaic period of ideals and practices which were exilic or even post-exilic (some of them probably do possibly pre-date the destruction of Solomon's temple). Within the Scriptures as they would have been read, however, the cultic regulations do not mention the Temple (all the more surprising because, at the time when the cultic regulations were put together, those who compiled them might have wanted to link them explicitly with a (restored) Temple rather than the ancient tabernacle). The lack of explicit link with the Temple is a deficiency which was remedied at a later date by 11 *QT*, a Qumran document which attributes many of the cultic regulations concerned originally with the Tabernacle to the Temple and attributes them to a divine revelation to Moses.

The anti-Temple stance of Stephen, which comes in the context of a scriptural demonstration of the intransigence of God's people, is an understandable point of view if a case is to be made for or against the Temple on the basis of first principles. His notoriety, which provokes the hearing before the Sanhedrin, is set out in Acts 6.13: 'This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.' The speech of Stephen itself supports the veracity of this charge only obliquely. Its main thrust is to demonstrate human rebelliousness. The quotation of Solomon's words about the Most High not dwelling in houses made with hands (1 Kings 8.20 in Acts 7.48 with the, possibly anti-Temple, sentiments of Isaiah 66.1) merely precedes a ringing indictment of the 'stiff-necked people' and a link between present rebelliousness in rejecting Jesus, the Prophet like Moses who was to come, and the history of similar disobedience.

Despite the evidence of the early chapters of Acts that the first Christians continued to worship in the Temple, elsewhere in early Christian writings the Temple became a metaphor for the holiness and sense of divine presence in the world in the lives of men, women and children. The importance of the physical temple diminished, particularly in those texts which now form the canon of our New Testament: 'the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem . . . the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these

to worship him' (John 4.21, 23). Voices like Stephen's are raised to denounce the rebelliousness of the majority of his ancestors, and in his review of Israel's history he points to Solomon as the villain of the piece, who built a house for God, which, if the quotation from Isaiah 66.1 is anything to go by, marked a departure from the divine intention:

Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands, as the prophet says, heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things? (Acts 7.48f.)

The description of the death of Stephen and of the vision of the 'Son of Man' (Acts 7.56) also deserves to be considered as evidence of a distinctive early Christian doctrine and not merely the rounded creation of an inventive writer.²⁷ What the Stephen material indicates is the probability that Paul was not the first radical within the primitive Church,²⁸ and that there was already a tradition of thought which was both innovative and productive of a significant degree of tension within the earliest Christian communities.

Where was the focus of this radical thought located? Paul in his own letters and the Acts of the Apostles explicitly points to Antioch as one centre (Gal. 2.11ff.; Acts 11.19ff.).²⁹ According to Acts 11.26, Antioch was the place where the people of the Way were first called Christians. In other words, their beliefs and practices had become so distinctive that there was need to attribute to them a separate label to distinguish them from others of a Jewish persuasion. It was the community in Antioch which commissioned Paul and Barnabas to embark on the first missionary journey (Acts 13.1ff.). According to Paul's own testimony, table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles was already firmly established, even if (for reasons now unknown to us) it was necessary for James the brother of Jesus to persuade Jewish Christians to desist (Gal. 2.12).³⁰ What is also significant about this passage in Galatians 2 is the fact that we do not seem to be dealing here with a development which was *totally* at odds with at least some of the principal figures in the Christian community in Jerusalem. According to Paul's own testimony, the apostle Peter himself was wont to share table-fellowship with Gentiles, thus indicating that the differences between Peter and Paul were not as great as some would suppose (as Acts itself makes clear).

Later we may find further hints of its belief and practice in the Gospel of Matthew, if the conjecture of those who consider that the Gospel emanates from Syria, and Antioch in particular, is right.³¹ At the beginning of the second century we find that Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, has left us the legacy of letters written en route to martyrdom in Rome. They evince a developed understanding of ecclesiastical order (which conflicts with the egalitarian hints in Matthew 23.8–10) and of the right of the bishop to speak

with authority to those communities through which he was travelling.³²

Paul's influence may have been less extensive than we suppose, even in succeeding centuries. There are indications from the New Testament that there were others who were thinking 'Pauline thoughts' both before and contemporary with the apostle to the Gentiles; and Paul himself was more devoted to the Law than many allow. It is tempting to make Hebrews and 1 Peter, as well as the so-called deutero-Paulines (Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles), part of the Pauline tradition. There are sufficient divergences in both 1 Peter and Hebrews to indicate both the vitality of early Christian thought and the widely held assumptions of the 'Pauline' position. Even within the extreme forms of Jewish Christianity, we may suppose that there was more overlap than is commonly allowed, particularly in the area of Christology, between Paul and those who, on grounds of Torah observance, might have been Paul's bitterest opponents. A comparison of the Christology of Revelation and the Pauline epistles would indicate much common ground, derived from the common Jewish heritage.³³ Revelation is probably not a document from the Pauline circle, even if it comes from a significant area of the Pauline mission (Revelation 2.14, 20 indicate a substantial divergence from 1 Corinthians 8). Thus, while it would be wrong to minimize the diversity of primitive Christianity and the bitterness and division which this caused, we must not suppose that this necessarily meant that there were irreconcilable and profound differences over *all* areas of doctrine; the Jewish heritage which primitive Christianity had in common ensured a substantial degree of common ground.³⁴

3

Situation and System in Paul's Letters

The central importance of Paul for the history of early Christianity, and indeed for Christian history as a whole, has meant that his letters have been subjected to such minute scrutiny over the years that it has become easy to speak of Paul and his theology. It is testimony to the genius of the apostle to the Gentiles that in these relatively short letters he expressed himself with sufficient coherence for later commentators to construct an outline of his thought. Such a task, however, is not without its difficulties, for the following reasons:

- 1 the difficulty in deciding on the authenticity of the letters;
- 2 the occasional nature of the letters he wrote;
- 3 the unwillingness of first-century Jews to write with the kind of attention to system and coherence which is demanded by the Western reader.¹

In recent years the outline of Paul's thought has proceeded on the assumption that the heart of Paul's theology is to be found in Romans and Galatians. It is in these two letters that we have the exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith and the wrestling with the problem of the Law. Other letters receive less attention for two reasons: because either they may not manifest the condensed theological exposition found in Romans and Galatians, or there may be doubt over authenticity. Into the latter category come the following: Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and possibly also 2 Thessalonians.²

The exclusion of these letters from the survey of Pauline thought has repercussions on the characterization of the apostle's doctrine. It is in the letter to the Colossians that we find one of the most sophisticated christological expositions in early Christian literature (1.15ff.), parallel in many of its ideas with the Prologue of the Gospel of John (though anticipated in 1 Corinthians 8.6).³ Elsewhere in the letter the use of the dying and rising image to speak of the present life of the believer in Christ is a development from the parallel passage in Romans 6 and is akin to the doctrine found in the (gnostic?) *Letter to Rheginos* (49.15f., cf. 2 Tim. 2.18 and 1 Cor. 4.8).⁴ The ideas which we find in Colossians represent a development compared with other letters, but this may well be explained by the need to combat a teaching which asserted that visions of the heavenly world could be gained by means other than those offered in Christ (2.18f.).⁵ If the authenticity of Colossians is denied, then the Pauline authorship of Ephesians probably falls as well. Much of the debate about the authenticity of Ephesians has centred on the relationship of the letter to Colossians. There are many affinities, and Ephesians 6.21f. and Colossians 4.7 indicate some kind of relationship, as also do the resemblances in vocabulary and content.⁶ What we have in this letter is a much more overtly ecclesiological exposition than can be found elsewhere.

As soon as one starts to read the Pastoral Epistles one has moved into a very different religious atmosphere. Admittedly, these are personal letters by Paul to his trusted companions, and this could explain some of the differences.⁷ But the preoccupation with church order, piety and sober living contrasts with the enthusiasm and charismatic fervour manifest in, say, 1 Corinthians. The detailed arrangements given by Paul to his assistants for the ministry in the Church find few, if any, parallels (cf. 1 Cor. 16.15ff.; Phil. 1.1) in the indisputably authentic Pauline letters. What is more, it has proved singularly difficult to fit the itineraries mentioned in the letters (to Asia Minor and Crete) into what we know of Paul's life in Acts (though one

should probably not attach too much weight to that fact, if one doubts the historicity of Acts anyway). One solution to this problem has been to suppose that Paul was released from prison in Rome (Acts 28) and embarked on another series of journeys, including one to the Eastern Mediterranean.⁸ Thus the speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus in Acts 20 reflects the belief of the apostle at that time that he would not see their faces again, rather than the statement of a later writer that this was Paul's last visit to Asia Minor. What is more, it may well be that such a view would tend to support an early date for Acts, which would not be by any means universally accepted, for the story of Paul stops with his sojourn in Rome and makes no mention of other journeys.⁹ The late-first-century 1 Clement suggests that Paul was released from prison and travelled to Spain (if that is what the furthest bounds of the west means in 1 Clement 5; cf. Romans 15.24), though it has to be pointed out that no mention is made in 1 Clement of a journey to the Eastern, rather than the Western, Mediterranean, which is suggested in the Pastorals. If the Pastorals could be shown to be Pauline, then the picture of church order which emerges in what were probably later epistles, does represent a definite change of attitude compared with what we find in Romans and 1 Corinthians. Acceptance of the authenticity of Ephesians suggests a change of mind on Paul's part with regard to eschatology and should be regarded as the mature reflections of the apostle.¹⁰ If all these letters were thought to be inauthentic, it is likely that Paul's testament would be Romans, which would leave us with the struggle over the fate of Israel as the high point of the apostle's writing career.

The concentration on Romans and Galatians has had the effect of pushing into the background the theologically less replete, but equally suggestive, letters to the Corinthians. In Romans and Galatians Paul wrestles with the theme of the Jewish Law and justification by faith. Such ideas hardly make any appearance in 1 Corinthians, and are found only fleetingly in 2 Corinthians (e.g., 5.21) and 1 Thessalonians. The relative infrequency of the theme of justification by faith has rightly led some commentators to question whether in fact we are dealing with the heart of Paul's thought when we read about justification by faith in Romans and Galatians.¹¹ Its presence in these letters was probably dictated by the issue of the membership of the people of God by Gentiles without circumcision. While it would be wrong to play down the significance of this doctrine within the whole gamut of Paul's thought, it is equally wrong to ignore the way in which Paul deals with the issues which manifest themselves in letters like 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians. These reveal in the most direct way the consequences of belief in the Pauline Gospel, and the kind of problems which the Christian way of life presented to the Gentile (and Jewish) converts to Christianity in the ancient world. The Corinthian correspondence is part of a longer sequence of at least two letters (2 Corinthians may contain fragments of several letters,

namely, 2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1; 10–13 and the rest of the letter).¹² Here we see the social and economic pressures, as well as the religious ferment, which were caused by the belief that Jesus was the Messiah.¹³

Circumstances dictated the content and approach of each letter. In no case can it be said that Paul is offering a systematic presentation of his views. Even Romans, which comes nearest to being such, seems to have been inspired by Paul's need to vindicate his Gospel before his visit to the city, and it, too, manifests the same kind of concern with pressing issues (e.g., chs 13–15) which characterizes other letters, like 1 Corinthians.¹⁴

Our approach to Paul's letters must at all times be controlled by the context in which the particular ideas are formulated and addressed.¹⁵ We should not be surprised to find that particular themes are absent in a letter, if these themes do not happen to coincide with the apostle's purpose. Recognition of this fact will prevent us from hasty judgements over questions of authorship as well as of the apostle's doctrine. What is more, we shall also see that it is quite understandable that there may be the occasional contradiction, particularly in those letters which are separated by several years. Circumstances themselves will also dictate changes of emphasis which may well explain discrepancies.

A good example of these discrepancies is the supposed development, which is said to have taken place from the early 1 Thessalonians, via 1 Corinthians, to 2 Corinthians, on the subject of eschatology and the resurrection-life of believers. In one of the earliest letters Paul seems to have expected an imminent return of Christ, when the elect would be caught up to meet him as they were in the air (1 Thess. 4.15f.). In 1 Corinthians, written probably six or seven years later, the apostle returns again to the theme of the final consummation in the context of persuading certain Corinthians that belief in the future resurrection is an essential item of faith (1 Cor. 15.12), and shows them that such a belief does not involve acceptance of a mere resuscitation of the carnal body (1 Cor. 15.35ff.). In this passage Paul still looks forward to the return of Christ and the general resurrection. As in 1 Thessalonians, the dead who are asleep in the dust of the earth will be raised, but, unlike 1 Thessalonians, Paul speaks of the transformation of the body of flesh into the glorious body similar to Christ's (cf. Phil. 3.21; 1 John 3.2).

The situation is rather different in 2 Corinthians 5. In a section dealing with the nature of the apostolic ministry, Paul returns to the theme of the resurrection body once again. Here he uses language which he had already used in 1 Corinthians 15 (clothing and undressing, 5.2ff; cf. 1 Cor. 15.53), but he now speaks of the resurrection body as an eternal entity waiting in the heavenly world to be put on by the believer. The question is: when does this take place? Is it at the return of Christ, as in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, or is it at death? There is much dispute over the answer to this question and the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5. Circumstances may

well have affected the kind of language which Paul uses.¹⁶ One of the essential differences between 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5 is the fact that the former is dealing with the totality of humanity at the general resurrection, whereas 2 Corinthians 5 is dealing with the individual. Two different questions are therefore being asked and answered. In 1 Corinthians 15 the issue is, 'How are the dead raised and with what body will they come?', whereas in 2 Corinthians the issue is what happens to believers at death: 'Is there complete separation between them and Christ until the consummation of all things?', and 'Is it possible that believers may be with Christ (cf. Phil. 1.23) unclothed (i.e., without his heavenly body) until the consummation of all things, when they would be clothed with the body of glory (cf. Rev. 6.9-11)?'

An answer to these questions could be given by assuming that Paul's thought developed to a significant degree.¹⁷ Such an answer assumes that what we have in these documents are three systematic presentations of Paul's thought at different stages of his career. While we cannot exclude the possibility that the apostle's thought *did* undergo some changes over the years (particularly as the imminence of his death loomed or the demands for community coherence intensified), it would be dangerous to suppose that the differences which can be detected necessarily mean significant shifts in his thought, as it is essential to take full account of the circumstances which led to the formulation within each letter.¹⁸

4

Major Themes of Paul's Letters

During this century, there has been a continuing debate between those who located the heart of Paul's gospel in Romans and Galatians in the idea of justification by faith, and those who have followed Schweitzer in speaking of Paul's mystical doctrine of incorporation in the body of Christ.¹ At the beginning of Romans, Paul sets out the heart of his gospel and begins with an eschatological foundation (Rom. 1.16ff.):

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'The

one who is righteous will live by faith'. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth.

The good news which Paul proclaims is about the power or saving action of God in the world.² This is the manifestation of God's righteous character; it is a God who liberated a people out of bondage in Egypt and keeps faith with them by manifesting righteousness in the eschatological acts of power associated with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The manifestation of God's righteousness is, ultimately, salvation to those who believe (though it is anticipated in this age through the Holy Spirit) and continue in that faith, but it involves judgement, wrath, working against all that stands against God. The action about which Paul speaks is not merely concerned with the individual's salvation (though that is included) but also with the demonstration of the power of God in the cosmos as a whole. This passage is important because it reminds us that Paul saw the effects of the Christ-event in more than individual terms. Christ's death was not just 'for me' (Gal. 2.20); its effects did not merely depend on its appropriation by the individual, for he believed it set in train a sequence of events which would lead to final acknowledgement of the lordship of Christ by the universe as a whole (1 Cor. 15.25f.; Phil. 2.11).

Paul's understanding starts with the resurrected Jesus whom he saw on the Damascus road, and the experience of the Spirit. The vision of Christ on the Damascus road was of the same kind as the visions granted to the Prophets at their call and is also similar to those described in some apocalyptic writings. Paul received the revelation (*apokalypsis*) of the gospel and as a part of it, the revelation of the 'mystery' (*mysterion*), namely, God's plan of salvation embodied in Christ for both Jews and Gentiles.³ The resurrection of Jesus marks the beginning of the cosmic process of transformation (1 Cor. 15.20). Meanwhile Christ reigns in heaven with God, until the universal sovereignty is acknowledged throughout creation and God can be all in all (1 Cor. 15.28). By asserting the reality of the resurrection, even of just one person, Paul took up a Jewish eschatological scheme, and modified it. With the exception of Matthew 27.52f., which presents peculiar problems to the interpreter, early Christians did not assert that the general resurrection had taken place, but that it had happened only in the case of one human being. Therefore, it became necessary to modify the eschatological expectation by regarding the resurrection of Jesus as an anticipatory act peculiar to him, which nevertheless was a sign that the sequence of events associated with the coming of the kingdom of God had already been set in train.

Paul's hope is a theme which occurs throughout his letters (e.g., Rom. 5.2; 8.24f.; 1 Thess. 1.9f.; 2 Cor. 5.10). This hope complements the belief in the resurrection of Jesus. As 1 Corinthians 15.20ff. makes plain, the heart of

Christian experience is bipolar in character. It looks back to a decisive event at Calvary and Easter and forward to the completion of that train of events set in action by the cross.⁴ Christians are in an 'in-between period', when they groan, longing for the consummation of the divine purposes (Rom. 8.18ff.), but they are assured that the time will come when, with the return of Christ, the elect will be vindicated (1 Thess. 4.15) and the creation be redeemed into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8.21). That in-between stage is marked not by knowledge but by faith and hope (2 Cor. 5.7; Rom. 8.24f.). At present, the believer can only see in a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13.12). Seeing face to face or, in Johannine language equally drawn from Jewish eschatological ideas, 'being like Christ' (1 John 3.2), is still to come; it is the moment when Christ 'will change our lowly body into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself' (Phil. 3.21).

Paul's eschatological belief is not confined to the resurrection of Jesus and its consequences. The present 'in-between' stage is itself marked as an eschatological time. Paul can tell the Corinthians that they are those 'upon whom the end of the age has come' (1 Cor. 10.11). The sign of this is that believers now taste of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13; cf. Heb. 6.4). Picking up a belief, which is to be found in some Jewish texts (cf. *tSotah* 13.2), Paul thinks of the Spirit as itself a mark of the presence of the new age. It is 'the first fruits' (Rom. 8.23), the seal placed in the hearts of believers as a guarantee (Rom. 8.23; cf. Eph. 1.14; 2 Cor. 1.22; Acts 2.17). The return of the Spirit was believed to coincide with an outburst of prophetic activity, and such activity was characteristic of the Pauline communities (1 Cor. 12–14; Rom. 12.6; 1 Thess. 5.19; cf. Eph. 4.11; Acts 11.28). Like the book of Revelation, which marks the breaking in of the last things with the presence of the prophetic witness (Rev. 19.10; chs 10–11), Paul and his churches experience the revival of the gift of prophecy, a sign that the promises of God were being fulfilled. Thus the present is not merely a time of waiting, for the communities can already taste what it is like in the kingdom of God within the fellowship of the Church. Here 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3.28; cf. Col. 3.11). It is the Spirit, of which all have drunk, which brings about this unity and breaks down divisions (1 Cor. 12.13), so that the community of believers can be compared to the human body, each with its different contribution to make but united to one another and to Christ by the Holy Spirit.

The twin beliefs of resurrection and Spirit are the foundations upon which the whole of Paul's theology is built. He starts with the conviction that Christ is vindicated and raised, and the experience of the Holy Spirit, and from these works back to an understanding of the world without Christ and a world under the Law and the rulers of this darkness. For Paul the concept

of the two ages is an important way of characterizing the difference between the past and the present (cf. Gal. 4.1–5). Christ delivers believers ‘from the present evil age’ (Gal. 1.4) and by implication allows them to participate in a new age (cf. Rom. 12.2; 1 Cor. 2.6ff.; 2 Cor. 4.4). Although Paul does not use the contrast between this age and the age to come (cf. Eph. 1.21) familiar to us from Jewish eschatology, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he presupposes it.

It is a commonplace in rabbinic eschatology to find the contrast between the present age with all its inadequacies and weaknesses and the glorious future when God’s kingdom would come, characterized by the contrast, ‘this age and the age to come’ (*ha-‘olam ba-zeh/ha-‘olam ba-ba*).⁵ The coming of Christ and the events of his Passion and resurrection mark a decisive turning point in God’s dealings with humanity. Until Christ the Law was the custodian; it played its part as a necessary part of the divine economy in demonstrating transgression (Gal. 3.19; Rom. 5.20). Until Christ, there was no opportunity for the Gentiles to become heirs of Abraham except through circumcision and the acceptance of the Law.⁶ But with the coming of Christ all this has changed. Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the Law, though the latter bears witness to this righteous manifestation of God’s power (Rom. 3.21). God acts in power and offers salvation. With the coming of Christ, humanity is faced with the challenge of either accepting the righteousness of God, or rejecting it and finding itself subject to God’s wrath, which is now being revealed. The righteousness of God is demonstrated by a gracious divine willingness to act, despite human impiety (Rom. 5.6). The eschatological action of God is a free gift which one can do nothing to earn, but must either accept in faith and so escape the wrath which is coming (Rom. 5.8), or reject and find oneself under judgement. The way of God’s saving act places all without distinction in the realm of sin (Rom. 3.23). All are part of the old aeon of sin and death. The only way of transferring from the old domain to the new is through faith in God’s Messiah, who alone can deliver from the evil age (Gal. 1.4), for he has conquered those powers who dominate it and will ultimately demonstrate his triumph over them when they acknowledge his lordship (1 Cor. 2.9; cf. 15.25ff.; Phil. 2.11).⁷

The present is a time of both fulfilment and ambiguity for believers. They wait in hope (Rom. 8.18ff.), though they have the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8.23). Yet Paul regards the present as a time of struggle and suffering. We saw, in considering Jewish eschatology, that a central component of the future hope was the belief that before the age to come finally came, there must be a time of great distress on the earth, when the elect may be expected to suffer. It is a theme which is echoed in the eschatological discourses in the Gospels (Mark 13 and par., esp. vv.7–13). Paul often writes of tribulations, as, for example, in Romans 2.9, Romans 8.35 and in 1 Thessalonians 3.3, 7

(cf. Rev. 2.22; 7.14). Elsewhere, the sufferings of the present time are discussed in a context dealing explicitly with the eschatological events (Rom. 8.18), and it would appear that the travail and persecution endured by believers is viewed by Paul as their undergoing of that tribulation which is a necessary prelude to the arrival of the new age.⁸ This suffering, however, is not seen as a necessary evil. Christians can rejoice in their present sufferings (Rom. 5.3). Indeed, it is possible for there to be reciprocal support between believers, so that the full quota of suffering is shared by all (2 Cor. 1.3ff.; Col. 1.24).⁹

In outlining Paul's gospel, nothing has been said so far about the cross. The question must be asked whether the death of Christ plays any *decisive and central role* in Paul's thought; did Paul view Christ's death as a sacrifice needed to reconcile humanity and God? Sacrificial terms are not frequent in Paul's thought,¹⁰ and much will depend on the weight that is attached to the passage in Romans 3.21ff., where the word 'expiation/propitiation' makes its only appearance in Paul's letters and the word 'redemption' makes one of its occasional appearances. Many have argued that passages like Romans 3.21ff.; 4.25, which seem to reflect an emphasis on the sacrificial, atoning death of Christ, are relics of earlier formulae taken over by Paul and used in these contexts.¹¹ Paul does quote these formulae, and, therefore, indicates his acceptance of that understanding of the Christ-event, which gives a role to the atoning death of Jesus (e.g., Heb.; 1 Cor. 15.3; Mark 10.45; 1 Pet. 1.18f.; 2.21ff.).¹²

Paul, therefore, accepts that stream of interpretation which finds its classic expression in Hebrews, but for him the significance of the cross does not lie primarily in the significance of a death as an atoning sacrifice.¹³ For Paul, Christ's death cannot be separated from his resurrection. Justification is only complete if both the death and resurrection are taken into account, as Romans 4.25 and 1 Corinthians 15 make plain. The cross is the stumbling block which finally puts to an end the wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 1.17ff.). The cruel and ignominious end of the messianic pretender is, in Paul's eyes, the decisive revelation of God's wisdom. In the cross the rulers of this age considered that they had defeated the lord of glory (1 Cor. 2.9). The cross marked the moment of triumph for Christ, when, by putting off the body of flesh, he triumphed over the principalities and powers (Col. 2.14f.; cf. 1 Pet. 3.22).

The issue is made more poignant for Paul the Jew because, as he points out in Galatians 3.13, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.' The cross marks in the most decisive way possible the end of the old aeon. The period of the Law had come to an end with the cross, for the crucifixion of the Messiah had effectively shown that the Law was never intended as a means of salvation, but as a witness to the glory to come. The cross is to be understood as the gateway to eschatological glory for Christ and ultimately for believers. It stands before humanity as a scandal, representing a moment of crisis.

It appears to be folly to humanity, but in it is revealed the wisdom of God, because God has chosen what is weak and foolish (1 Cor. 1.27). It is only by accepting what is foolish in human eyes, 'a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Greeks', that one will be able to see that in it God has offered the source of new life in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1.20). It is when one can see glory in the cross of Christ that a path is opened to a new creation where neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Jew nor Gentile, Law or no Law have any place (Gal. 6.15f.). Just as the resurrection and the bestowal of the Spirit mark the dawn of the new age, so the cross just as decisively marks the end of the old aeon. It is only when believers die with Christ, something which takes place in baptism (Rom. 6.5ff.), that they can walk in newness of life (Rom. 6.4) and pass from the present evil age (Gal. 1.4). The death and resurrection of Christ mark the discontinuity between the old age and the new. History is divided into the era of the old Adam and that of the eschatological Adam (Rom. 5.12–21). The death of Christ involves the conflict with sin viewed as a cosmic power. The gospel announces the negation of the power of sin that controls the world: 'The old has passed away . . . the new has come' (2 Cor. 5.17), and a new creation has been established (*kaine ktisis*, 2 Cor. 5.17; Gal. 6.15).¹⁴

Being in Christ means being part of a new order, therefore, initiated by Christ's resurrection and entered by believers at baptism, when they receive the Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13). But it is not merely a relationship with an absent Messiah whose return is still expected but also a participation with others, who have been baptized in the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13), in a common life, almost a new holy space, initiated and determined by the events of Christ's life. The ideal picture of the new community (for this is what Paul offers in his letters; the reality was often very different) is of a group of individuals related to Christ through the Spirit (1 Cor. 6.15ff.), each of equal importance in the eyes of God and yet with different functions within the community. Paul's most distinctive image for the Church is the body (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12).¹⁵ If 1 Corinthians is anything to go by, its common life is characterized by a common meal (1 Cor. 11.18ff.), in which the community expresses its unity with its Lord through a repetition of the words and acts of Jesus at the Last Supper (11.23ff.): it is nothing less than a participation in the body and blood of Christ (10.16), an anticipation of the messianic banquet in the Last Days.¹⁶ The meeting for worship is characterized by spontaneity: prophecy, visions and revelations and hymns, all contributed by different members of the community (1 Cor. 14.26f.). Women, if properly attired, may participate in the prayer and prophecy of the meeting (1 Cor. 11.5, 13).¹⁷

The community is a holy enclave amidst an age which is passing away. It is a community where the Holy Spirit dwells and is described by Paul as the Temple of God, the location of God's presence on earth (1 Cor. 3.16; 6.19). Like the righteous group in the desert, about which we now know so much

as the result of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the early Christian communities were a colony of heaven on earth, a present demonstration of the holiness of God.¹⁸ They are the saints (1 Cor. 1.2), not because they keep the commandments and maintain the degree of purity necessary to be a holy people of God, but because they have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1.2); they have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6.19); they were washed, sanctified and justified (1 Cor. 6.11); and their bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3.16). The language of the cult and sacrifice is transferred to the life of the holy community. They offer spiritual sacrifices (Rom. 12.1), and both apostle and community can by their deeds offer a sacrifice, acceptable and pleasing to God (Phil. 4.18; 2 Cor. 2.14f.).

Paul says little explicitly about the exercise of authority within the community (apart, that is, from persuading Christians to accept the basis of his own divine authority). The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3.17), and it is the Spirit who inspires the Church and bestows gifts for edification upon its members (1 Cor. 12.4ff.). There are some gifts which call for particular mention: apostleship, prophecy, miraculous deeds, teaching, helping, administration, speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 12.28). Only once in the indisputably authentic letters (that is, outside Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles) is mention made of bishops/overseers and deacons (Phil. 1.1). This contrasts with the Pastoral Epistles, where 'Paul' instructs his helpers to set up church officers in the various communities to carry on the work. In Acts, Paul and Barnabas are represented as those who set up elders in the churches (Acts 14.23), though this finds no explicit parallel in the authentic Pauline letters. Nevertheless, mention should be made of the occasional hint which indicates that Paul did not entirely ignore the provision of oversight in his churches, for example 1 Corinthians 16.15f. Here we have a recognition of pastoral oversight, though without the word 'overseer' (*episkopos*) being used. The basis of it may be related to one of the gifts in the list in 1 Corinthians 12, though it is not explicitly so stated there; only that as the earliest converts the household of Stephanas have a position of pre-eminence, based not only on the length of their discipleship but also on the quality of their ministry and social position.¹⁹

As far as Christian living was concerned, Paul refused to allow his communities to adopt an escapist attitude, so that the purity of their life and the ideals of their faith might be translated into practice without hindrance from the world (1 Cor. 5.10). There is an uneasy tension here between the belief that the life of the age to come can already be experienced and that in Christ all barriers are transcended, and the fact of relating to 'the old age', in the practical advice given by the apostle. Paul refuses to allow the converts to shake the fabric of society too much (1 Cor. 7.17ff.).²⁰ Even within the life of the community, contemporary cultural norms intrude (1 Cor. 14.34).²¹ Even if Paul does not challenge the relationship between slave and master in his

detailed ethical advice, the harsher realities of that relationship are mitigated (Col. 4.1). Nor should one miss the significance of the advice to Philemon to regard his runaway slave Onesimus as a 'beloved brother' (Philemon v. 16).

Paul may have been influenced by the view that the present world order was not much longer to be in existence and would be swept away in the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth (cf. 1 Cor. 7.26: 'In view of the impending distress it is as well for people to remain as they are', and also v.31). State, slavery and sexual relationships are not explicitly challenged by Paul. Yet it would be a mistake to miss the revolutionary concept for which Paul fought: the breaking down of barriers between Jew and Gentile. His confrontation with Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2.10) indicates that previous patterns of relating cannot now apply to life in the Christian community. The Spirit apportions the gifts in ways beyond human control, for with God there is no partiality. While we may expect that, in practice, the more important gifts of oversight would have been linked with the head of the household rather than the humbler (in terms of wealth and status) members, that pattern is not explicitly supported by Paul. The focus of the revolution is complete communion between Jews and Gentiles within the body of Christ. Pauline Christianity eschewed withdrawal from the world and stressed the need for accommodation with the old aeon. In this the ethical principle of care for the weaker brother and sister enunciated in 1 Corinthians 8 and based on 'the law of Christ' (Gal. 6.2) injected a fresh dimension into the ethical response of the believer, which slowly made its impact on the surrounding culture.²²

5

Apostle to the Gentiles

Why did Paul have the burning conviction that he had been set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles, commissioned by the Messiah himself to preach the good news to the nations (Gal. 1.16)? The answer to that question probably lies in some of the Jewish traditions he had inherited. We have already noted that Jesus would have shared the beliefs of many Jews that Jewish outcasts (Isa. 11.12) and some Gentiles would participate in the glories of the new age.¹ Such ideas have their origins within the Bible (e.g., Zech. 8.20) and were taken up in later Jewish sources (e.g., 1 Enoch 90.30), where the acceptance by the Gentiles of the way of Israel takes place as one of the

components of the eschatological events. This belief was in the process of fulfilment through Paul (Rom. 15.16).² As we have seen, Paul believed that he and the communities of believers dotted around the Eastern Mediterranean were themselves living in a critical period (1 Cor. 10.11). The belief that a quota of Gentiles would be allowed to participate in the new age was one which was shared by Paul (Rom. 11.25) in common with other Jews. The difference between Paul and most of his Jewish contemporaries with regard to Gentiles was twofold:

- 1 He claimed the right to bring the Gentiles into the covenant himself, since he considered that he was the agent of the divine plan to bring into effect this eschatological event as a result of his call.
- 2 He considered that it was not necessary for those Gentiles whom he brought into the covenant to practise the totality of the Jewish Law, as the Law was part of a past aeon and was now obsolete in the light of Christ, even if they recognized that Law as a general guide to practice (Rom. 15.4). This is central to Galatians 3. The experience of the Spirit, and therefore of the age to come, does not arise through obedience to the Law but through faith (Gal. 3.3ff.; cf. Acts 10.47). Gentiles had tasted of the fruits of the age to come *without prior acceptance of, and obedience to the letter of, the Law*. Such a position inevitably cast a new light on the position of the Law.

In these two areas we can isolate the fundamental reasons why Paul should have come into conflict not only with his Jewish contemporaries but also with certain of his fellow Christians. In his statements about the Law of Moses and in his claim to have authority to bring the Gentiles into the covenant people, he threatens two well-established principles of Judaism:

- 1 the persisting validity, indeed centrality, of the Law of Moses, even in the messianic age; and,
- 2 the pattern of authority which validated teaching by recourse to tradition rather than experience.³

None of Paul's claims are inherently impossible as part of the fabric of Jewish belief, but they are symptomatic of the overwhelming effect that eschatological convictions can have on established patterns of inherited traditions. To grasp this fact and the concomitant conviction of Paul that it was his task to evangelize the Gentiles, and play his part in bringing in the full number of Gentiles (Rom. 11.25) is to understand the heart of Paul's career as an apostle of Jesus of Nazareth.

Reading through Paul's letters, it is difficult to resist the impression that many of his converts were in fact Gentiles and not Jews. In 1 Thessalonians

1.9 (cf. Gal. 4.8; 1 Cor. 12.2) he speaks of the converts at Thessalonica as those who turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for God's son from heaven.⁴

In Acts Paul is presented as going to the synagogue first of all (Acts 17.2). Of course, there is a wide discrepancy between those who regard the historicity of Acts with considerable suspicion,⁵ and those others who think that it represents, at least in general terms, the outline of early Christian history.⁶ The hints in Paul's letters indicate that the picture in Acts may in fact be near the mark. Paul's principle of accommodation set out in 1 Corinthians 9.19ff. indicates that he did not go exclusively to Gentiles (but note Galatians 2.9), though it may well have been the case that, as Acts itself indicates, the greatest response came from Gentiles.⁷ The fate which Paul suffered in some of the Diaspora synagogues according to Acts (e.g., 13.50; 18.6) finds few echoes in the letters, but we may suppose that 2 Corinthians 11.24 reflects Paul's concern to maintain his connection with the synagogue in his missionary endeavours.

The accounts of Paul's preaching in Acts indicate that among his hearers were non-Jews: those sympathizers with the Jewish tradition who took upon themselves some basic requirements but refused circumcision, and were known as the God-fearers (Acts 13.26).⁸ This was probably the group which formed the heart of the Pauline churches.⁹ Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was asserting that membership of the people of God did not depend on the rite of circumcision.¹⁰ Like a few other Jews before him, he said that baptism, not circumcision, was the means of entry into the people of God,¹¹ though as far as Paul was concerned, this was linked to belief in Jesus as the Christ (the narrative concerning the conversion of Izates in Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.34 is particularly relevant).

Paul's practice as set out in Acts seems to conflict with the account of the agreement between Peter and Paul over their respective spheres of activity (Gal. 2.7ff.). What is not clear is how it would have been possible to maintain a precise demarcation between these different spheres. Indeed, there is evidence from 2 Corinthians 10.14 that there was some dispute over Paul's sphere of activity.¹² 1 Corinthians 1-3 hints that Peter had made an appearance in the church at Corinth. Peter too is likely to have come into contact with Gentile sympathizers.

Some of the issues which are dealt with in Romans 14.2ff. suggest that there was, at the very least, a strong Jewish influence around in churches which were part of the Pauline mission (cf. Col. 2.16f.).¹³ The contents of Paul's letters suggest that he was writing to communities who had some familiarity with the Bible. The use of the Bible, particularly in a letter like Galatians, points to a community which, Paul presumed, would have both considered the Scriptures as an authoritative source for his argument and also would have known them sufficiently well to have made the most of the

allusions, frequently unacknowledged, which he makes. The presence of 'Judaizing' is itself testimony to the pervasive influence of Jewish ideas and practices on the Pauline communities.¹⁴

Paul nowhere says anything about the kind of attitude to the Law which would have been incumbent upon a Diaspora Jew who accepted that Jesus was the Messiah. If his practice in 1 Corinthians 9.19ff. is anything to go by, it would appear that he would not have gone out of his way to suggest either that a Jew should stop obeying the Law or that he should continue to obey the Law (cf. Acts 21.21f.). The point at issue in Galatians (which admittedly is addressed to the issue of Gentile observance of the Law) is the position of the Law in the process of salvation. Paul might have been content to allow Jews to keep the Law, provided that they did not regard that as itself constituting the basis of salvation (that may be hinted at in Romans 4 and is the point made in Galatians 5.2ff.).¹⁵ To keep the Law literally would have been an optional, though not essential, mark of the believer, though all would have been expected to find in it guidance for their spiritual life (Rom. 15.4). Thus the charge levelled against Paul in Acts 21.21 that he encouraged Jews to stop obeying the Law of Moses is not true to Paul's own teaching. What he did do was to reject the idea that the Law was the cornerstone of God's saving purposes, now that the Messiah had come and was obligatory for membership of God's people.

If we are to take Paul's principle of being all things to all people (1 Cor. 9.22) seriously,¹⁶ it is not impossible that this practice was itself a source of confusion. If Acts 21.23ff. is anything to go by, Paul is ready to pass a stiff test of his obedience to the letter of the Torah in paying for the release of the Nazirite vows. In this there is involved submission to the Law of Moses and acceptance of the Temple (Num. 6.9, 18). To be able to do this in Jerusalem is to be a Jew with Jews. If, as we have suggested, Paul went first to the synagogues, then it is likely that he would have observed certain dietary laws while living in Jewish homes and a Jewish environment, but as his confrontation with Peter in Antioch makes plain, when he was in a situation where Jews and Gentiles met together in the messianic community, then the food laws were suspended and table-fellowship between the two sets of believers was paramount. The need for a certain amount of flexibility in dealing with the Gentiles must have been a perennial problem for Diaspora Jews, and a degree of accommodation was probably reached.¹⁷ The issues with which Paul deals in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 indicate the kind of problem which would emerge in a Gentile environment, when believers from a Jewish background and non-Jews had to work out a pattern of existence in which their common bond in Christ could be acknowledged.

One of the most difficult questions facing any commentator on Paul is the origin of his belief that the Law of Moses was not a necessary condition of the salvation of the Gentiles. There are two related issues here: first, what

Judaism may have said about the demands laid upon Gentiles who were allowed to participate in the new age; second, the status of the Law in the messianic age to come.¹⁸ Unfortunately the evidence is sparse, and what there is does not allow us to answer the questions with any degree of clarity.

It may be supposed that passages like 1 Enoch 90.30, which speaks of the homage done by the Gentiles, and Zechariah 8.20, where the Gentiles acknowledge that Israel has the true religion, presuppose that those Gentiles submit to the Law of Moses and become proselytes, thus accepting circumcision. Indeed, a passage like Isaiah 56.3ff. might suggest that keeping the Law, including circumcision, was the necessary condition for acceptance into the people of God.¹⁹

The Prophet is not here contemplating the admission of foreigners on grounds any different from those offered to Jews. They are expected to keep the sabbath and to offer the sacrifices prescribed in the Law. But the important point to note is the obligation to 'hold fast the covenant' (56.6). Can it be assumed that the Prophet here includes in this obligation maintenance of the rite, which is the sign of the covenant, namely, circumcision (Gen. 17.9ff.)? We cannot be sure.

A probable interpretation (and the most likely meaning of the original) of Isaiah 56.6 would have indicated that circumcision *was* necessary for the Gentiles who became members of the covenant people. The question is whether Paul might have supposed that passages like Isaiah 56.6f. did not *require* the circumcision of Gentiles. In terms of precise detail it has to be said that no *explicit* requirement is laid upon the Gentiles in this passage to accept circumcision. A possible interpretation of holding fast the covenant might have been the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer. 31.31ff.; Ezek. 36.26ff.). An interpretation of Isaiah 56.6 in the light of the inwardness of the new covenant, of which Jeremiah spoke, could well have yielded a concept of Gentiles' membership of the covenant people in which the condition was not circumcision but the heart of flesh, the Law written on the heart which will enable each to know the Lord (Jer. 31.34).²⁰

There was room for variety of interpretation in the understanding of these demands. The kind of speculations, which are now extant, concerning the situation in the new age do not allow us to reconstruct with any certainty whether there was any messianic *halakab* at all, never mind specific provision made for those Gentiles who would come into Israel in the last days. The Temple Scroll has given us evidence that one Jewish group did make extensive provision for the new age,²¹ but whether this was a typical feature of the debates taking place in other groups at the time is by no means certain. Perhaps the issue of the character of life in the new age depended less on the exegesis of Scripture and more on the experience of life in community. This at least would be true to the priority given to experience in Galatians 3.3.

In any discussion of the Gentile mission, mention must be made of the

scheme which occupied Paul's attention during the later years of his missionary activity, the collection for the saints in Jerusalem.²² Paul mentions this action on the part of the churches of the Gentile mission in several places in his letters (e.g., Rom. 15.25f.; 1 Cor. 16.1ff.; 2 Cor. 8-9; cf. Acts 24.17). There have been many explanations of this action. Some have compared it with the half-shekel Temple tax paid by all Jews to the maintenance of the Temple in Jerusalem, though the collection for the church in Jerusalem was not a levy but a voluntary contribution. Others consider that Paul regards this act as part of the fulfilment of biblical prophecy where Gentiles bring in their gifts to Zion (Ps. 72.10; Isa. 60.6ff.). The problem with this is that Paul says nothing explicit along these lines, however attractive such a theory might be on other grounds because of its eschatological connotations. The journey to Jerusalem was very important for Paul, as his worries about it expressed in Romans 15.31f. make plain. Whether he really hoped to provoke the Jews to jealousy and so to repentance by his act remains unclear (cf. Rom. 11.13f.). The collection is an extraordinary event in the account of Christian origins. Examples of the patronage of the rich and powerful for their local citizens abound. In the operation on which Paul embarked something very different is to be found: a financial support for people of a different nation, with whom the donors had hitherto no contact, and who were linked only by a common faith and mutual obligation.

Paul's apostolic zeal should not lead us to suppose that his role was typical in early Christianity. There is evidence of other apostles travelling from community to community and perhaps trying to persuade others of the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2.9). What is not so clear is that Paul's communities saw in Paul's missionary activity a role model for their lives, not that Paul offered this aspect of his work as something which they should emulate. The communities were encouraged to look to Paul's ordinary conduct of service as a reflection of the character of Christ (1 Cor. 11.1). Proselytism was not widespread in the ancient world, and Paul and his circle apart, early Christianity was little different in eschewing a proactive role in persuading people to convert. People *were* converted to Christianity, not by elaborate rhetoric and missionary activity but by the quiet devotion of lives and service which attracted people to the growing Christian communities.²³

Paul's Method as an Apostle

Paul has often been portrayed as a missionary with an unambiguous message of justification by faith in Christ alone who presented an uncompromising and clear-cut stance to those he dealt with. A glance at the uncertainties which manifest themselves in some of his more polemical letters, like Galatians and 2 Corinthians, indicates that the reality was probably far different. Indeed, in 2 Corinthians Paul is charged with inconsistency (2 Cor. 1.15ff.). Some at least of the problems which he spends time unravelling may in part be of his own making. We are used to thinking of converts receiving a pure gospel which is then corrupted either by influence from the pagan environment (1 Cor.)¹ or the influence of outsiders (Gal. and 2 Cor.), so that Paul has to recall them to their original faith (2 Cor. 11.1ff.; Gal. 1.7). While one does not want to minimize such influences, the contribution of Paul's own impact in his initial proclamation and his subsequent dealings with the Church should not be lost sight of as factors in creating the problems which emerge.

One reason for thinking that this might have been the case is the remarkable passage at the end of 1 Corinthians 9, already quoted, where Paul enunciates his principle of accommodation: 'I have become all things to all people' (9.22).² Even allowing for a degree of hyperbole in what he says in these verses about his varying stances, it is not too difficult to see how such an approach would have presented problems to those who expected a degree of consistency. If Paul behaved as a Jew when in the company of Jews and had no inhibitions about behaving as a Gentile (within certain limits, of course) when with Gentiles, the resulting impression given of his activities would have been highly confusing. For Paul the apology for his position is clear enough: 'I do it all for the sake of the gospel' (1 Cor. 9.23). The principle of accommodation manifests itself in two forms: first, the type of activity which is described in 1 Corinthians 9.19ff., and second, a willingness to compromise on statements and teachings already given or received if circumstances justified it.

If the book of Acts is to be believed, Paul's missionary practice involved him in starting his mission to the Gentiles at the Jewish synagogue.³ This would have involved him fulfilling certain requirements of Jewish dietary practice as well as sabbath and liturgical observance. Those who accepted his message, both Jews and Gentiles, would then be faced with the need to interpret differently certain legal requirements to conform to the image of the Church as one body, of different nations and cultures, in Christ. Table-fellowship (Gal. 2.11) would have involved Jews and Gentiles in eating

together and making dietary rules more difficult to fulfil. The practice of the Jewish law, perhaps including circumcision, was neither here nor there (Rom. 4.11; Gal. 6.15).⁴ The pattern of behaviour of the believer should be dictated by the law of love and the needs of the weaker members of the community (Rom. 14.1ff.; 1 Cor. 8.1ff.). Observances of festivals, special diets and sabbaths are only problematic if they become part of a pattern of religion which, however subtly, undermines the unique role of Christ as the agent of salvation (Gal. 4.8ff.; Col. 2.16ff.).

On at least one occasion Paul circumcised a Gentile. According to Acts 16.3 he circumcised Timothy, not because he thought that it was necessary for salvation but to avoid any offence because of the confused status of Timothy as far as the Law was concerned (Timothy is said to be the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, and of a pagan father). It is possible also that he had Titus circumcised in Jerusalem (Gal. 2.3).⁵ If so, this would explain why it was that Paul came under so much pressure in the Galatian churches to conform to practices which he had carried out elsewhere. The issue in both cases was clear for Paul. Neither Timothy nor Titus *had* to be circumcised as Christians. They were circumcised for the sake of expediency (cf. 1 Cor. 10.23). They had become as those under the Law, not in order to be saved but to win those under the Law.

In his dealings with the churches Paul demonstrated a similar kind of accommodation. What we have in 1 Corinthians may be an example of Paul to some extent retreating from positions which he had once held in the light of problems which had emerged.⁶ Some at least of the statements which are quoted in, e.g., 1 Cor. 7.1; 8.1, 4 may well be quotations by the Corinthians in their letter of Paul's own views which are now being quoted back at him. While we do not know the content of the initial preaching of Paul in Corinth and the characterization of the Christian life which he offered, there is much to be said for the view that in 1 Corinthians Paul is dampening an initial enthusiasm created by his own proclamation of the eschatological gospel rather than reacting to the importation of alien views into the community (cf. 2 Thess. 2).⁷ The eschatological enthusiasm of Paul's message of the resurrection and the gift of the Spirit could well have been understood rather differently in the Jewish synagogues of the Diaspora compared with those in Palestine, and even more differently by those Gentiles whose contact with Judaism was either superficial or negligible.

The elusive genius of Paul, which emerges in the letters, is that he refuses to be too tightly tied down to particular patterns of behaviour and practice. The glimpse which we have of his relationships with the Corinthian church shows us a person on the move in his ideas, who allows the changing circumstances to influence his advice. Whatever Paul's relationship with the Jerusalem Council may have been,⁸ in 1 Corinthians 8 we see Paul taking a position which would have contravened the agreement of the Council; as a

result of this, he would have been bound to come under criticism for breaking that agreement.⁹ The same problem emerges in the way in which he quotes, only to ignore, a command of Jesus about provisions for Christian missionaries. Unlike other Christian apostles who exercised their right to take their wives with them and to live off the churches where they stayed (1 Cor. 9.5f., 14f.), Paul makes it a principle of his ministry to work for his living and thus place no financial burden upon his churches.¹⁰ He tells us little about the reasons for this course of action, save that it is an obligation to preach the gospel which characterizes his work, rather than a profession which deserves a reward (1 Cor. 9.16f.). We may suspect that difficulties caused by wandering teachers (cf. *Didache* 12) led to a different kind of pattern of life on Paul's part to avoid claims of 'sponging' off a community (though, of course, the irony is that his failure to make claims on the Corinthian church seems to have led to a comparison among apostles, unfavourable to Paul, because he worked with his own hands (1 Cor. 9.6)).

Paul probably faithfully passed on traditions that he received (e.g., 1 Cor. 11.23; 15.3ff.),¹¹ but the centrality of the demands of the situation for the practice guided by the Spirit dominated his thought. Even a command from the Lord had to be subordinated to the appropriate action in the present as the apostle understood it (1 Cor. 9.14–15). To those with less flexible attitudes towards tradition, such an apparently cavalier approach would have been offensive, and would at least have provided grounds for misunderstanding Paul's motives. Matters of law and their observance were now secondary to the new life in Christ. That was the guiding principle for ethics.¹² Those who are in Christ know no barrier between them; they have all participated in the same Spirit, and anything which keeps them apart must be repudiated (1 Cor. 12.13). There were certain limits to the freedom which was allowed. Paul did not contemplate any concession to idolatry, as he makes plain in 1 Corinthians 10. It may well be all right to eat meat which has been used in the worship of a pagan temple, but when it comes to participating in the worship of pagan shrines, Paul emphatically rejects that. Nevertheless, being under the law of Christ in theory gave the individual a freedom of manoeuvre and the opportunity for stances which could betray a degree of inconsistency to outside observers. In practice (as the Pastoral Epistles indicate) a less liberal approach became the norm as the consequences of enthusiastic excess began to compel a greater degree of conformity.

Paul and the Torah

In the letters of Paul, Christ is the end of the Law for all who have faith (Rom. 10.4). Much ink has been spilt over the meaning of these words: did Paul think that Christ in some sense abolished the Law or was it more a case of fulfilment of the Law of Moses in Christ?¹ Most commentators tend to choose the second alternative, and this seems to fit the evidence of the letters themselves. Paul did not see the Law as something which had no more importance in the divine economy. Despite his impassioned words in Galatians, he wants to guarantee the central importance of the Law of Moses, though not as the means of salvation but as the witness to that messianic salvation. This is the central thrust of Paul's discussion in Galatians 3. In dealing with the issue of whether Gentiles needed to accept the Law of Moses and, with it, circumcision in order to be members of the people of God, Paul uses Scripture to prove that righteousness comes by faith and is open to Gentiles as well as Jews on these terms. The use Paul makes of Scripture in this letter and elsewhere is testimony itself to the apostle's conviction that 'the Law is holy, just and good' (Rom. 7.12).² The purpose of the Law must be correctly seen, however. According to Paul, its function was not an end in itself. It did not exist from the beginning of creation (Rom. 5.13), but only came later to show up sin in its true colours (Rom. 5.20; cf. Gal. 3.19). It was not itself the means of righteousness, though it bore witness to the righteousness of God, which comes through faith in Christ (Rom. 3.21). Its function was not to give life (Gal. 3.21), for if it had been, then the righteousness, which comes by Christ, would have been of no avail. Paul's exposition starts from the fact of the revelation of the eschatological event in Jesus of Nazareth,³ not with his problems with observance of the Law of Moses, or the human plight in general. He started with the fact that the Son of God had been revealed to him (Gal. 1.16), which marked the moment of his perception that the old aeon was passing away and a new one had begun. In Galatians 3.19, where Paul asserts that the Law was given by angels and thus inferior to the subsequent revelation of the Son, which was direct, the purpose is to undermine the position of those who would assert that the Law had any hold on those who had faith. God gave the Law, and indeed, if the Law is read properly, Paul believes that it will vindicate his own position (Gal. 3.6ff., 21). It bears witness to the righteousness which comes by faith and serves as a custodian until the Messiah comes (Gal. 3.23).

If Paul finds himself opposed to the written law as the ultimate embodiment of God's saving purposes (cf. 2 Cor. 3.6ff.), that is not to suggest that he

is opposed to the moral character of the life of believers. This is a charge he sets out to answer in Romans 6.1, where he responds to the rhetorical question 'Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?' (cf. Rom. 3.8). Paul is in no doubt that the new life in Christ will mean that those who participate in it will walk in newness of life (Rom. 6.4). What is involved in this newness of life is never spelt out in detail, though passages like Galatians 6.2, 1 Corinthians 9.21 and Romans 8.4 all indicate that Christians were under the obligation to fulfil a law, though not *the Law*.⁴ Whereas the Law weakened by the flesh could bring only death, the Law of the Spirit could bring life (Rom. 8.2f.). Possession of the Spirit marked the beginning of a new mode of ethical attitudes (Gal. 5.22ff.). If the letters are anything to go by, it did not consist of many or even any specific regulations, except to fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6.2), or the obligation to love one's neighbour (Gal. 5.14; cf. Rom. 13.9), the latter being the fulfilling of the whole Law. Paul did not abandon the importance of moral earnestness for the members of a people of God, though he locates the means by which that is achieved elsewhere: life in the Spirit. Whereas other forms of Judaism maintained distinctiveness by observance of circumcision and dietary requirements, Paul abandoned these in favour of another overriding principle, the Law of Christ. Within the life of the new creation there was no longer room for the continuation of obligations like dietary laws as essential marks of community, for these would effectively separate Gentile from Jewish Christians. In accepting the Law of Christ, the Law of the Spirit, believers were indicating continuity with the old covenant and its demands to be obedient to God. The difference is that the new demand is not the letter which kills (2 Cor. 3.7f.) but the Spirit who points beyond the letter of Scripture to another reality and another dimension of meaning to life. It is the indwelling Spirit, which ensures that the Law's (and God's) requirement is fulfilled. The eschatological revelation of the Son, to which the only response is grateful acceptance (faith), is continued in the way in which the believer fulfils what God requires through the promptings of the indwelling Spirit. To say this is not to deny the evidence of other strands in Paul's letters, which indicate that he was quite capable of drawing on widely used moral codes such as Colossians 3.18ff.,⁵ and to have offered commands similar to a rabbi which he enjoined on his churches (e.g. 1 Cor. 14.34–6). Nevertheless, the underlying emphasis is on conformity with the pattern of life of a person, not least as represented in the apostle who himself imitates the crucified Christ (1 Cor. 11.1).

Membership of the People of God

The belief that Jesus was the eschatological deliverer, who had introduced a new aeon, poses two problems for non-believing Jews: the status of the nations and the status of those Jews who did not accept the fact that the Messiah had come. We have already noted that one of the foundations of Paul's understanding of his work is that he had received a direct commission to bring in the Gentiles, whom God had ordained would participate in the life of the age to come. We can all too easily assume that the problem with which Paul wrestles in Romans 9–11 was not considered to be such a difficulty within other Jewish groups. After all, it might be assumed that when the Messiah came it would be obvious to all concerned. But would it? The hints we have about the nature of Jewish messianism suggest that by no means all Jews agreed with their contemporaries who asserted that the Messiah had come. One is reminded of the comment from one of Akiba's contemporaries, when he said that Bar Kochba was the Messiah: in effect, that Akiba would be long dead and buried before the Messiah had come (*ḡTa'anith* 68d).¹ While Paul had no doubts in his mind that the decisive eschatological event had begun to take place, he was faced with the fact that his fellow-Jews did not in general accept the messiahship of Jesus. This is the issue which occupies his attention in Romans 9–11 and leads him to formulate an eschatological scheme, in which the Gentile mission is seen as a prelude to the redemption of Israel: a reversal of the usual eschatological order, where the central role of Israel in the events of the last days will gradually lead to the complement of Gentiles being brought into the kingdom (Rom. 11.25ff.).²

Paul offers an alternative way into the people of God, which excluded those who refused to accept his terms of entry. As far as he was concerned, the rite of circumcision as a badge of membership of the covenant people was no longer necessary. Most proselytes (converts to Judaism) would have accepted circumcision and the obligation to keep the 'Torah,³ so that they would have become members of the covenant people. Once inside the covenant people, they would have maintained their place by avoiding major transgression, and in those instances where they did infringe, there was the possibility of repentance and atonement through the sacrificial system in the Temple and pre-eminently through the ritual of the Day of Atonement. There were a few ultra-observant Jews who were members of groups with strict entrance requirements, such as we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Refusal to accept the obligations of the group might lead to exclusion or various

kinds of punishment,⁴ but such rigid processes of exclusion would not have applied to the vast majority of Jews.

In the Pauline churches, a similar pattern of entry, maintenance of position and even exclusion is contemplated.⁵ For Paul, entry into the community came through baptism, which marked the moment of the receipt of the eschatological Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13). That was the outward identification of a person with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6), and marked release from the old aeon of Law, sin and death and entry into the new creation of the Law of the spirit of life (Rom. 8.2).

Members of the Church (in theory at least) manifested that law of the Spirit, which exhibited particular characteristics (Gal. 5.22ff.) and certain patterns of behaviour. While Paul never admits as much, there is a sense in which his language suggests that there was little likelihood of transgression in the community of the new age (Rom. 6.11ff.; 8.4ff.; 1 Cor. 4.8; cf. Heb. 6.1; 1 John 3.4ff.). After all, the community which was the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3.16; 6.19) was not the place where unrighteousness was to be found.⁶ The first letter to the Corinthians sees the apostle dealing with a situation where such idealism is under challenge (as it was also in the situation confronting the writer of 1 John). In dealing with them, Paul summons the Corinthians back to their position as those who have been made righteous in Christ (1 Cor. 6.11) and gives advice concerning the kind of attitudes which are appropriate for those who would aspire to be citizens of the kingdom of God (6.10). In one case he sets out a process which will bring about the expulsion of a notorious sinner from the community (5.3ff.), a pattern similar to expulsion from other sectarian groups for grievous offences.

What emerges in the Pauline letters is a pattern of entry, guidelines for continuation in community and, if necessary, expulsion, all of which indicate that the Pauline churches were developing a self-conscious identity over against those who did not accept this particular view of the saving events in Christ.⁷ Like the Qumran sect, which maintained a separate existence over against other Jews, the Pauline communities had begun to separate themselves from those Jews who did not accept the messiahship of Jesus. Synagogues of Satan the latter may not yet have been (cf. Rev. 2.9), but the beginnings of a self-conscious differentiation were there. Belonging to a group with highly idiosyncratic beliefs and practices was a feature of some parts of first-century Judaism, and in this respect the Pauline communities did not differ from other Jewish sects.

There is an appropriate sense in which the word 'sect' may be used to describe the Pauline communities. Nevertheless, we should differentiate the Pauline sect from, say, the sect whose beliefs are manifested in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls. There are different forms of sectarian life, ranging from the revolutionary group which wishes to overturn society and takes practical

steps to do so, to the introverted group which maintains its holiness and identity by keeping itself cut off from the rest of society. The Pauline groups were not, as far as we can ascertain, 'introverted', but at the same time do not exhibit the determined social activism which would mark them out as revolutionary. Nevertheless, as the subsequent history of pre-Constantinian Christianity indicates, they were far from being mere adjuncts to the culture and offered an alternative to the social ethos of the day.⁸

9

*Paul and Israel*¹

Paul leaves his readers in no doubt that he is proud of his Jewish ancestry and traditions (Rom. 9.4; Phil. 3.4ff.), and the polemic, which we find dotted around the letters, against the Law and Jews should not be mistaken for anti-Jewish sentiments. The issue which preoccupied Paul (and several early Christian writers) was the problem of the deep difference of opinion between themselves and those Jews who did not share their convictions about Jesus. The question with which they were wrestling was: what happens to the Jewish traditions now that the Messiah has come?²

It is in his earliest letters (Galatians)³ that we find the most outspoken criticisms of Judaism. According to Galatians 3.18, for example, Paul interprets the glorious giving of the Law, attended as it was by the angelic host, as an indication of its inferior status in the divine economy. Later in the letter he speaks (on the only occasion in his letters) explicitly of the Church as the Israel of God (6.16).⁴ Normally, Paul recognizes in his letters that Israel refers to an entity which is much broader than the Church.

In 1 Thessalonians Paul refers briefly to the Jewish nation in a context dealing with the persecution of Jewish Christians by Jews. In a passage which has proved to be taxing for commentators, Paul speaks in an uncompromising way about non-Christian Jews (1 Thess. 2.14f.). It is an outburst of almost unparalleled vehemence in the Pauline corpus (but note Phil. 3.2ff.) and contrasts with the much more positive comments elsewhere (e.g., Rom. 9.4f.). Paul probably occasionally suffered at the hands of fellow Jews (e.g., 2 Cor. 11.24f.; Acts 13.45f.). The theme of the Jewish rejection of the envoys of God is one which is taken up in the Synoptic tradition on the lips of Jesus (e.g., Matt. 23.29ff.; Luke 13.34), and it is not impossible that behind the Pauline formulation there lies an echo of the Synoptic saying.⁵ If Paul's early

ministry was beset with vexing debates and extreme hostility from his fellow Jews, particularly those who were also Christian sympathizers, then it may not cause too much surprise if we find such a violent outburst on the lips of Paul. After all, we know from the Dead Sea Scrolls the vitriolic attitude taken by members of the group towards those Jews outside the sect (see 1 *QpHab.*). The outburst in 1 Thessalonians contrasts with his more mature cogitations on the problems of non-messianic Judaism in Romans 9–11. Like the prophets before him, who prophesied judgement on an unrepentant nation, and Jesus also in similar vein, according to Luke 10.13f.; 11.49f., Paul speaks the word of condemnation from the point of view of a threatened minority group, whose views are either not accepted, or treated with hostility by the majority.⁶

The remark in 1 Thessalonians, made in the heat of the struggle which characterized Paul's early missionary career, should be seen in the light of the more extended treatment of the subject in Romans 9–11.⁷ While one does not want to deny the contacts which exist between these chapters and 1 Thessalonians 2.16 (e.g., Rom. 9.6ff.; 9.22; 11.28, 32), the attitude to non-Christian Jews is, in the end, more positive in Romans 9–11. In this section Paul meditates on the rejection of the gospel by many Jews. He concludes that the rejection of the gospel by the Jews has opened up the possibility of the Gentile mission (Rom. 9.22f.). But the opportunity created for the Gentiles to hear and receive the gospel cannot be the end of the matter. All this must be seen within the framework of the totality of the divine purposes. Paul has agonized over the fate of the Jewish nation, which had stumbled over the stone of stumbling (Rom. 9.33). He does not deny the centrality of the means of salvation, which God has offered through Christ (Rom. 10.4ff.), but is unwilling to regard their rejection of the gospel as an indication that God has abandoned the Jewish people eternally (Rom. 11.1). For one thing, there have been Jews like Paul himself who have responded to the gospel. A tiny remnant they may be, but it is an indication that God has not cast off the people (Rom. 11.2ff.). Paul's solution to Israel's disobedience is to assert that this disobedience is in fact a necessary part of the divine plan for the gospel to go to the Gentiles (Rom. 11.11). The clue to the fate of Israel lies with the hidden purposes of God. Just as God offered participation in the people of God through grace alone dependent on faith (Rom. 11.20), so also this grace and mercy of God will be shown towards the Jewish people. Their rejection of the gospel does not mean an irrevocable judgement (11.23ff.); the assessment of 1 Thessalonians 2.16 is shown, therefore, not to be Paul's last word on the subject.

In concluding his discussion in Romans 11.25ff., Paul is not prepared to leave the matter with the hope that somehow the Jews will respond to the gospel. Perhaps Paul did indeed entertain the fond hope that his own ministry to the Gentiles would provoke the Jews to jealousy and repentance,

which would usher in the last stage of the age to come (Rom. 11.15).⁸ What does seem to emerge from Romans 11.25ff. is the deeply rooted conviction on Paul's part that, despite all their rebellion against the gospel, God would not cast off Israel (Rom. 11.28f.). Like the rabbis who coined the doctrine 'All Israel will have a share in the age to come' (in *mSanhedrin* 10.1), Paul is unwilling to confine ultimate salvation only to those who belong to the Christian Church. The hardening of Israel would continue until the full number of the Gentiles was gathered in (11.25).⁹ It is by this means that Israel will be saved. That is, Paul reveals the mystery that the salvation of Israel will involve the reversal of the usually accepted process: first the Jews, then the Gentiles. In his exposition, the rejection of the gospel by the Jews leads to the Gentile mission, but the achievement of the full quota of Gentile converts will be the means by which the salvation of Israel will come about.

The quotations from Isaiah are introduced to support the divine mystery which has been revealed to him. It is this which Paul offers as the basis for this unusual eschatological solution which has been tearing him apart inwardly as is evidenced by his language in the previous chapters. The scriptural quotations shed some light on how Paul thought that the salvation would take place. The coming of the deliverer from Zion, which must be a reference to Christ (cf. 1 Thess. 1.10), will effect the removal of Israel's transgressions. In this way will God honour the covenant. Despite the fact that they are, in the present, the enemies of God for the sake of the Gentiles (Rom. 11.28), the promises made by God to the ancestors will not be revoked, and at the end God will redeem Israel. So by reversing the order of salvation and asserting that the salvation of the Jews must wait for the coming of the redeemer, Paul demonstrates his belief that God has not cast off the people, but that ultimately they will share in the life of the age to come. This is an example of the depth of the riches of God (Rom. 11.33). For Paul, what lies beyond his mission to the Gentiles is the reconciliation between God and the people when 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11.26). Paul might have some part to play in that (Rom. 11.14), but the certainty of the promise lies in the righteousness of God (11.28f.).¹⁰

*The Problem of Authority*¹

One of the major issues posed by Paul's missionary endeavours was not so much his interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures and his conviction that the age to come had already dawned, but his right to assert this, with all its consequences for the understanding of the Torah and the position of the nations. In short, the issue of authority is as central to Paul's career as it was to the mission of Jesus. It is a theme to which Paul returns in all his major letters, and even when he is not dealing with it explicitly, as, for example, in Romans, it is clear that it is an issue which is very near the surface.

It is in the letter which is assumed to be the earliest of Paul's letters in this study, Galatians, that we have the first evidence of the problem posed by Paul's claim to authority.² The issues, with which Paul chooses to start, are not the questions about circumcision and the Law, which only surface at the end of chapter 2, but his claim to be an apostle, along with the account of his visits to Jerusalem.³ Thus the primary concern of the letter is apostolic authority; it is this which is the foundation of all the teaching, which he expounds elsewhere in the letter. Without demonstrating the validity of his credentials, his proof from Scripture in Galatians 3–4 that his interpretation of the gospel was in fact in accord with the plan of God might have been of no avail.

When we recall how important the issue of authority was in Judaism we can understand the fundamental issue at stake in Galatians. One of the central pillars of Jewish teaching is the appeal to antiquity and tradition. The priests, who minister in the Temple, have to be able to show by their genealogies (note the importance of genealogies in the Bible, e.g., Matthew 1 and Luke 3.23–38) that they are of Aaronic descent.⁴ Also the pharisaic-rabbinic tradition rested on the importance of precedent and the authority vouchsafed to current interpreters by virtue of their knowledge of the tradition.⁵ Claims to speak and act on the basis of apocalyptic conviction were viewed with suspicion, because they cut across the normal channels of authority which had evolved over the centuries to guarantee a degree of continuity and stability within the religion. That is not to say that there was no room for what one might term 'charismatic figures',⁶ but their role always had to be subordinate to tradition and could never be allowed to usurp the dominant position given to it.

A famous example of the attitude towards claims to authority based on supernatural events and experiences is to be found in a story about the late-first-century CE teacher, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus:

It has been taught: On that day R. Eliezer brought forward every imaginable argument, but they did not accept them. Said he to them: 'If the halakah [i.e., the correct interpretation of the Jewish law] agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it'. Thereupon the carob-tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place . . . No proof can be brought from a carob-tree, they retorted. Again he said to them: 'If the halakah agrees with me, let the streams of water prove it'. Whereupon the streams of water flowed backward. 'No proof can be brought from a stream of water,' they rejoined. Again he urged: 'If the halakah agrees with me, let the walls of the school-house prove it', whereupon the walls inclined to fall. But R. Joshua rebuked them saying: 'When scholars are engaged in a halakic dispute, what have ye to interfere?' Hence they did not fall, in honour of R. Joshua, nor did they become upright, in honour of R. Eliezer; and they are still standing thus inclined. Again he said to them: 'If the halakah agrees with me, let it be proved from heaven'. Whereupon a heavenly voice cried out: 'Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halakah agrees with him?' . . . But R. Joshua arose and exclaimed 'it is not in heaven'. What did he mean by this? – Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, After the majority must one incline. (*bBaba Metzua* 59a)⁷

In this story (probably much embellished and whose historicity is not material to the point being discussed)⁸ even in those cases where a particular teacher could claim all kinds of miraculous vindications for the teaching which he adopted, that position must be viewed with considerable scepticism and indeed be rejected, if it did not comply with the opinion of the majority of the rabbis (cf. Deut. 13.1). There are two related issues arising here. First of all, the demands on emerging rabbinic Judaism made it essential to eliminate excessive variation in the positions adopted, to ensure sufficiently clear (even though broad) parameters for discussion and practice. Second, because of the unpredictability and unverifiability of the authenticity of claims to divine revelation, they were to be treated with caution unless they happened to coincide with the views of the majority.

The relevance of this story for Paul's accounts of his conversion and visits to Jerusalem in Galatians 1–2 is clear. Just as in the situation with Eliezer, Paul claims that he has heaven on his side (1.1, 12, 16),⁹ and therefore his words should be heeded and his interpretation given as much, if not more, credence as that of others. The issue here is one which is at the heart of Paul's relationship both with non-Christian Jews and also those who were Christians before him: who should have the right to interpret the Scriptures and to make claims about a crucified subversive, which would have consequences for the whole of the people of God? Paul is convinced that the

apocalyptic vision, which he mentions in Galatians 1.12 is basis enough for his right to speak and act in the way that he does. Drawing on the language of call-visions in the Bible (Isa. 49.1; Jer. 1.5) Paul maintains that, like the prophets before him, God had called him to a specific task: to preach Christ among the Gentiles (Gal. 1.16). It is an extraordinary claim, involving as it does the denial of the continued centrality of the Law of Moses in God's saving purposes and, what is more, asserting that the Messiah and the age to come had arrived.

The position is somewhat more complicated than the one in the story of Eliezer and Joshua. Galatians 1–2 indicates that it is not merely a question of Paul's right to be an apostle which is at stake nor the validity of his own experience. Rather, what Galatians 1–2 shows is that, in addition, Paul's own claim to *independent* apostolic authority is being questioned. Hence Paul finds that it is necessary to describe his journeys to Jerusalem, where he met the 'pillar apostles' (Gal. 2.9). Paul's reason for mentioning the visits to Jerusalem, in addition to his conversion experience, was that these had become a point at issue within the Galatian churches.¹⁰ The problem posed by Paul's visits to Jerusalem was twofold. First, they put in question Paul's claim to be an independent apostle called by God, as they seemed to indicate that the journeys to Jerusalem were part of the briefing necessary for an apostle whose commission was from human leaders (cf. Gal. 1.1). Why should Paul need to go up to Jerusalem if he had an independent apostolic office? If he was on the same level as the other apostles, there would have been no need to go there and talk with those who were apostles originally, unless, that is, Paul needed their support or was in fact their emissary.

Second, if, as is assumed in this study, Galatians preceded the apostolic council described in Acts, why did Paul not conform to the practice of the Jerusalem church, which accepted circumcision as an indispensable sign of membership of the covenant people?

The visits to Jerusalem seem to be an embarrassment to Paul. He does his best to explain away their significance, but probably during the first visit and certainly during the second visit, Paul by his own admission offered his gospel for scrutiny to the Jerusalem apostles and also possibly obtained important information from them.¹¹ Indeed, in Galatians 2.2 he states that he laid before them the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. Inevitably, the question would have been asked why such an important apostle, as Paul claimed to be, should have felt the need to go up to Jerusalem to have his credentials and his message examined by those who, in his view, were in no way superior to him. Paul's reasons for doing this are not explicitly stated, though he does say, with regard to the second visit, that he went up as the result of a revelation; it was no summons by the authorities but an act on his part prompted by the call of God.¹²

Paul's embarrassment would have been complete if the reference in Gala-

tians 2 to the incident with Titus in Jerusalem is to be taken to mean that Paul *did* in fact have Titus circumcised. Much depends on how one interprets Galatians 2.5 (some versions of this verse omit the negative, thus indicating that Paul did submit in this instance).¹³ There have been those who have supported the view that, in this rather tortured syntax of Galatians 2.3ff., we should see the signs of Paul's acute embarrassment at having the circumcision of Titus thrown in his face by the judaizing opponents in Galatia.¹⁴ As we have suggested in the section on Paul's principle of accommodation, such an act would not have been out of character for Paul. If Acts is to be believed, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16.3), and his principle of being all things to all people (1 Cor. 9.22) would have necessitated him making compromises, which might have been misunderstood by others.

Fundamental to Paul's convictions about the Law is his right to speak with an authority which contrasts with other types within Judaism, though it has its parallels in the claims made in the Jewish apocalypses and by the Teacher of Righteousness in *QpHab.* 7 and *QH.*¹⁵ In the Corinthian correspondence the issue of apostolic authority is also never far from the surface. The opening chapters of 1 Corinthians indicate that Paul's mission has been held up for comparison with other Christian emissaries. In his digression in the discussion concerning food sacrificed to idols, Paul points out the need to limit the use of one's freedom for the benefit of the majority, by speaking about the way in which he had deliberately refrained from making use of his rights as an apostle (9.1).¹⁶ His deliberate refusal to make use of his rights was in itself a cause of problems for Paul in the Corinthian church. It is already apparent from 1 Thessalonians 2.6 that Paul did not as a rule make demands on his churches. This involved him in ignoring a command of Jesus: 'the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel' (1 Cor. 9.14f.).¹⁷ Yet, he goes on, 'I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing to secure any such provision.' This decision by Paul is regarded with suspicion by the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 11.7), presumably because Paul chose to conflict with the command of the Lord for apostolic ministry, and his action seemed to be at odds with other apostles, whom the Corinthians had received into their church.

In 2 Corinthians we have the most extended treatment of the issue of apostolic authority in the Pauline corpus. The Corinthian church seems to have had a succession of apostolic emissaries other than Paul.¹⁸ In 2 Corinthians 10–13 Paul is faced with other (Jewish–) Christian apostles, whose activity had caused the Corinthian church to make comparisons between Paul and them, which were unfavourable to Paul: Paul does not have the true marks of an apostle; 'his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak' (2 Cor. 10.10); he lacks skill in speaking (2 Cor. 11.6); and he has no letters of recommendation (2 Cor. 3.1).

We are not in a position to say with any degree of certainty who these apostles were.¹⁹ Whether they were engaged in subverting Paul's authority deliberately, or merely had presented such a different characterization of the apostolic ministry that the Corinthians themselves had made an unfavourable assessment of Paul as a result, is not clear; one suspects that the latter is more likely. In any case, Paul in his defence expounds his understanding of the apostolic office, partly by answering the claims of the other apostles and partly by expounding on the marks of his (true) apostleship (e.g., 2 Cor. 12.2f., 11f.). Thereby he manifests a different view of the role of an apostle from that which the Corinthians had come to expect.²⁰

In the letters written towards the end of Paul's career, the issue of authority looms less large. In Romans we find that there is still the fear that the gospel which Paul preached would not find acceptance, and this is linked with the real fear in Romans 15.31 that the collection for the saints in Jerusalem would not be accepted. Paul seems to have suspected that possibly the Christians in Jerusalem and probably many non-Christian Jews there (cf. Acts 21.21ff.) would have been very hostile to his activities.

In Philippians there is a much more relaxed attitude towards other Christian missionaries and their activities, though an outburst characteristic of the polemical tone of 2 Corinthians and Galatians is to be found at the beginning of chapter 3.²¹ The issue in this section is similar to the problem in Galatia, the validity of Jewish claims, but despite Paul's list of qualifications, the problem here is not one of apostolic authority. Paul recounts his Jewish ancestry and training to show his readers that impressive qualifications 'of the flesh' are of no avail. What really counts is to gain Christ (Phil. 3.9). Elsewhere, when Paul speaks of his rivals in Philippians 1.15, he does so with a generous spirit which is unparalleled elsewhere. This may be because the rivals are not themselves a threat to his congregation at Philippi, which is making good progress in the faith.

In the later (non-Pauline?)²² Pastoral Epistles the issue of authority emerges again, though this time in the context of the discussion of the authentic tradition after Paul. In the light of threats from teaching of various kinds (1 Tim. 1.4; 4.7; 2 Tim. 2.16; 4.4; Titus 1.14) there is need to encourage sound teaching (1 Tim. 4.6, 14; 6.20; 2 Tim. 1.14; 3.14ff.; 4.1ff.; Titus 2.1f.) and to appoint sober men (note 1 Tim. 2.12) as overseers, elders and deacons in the communities (1 Tim. 3; 5.17ff.; Titus 1.5f.). The important thing is to concentrate on the teaching which has been received (1 Tim. 6.20). Inspiration by the Spirit which leads to false teaching is to be repudiated (1 Tim. 4.1; cf. 1 John 4.2). It is through the laying on of hands that the Spirit is passed on which gives the right to teach and preach and guarantees the authenticity of what is said (2 Tim. 1.6; cf. 1 Tim. 4.14). Here we have the first signs of that commissioning which was a feature of authorization in both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity: ordination.²³ That is the means

whereby the community guarantees the safe transmission of its doctrines by committing it only to those who have been approved by those who were teachers before them.²⁴

Section 4

From Messianism to Christian Religion

We have examined the literature in the New Testament connected with two of the major figures in the New Testament's presentation of the origins of Christianity, Jesus and Paul. We have noted that throughout the careers of both there was conflict between themselves and those who disagreed with them. While neither Jesus nor Paul set out to form a religion separate from Judaism, in their practice both paved the way for such a separation, when the circumstances were ripe. The Christian 'sect' might not always have been completely indistinguishable from other Jewish groups in the early years. Its convictions about Jesus, the imminence of the kingdom and certain practices, however, marked it off from other Jewish sects and other Jews. The discrete individual beliefs (doctrine of the Messiah and the new age) and practices (baptism, fellowship meal) were not in themselves unique; there is much evidence to suggest that some were believed and practised by other groups. While *particular combinations* of beliefs and practices which we find in Christianity had few parallels in other Jewish groups, that only allows us to conclude that from the very start the Christian movement had a self-conscious identity with a separate existence and focus within wider Jewish society. The problem was not so much the beliefs as the emerging practice, particularly as it emerged within the Pauline sphere of influence.

In this section three themes will be explored: first of all, the practices of the Church and its beliefs which identified it as a separate group with its own increasingly distinctive identity; second, the way in which the early Christians learned to live out their eschatological beginnings; and, finally, the factors which led to a rupture between church and synagogue. Understanding the way in which the Jewish messianic movement ended up as the Christian Church separate from Judaism demands investigation of all of these factors.

Early Christian Initiation and Worship

Before the beginning of the common era, significant changes had taken place in the pattern of Jewish religious life. While the Temple remained the focal point of the worship of God for all Jews, the emergence of the synagogue and with it the study of the Torah, meant that in practice the dominant part of religious observance for most Jews in the Diaspora was the observance of the ancestral laws and probably the regular meeting to study the Torah on the sabbath. While this development did not make the cessation of Temple worship any easier to accept after the end of the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the fact that there already existed, alongside the worship of the Temple in Jerusalem, a framework of observance which could fill the vacuum left by the loss of the Temple, made its removal from Jewish piety the more easy to deal with, though Jews longed to see the Temple rebuilt and sacrifice restored (e.g., *Shemoneh Esreh*; 4 Ezra 9–10; 1 Enoch 90.28ff.; Syr. Baruch 32.2).

A group like the Qumran community, with a priestly origin and cultic inspiration, began, because of distaste for the conduct of worship in the Jerusalem Temple, to spiritualize cultic language, a process already started in the Bible itself with the transferred sense of circumcision to describe the moral life, e.g., Deuteronomy 10.16; 50.6; Jeremiah 4.4. In the desert, their common life was itself interpreted in cultic terms:¹

It shall be an Everlasting Plantation, a House of Holiness for Israel, an Assembly of Supreme Holiness for Aaron . . . It shall be a Most Holy Dwelling for Aaron, with everlasting knowledge of the covenant of justice, and shall offer up sweet fragrance. It shall be a house of Perfection and Truth in Israel that they may establish a covenant according to the everlasting precepts. And they shall be an agreeable offering atoning for the land . . . (1 QS 8.5–9).²

They shall atone for guilty rebellion and for the sins of unfaithfulness that they may obtain loving kindness for the land without the flesh of holocausts and the fat of sacrifice. And prayer rightly offered shall be as an acceptable fragrance of righteousness, and perfection of way as a delectable free will offering. (1 QS 9.4–5).³

The situation of the Qumran community finds many parallels in the writings of early Christianity.⁴ Here too we find that cultic terminology is

transferred to the community: the church is the Temple (1 Cor. 3.16; 6.19) and its members offer spiritual sacrifices to God (Rom. 12.1). The members of the Body of Christ are themselves holy and are a royal priesthood ministering before God (1 Pet. 2.9f.; cf. Rev. 1.6). In its worship, however, it is not apparent that such cultic language was applied to its activities. Its holy meal was not a sacrifice (1 Cor. 10.16; 11.23f., though note the Passover theme in 1 Cor. 5.7), nor were its ministers priests in the biblical sense of those who offered sacrifice (but cf. Rom. 15.16, where Paul applies priestly terminology to his apostolic task). The Temple and its sacrifices and the ministers who attended to them continued to be in the background of the early Christian movement's understanding, at least in Jerusalem (Acts 2.46).

What then was the pattern of early Christian worship? The New Testament itself gives us very little information about the kind of activity which went on. From the evidence before us two distinct activities are apparent, both of which probably have their origin within Jewish practice.

(a) Baptism⁵

According to the account of Peter's speech in Acts 2 the basis of admission to the life of the new age was acceptance of the message concerning the salvation God had wrought through Christ, repentance, baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This in turn led to entrance into a community which at least in its earliest phase practised fellowship and the common meal (Acts 2.38f., 42; cf. Acts 10.44). According to the claim of Acts, acceptance into the earliest Christian community was an immediate event and did not depend upon a long probationary period as we find practised, for example, at Qumran (1 QS 3-4 and *War* 2.137). In this respect early Christian practice as described in Acts differed from the later church,⁶ where an extended catechumenate formed an essential part of Christian discipleship,⁷ baptism itself often being delayed until much later in life (e.g., *Apost. Trad.* 17).

The origin of the Christian rite of initiation can only be ascertained in the most general terms. Several possible sources have been suggested, including the frequent lustrations, practised by various Jewish sects, and proselyte baptism. Of these, the latter, with its emphasis on the passage from the old life to the new, from a life outside the people of God to one inside, provides the most convincing parallel. Doubts have been raised, however, about the date of the introduction of baptism as well as circumcision for proselytes.⁸

Why did the Christians take up the rite of baptism as the sign of initiation into their sect? While certainty is out of the question, it would appear likely that the origin of Jesus' own mission with the baptizing prophet John provides as convincing an origin as we are likely to find,⁹ particularly when we remember that according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus and his disciples continued to practise baptism, even after they had separated themselves from

John (John 3.22; 4.1f.). The fact that, according to the Gospels, John's baptism was linked with the appearance of an eschatological judge (Mark 1.7f.; cf. Matt. 3.1ff.; Luke 3.1ff.; John 1.15, 19ff.; cf. *Ant.* 18.116ff.) makes a link between Christian baptism and John's baptism likely. The eschatological character of Christian baptism is maintained in many of our sources (e.g., 1 Cor. 12.13; Acts 2.38), though there are passages in Acts where the Spirit does not come until the laying on of hands by the apostles (e.g., Acts 8.17; 19.2ff.). It is the mark of the transfer into the new age (Titus 3.5 – new birth is an eschatological concept; see also John 3.5; Matt. 19.28; 1 Pet. 1.3). Like Christ, who at his death laid aside the body of flesh and took a new body of glory, believers at baptism put off the body of flesh with all its influence (Rom. 6). They are buried with Christ in baptism and raised to a new life in the Spirit. In Colossians Paul can describe baptism as the Christian circumcision (Col. 2.11). In terms of Paul's thought, baptism marks the identification of the believers with the decisive historical events which inaugurated the new age. Baptism gave the believers access to the world above (Col. 3.1; cf. Eph. 1.3) and enabled believers to sit with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2.6; cf. Rev. 3.21). No longer did the hostile powers have any control over them;¹⁰ Christ was the creator of the heavenly powers (Col. 1.16) and their conqueror (Col. 2.14f.; cf. 1 Pet. 3.22; Eph. 1.22).¹¹

Nowhere in the New Testament does Christian initiation receive such a profound, though indirect, treatment as in the Gospel of John. In John 3, Jesus is approached by Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, and one of the group who later in the Gospel was to be party to the handing over of Jesus to the colonial power. He also appears elsewhere as a tentative supporter of Jesus (cf. John 7.50 and 19.39). In the meeting the Johannine Jesus confronts the leader with the uncompromising statement that he needs to be born over again or from above (there is a play on words here similar to John 19.11). For that to happen a complete transformation is required which can only be likened to a birth. Jesus bids Nicodemus move from that position to one in which he can share that transformation of perspective which is essential in order to be able to 'see the Kingdom of God'. His social, political and religious position makes it almost impossible for him, however. In the context of John's story what Nicodemus has to learn is that the true perspective is not that of the Jerusalem political leadership or their Roman allies, but of Jesus. Baptism would have been a public political act which would have required him to change sides. While Nicodemus remains part of the leadership, he is looking at the world from a purely human point of view. That is the perspective of the flesh rather than the spirit. Nicodemus has to see that, however old one may be, there is necessity to go through that process of gestation and growth which will enable a new perception. Paul had written about the contrast between human and divine wisdom. So here too the Johannine Jesus probes the way in which the lack of an appropriate epistemology means a

lack of faith. That break can only come about through baptism, which is itself an event which is dangerous politically and socially.

In John 9, on the other hand, we have the man born blind whose conviction that Jesus is a teacher of Israel on account of his experience of healing leads to ostracism and a meeting with Jesus only once he has been excluded from synagogue, society and family. We note the baptismal imagery in his washing in the pool of Siloam in John 9.7, so that 'seeing again' means a social shift and not just a doctrinal/religious shift. The blind man's perspective is one which enables him to recognize the Son of Man, but that means a public separation from the prevailing culture. He shares the perspective of the heavenly 'Son of Man' who himself was about to suffer the opprobrium of the political establishment. What happens when a person comes to baptism is that their perspective on reality changes. They then see that their deeds were evil and that in the past they loved darkness rather than light.

That radical break which involves the change of lifestyle as well as thought is brought out in two passages, one from Justin's *Apology* 14 (mid-second century CE). The transfer from an oppressive and dehumanizing culture is captured in Justin's account of conversion:

[The demons] struggle to have you as their slaves and servants, and . . . they get hold of all who do not struggle to their utmost for their own salvation – as we do who, after being persuaded by the Word, renounced them and now follow the only unbegotten God through his Son. Those who once rejoiced in fornication now delight in self-control alone; those who made use of magic arts have dedicated themselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who once took most pleasure in the means of increasing our wealth and property now bring what we have into a common fund and share with everyone in need; we who hated and killed one another and would not associate with people of different tribes because of [their different] customs, now after the manifestation of Christ live together and pray for our enemies and try to persuade those who unjustly hate us, so that they, living according to the fair commands of Christ, may share with us the good hope of receiving the same things . . .

In the following extract from one of his letters Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage at the end of the third century, describes the problems posed for him by conversion to Christianity and the change of practice as well as heart which resulted from baptism. The struggle for Cyprian in becoming a Christian was the requirement that he simplify his style of life and that it was only the powers unleashed by baptism which enabled him to do this:

While I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night . . . and remote from truth and light, I used to regard it as a difficult matter, and especially as difficult in respect of my character at that time, that a person should be capable of being born again . . . and that a person quickened to a new life in the laver of saving water should be able to put off what he has previously been . . . How, said I, is such a conversion possible, that there should be a sudden and rapid divestment of all which, either innate in us has hardened in the corruption of our material nature, or acquired by us has become inveterate by long accustomed use? These things have become deeply and radically ingrained within us. When does he learn thrift who has been used to liberal banquets and sumptuous feasts? And he who has been glittering in gold and purple, and has been celebrated for his costly attire, when does he reduce himself to ordinary and simple clothing? . . . But after that, by the help of the water of new birth, the stain of former years had been washed away, and a light from above, serene and pure, had been infused into my reconciled heart, – after that, by the agency of the Spirit breathed from heaven, a second birth restored me to a new human being; – then in a wondrous manner, doubtful things at once began to assure themselves to me . . . What before had seemed difficult began to suggest a means of accomplishment, what had been thought impossible, to be capable of being achieved. (Cyprian, *Epistle* 1.3–4)

Such a contrast between new and old life is described theologically by Paul in Romans 6 and given practical effect in the early Christian baptismal liturgies. In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, for example, the necessity of preparation and the avoidance of certain professions which are deemed to be incompatible with Christian discipleship, combine to offer a picture of new identity being formed in the adaptation of habits which are set in train by belonging to Christian communities (*Apostolic Tradition* 19–21, attributed to Hippolytus, early third century CE).

This counter-cultural stance manifested in these accounts helps to account for the significant martyr thread throughout the pre-Constantinian Christian sources. For a variety of reasons converts to Christianity believed that they were living in a different kind of polity ('our commonwealth is from heaven', Paul wrote in Philippians 3.20), a new regime, the kingdom of Christ, which meant that they could not acknowledge the absolute lordship of Caesar or his ways. That sense of difference meant that normal social intercourse was compromised and there were limits on what was possible in terms of the complete integration into society. While there was very little systematic persecution of Christians, sporadic outbursts against their anti-social behaviour went on throughout the first three centuries of the churches' existence. The seemingly tiresome refusal to 'burn a pinch of incense to Caesar', to fight in Caesar's armies, or to engage in those civil

activities which might compromise one's integrity as citizens of a heavenly commonwealth, all derive in part from that deep-rooted eschatological conviction that already in the midst of the earthly city they were citizens of the Jerusalem to come where the divine justice and peace would prevail.

(b) The Eucharist¹²

The Acts of the Apostles speaks in general terms about Christian fellowship, in which there was devotion to the apostles' teaching and breaking of bread (Acts 2.42; cf. 20.7; 27.35). It is probably a typical Jewish fellowship meal celebrated by those who believed that the Messiah had come.¹³ Such meals, like all Jewish meals, would not have been devoid of religious significance (1 Cor. 10.31; Luke 24.30). In his description of the worship at Troas (Acts 20.7) the author of Acts indicates that the meeting took place on the first day of the week (cf. Rev. 1.10: 'on the Lord's Day', the day of the resurrection).¹⁴ Whether Christians continued to worship in synagogues on the sabbath as well as having their own liturgy on the first day of the week, the anniversary of the resurrection (cf. Justin, *Apology* 1.67), is not clear (note John 20.19, 26).

Questions remain about the extent of the contribution of the synagogue to early Christian worship.¹⁵ Its emphasis (and deliberately so) on non-cultic activity, to avoid any suggestion of conflict with the Temple as the only shrine prescribed by the Torah (Deut. 12.4f.) meant that its emphasis was on prayer (Acts 18.13), the reading (and if necessary, translation) of Scripture and expositions of it (Acts 13).¹⁶ If the Corinthian church is anything to go by, the characteristic convictions of early Christianity concerning the coming new age probably affected the pattern of worship. Paul reports that at the meeting for worship, in addition to any reading from the Scriptures, individual members of the community came along with their own contributions: prophecies, revelations, and hymns (1 Cor. 14.26). Paul expected his letters to be read aloud to the churches when they assembled (1 Cor. 4.16). Later on, in the middle of the second century CE, readings from the 'memoirs of the apostles' formed part of the worship in the time of Justin, along with the eucharistic meal, as the following passage makes plain:

... And on the day which is called the day of the sun there is an assembly of all those who live in the towns or in the country; and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read, as long as time permits. Then the reader ceases, and the president speaks, admonishing us and exhorting us to imitate these excellent examples. (*Apology* 1.65-7)

The evidence from the New Testament does not allow us to conclude with any degree of certainty that the common meal, the Eucharist, and the type of worship described in 1 Corinthians 14 necessarily coincided at this

early stage. The indication from Acts 20.7ff. is that they did, but the evidence from 1 Corinthians is less clear on the matter. In the section dealing with the common meal in 1 Corinthians (11.18ff.) Paul mentions the eucharistic words of Jesus (11.23ff.) and the need for all those who participate to share their food, but no mention is made here of the reading of Scripture or the charismatic contributions mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, other than the recall of the words of Jesus on the night that he was betrayed (1 Cor. 11.23). Likewise, in the account of early Christian worship in 1 Corinthians 14 there is no mention made of the common meal, and the fact that outsiders are welcome at the service is probably an indication that the worship described was not confined to believers (1 Cor. 14.22ff.; cf. *Didache* 9: 'let none eat or drink of Eucharist, save such as are baptized').¹⁷ What is clear from 1 Corinthians 11, however, is that the eucharistic meal is a normal, rather than a liturgical, meal, unlike the meal described by Justin; otherwise it would not be possible to understand the significance of advice Paul gives to the Corinthians about the sharing of food (1 Cor. 11.21ff.).

The origin of the meal described in 1 Corinthians 11 and elsewhere in the New Testament is to be found in the central importance which meals had with Judaism. In addition to the Passover meal, when the central facts of Israel's redemption were recalled during a special meal (and which was the context of Jesus' own words at the Last Supper),¹⁸ there was the weekly meal at the beginning of the sabbath.¹⁹ This regular pattern of meals seems to be what is presupposed in 1 Corinthians 11 (cf. Luke 24.30f.). Despite the language which Paul chooses to use about it (1 Cor. 10.16), we are probably still some way from the cult meal which characterized the celebration of the Eucharist in the day of Justin.²⁰ Whether or not this was a regular or even weekly event is by no means clear (cf. 1 Cor. 16.2). The various texts of the eucharistic words of Jesus (1 Cor. 11.23ff.; Matt. 26.26ff.; Mark 14.22ff.; Luke 22.19–22) disagree over the inclusion of the words 'Do this in remembrance of me'.²¹ From 1 Corinthians one gets the impression that the regular meeting for the common meal probably included a recollection of the words of Jesus at some point during the meal, just as year by year the domestic Passover meal included recollection of the events of redemption from Egypt.²²

The eschatological dimension is apparent in the interpretation of the eucharistic meal (1 Cor. 11.26).²³ In the Passover, the past redemption by God was regarded as a type of the future deliverance of the people of God out of their present bondage.²⁴ Consequently, Passover was always a time of heightened expectation (a fact which needs to be borne in mind in considering the accounts of the last days of Jesus, e.g., Luke 22.35ff.). The use of Exodus typology in referring to the death of Jesus (his death is ransom or liberation, Mark 10.45; cf. Rom. 3.25)²⁵ is an indication of the way in which the death of Jesus and the deliverance at the Passover were linked by the early Christians. The eschatological flavour of the common meal is also apparent

in the early church order known as the *Didache* or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.²⁶ In the eucharistic prayer contained in this manifestly Jewish-Christian work the future hope permeates the prayer:

We give thanks, Holy Father, for thy holy name, which thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality which thou hast made known to us through thy servant Jesus. To thee be glory for ever. Thou Lord Almighty didst create all things for thy name's sake, and gavest food and drink to humanity for their enjoyment, that they might give thee thanks; and to us thou didst grant spiritual food and drink and life eternal, through thy servant. Above all we thank thee that thou art mighty. To thee be glory for ever. Remember, Lord, thy church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in thy love, and to gather from the four winds that which is sanctified into thy kingdom which thou didst prepare for it; for thine is the power and the glory for ever. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any are holy, let them come; if any are not holy, let them repent. Maranatha. Amen. (*Didache* 10)

The concluding sentences recall parts of the New Testament, particularly Paul's final words in 1 Corinthians 16.22f. (cf. Rev. 22.20), which include the phrase *Maranatha* ('Come, Lord').²⁷ The common meal provided a setting not only for recall of God's saving purposes in the past, but also a reminder of the consummation of the saving purposes, which the Church longed to see fulfilled and expressed the fervour of its hope by the *Maranatha*.²⁸ It was an occasion when the company at table hailed the longed-for Lord with glad Hosannas.²⁹

At the end of the discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6.51ff. (a passage whose eucharistic overtones have long been recognized),³⁰ resurrection on the last day for the individual believer is linked very closely with eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the 'Son of Man' (John 6.54). Even in the writings of Ignatius, where eschatological expectation is less apparent, the eucharistic meal is described as 'the medicine of immortality' (*Ephesians* 20), thus preserving a version of the eschatological element. Nevertheless, the main thrust of Ignatius' interpretation is to make the meal a means whereby the individual can maintain and ultimately gain access to heaven. It has become the means of gaining access to another world and has ceased to be the foretaste of that kingdom of God on earth in the present.³¹

While eschatological emphasis still persisted,³² in the course of time the Eucharist gradually took on the significance of cultic communion with the Saviour. The infiltration of the cultic understanding into the worship of the community led to an increased influence of the Temple-model on the worship of the Christian communities.³³ With this emerging influence the question of presidency became important. Paul had assumed that the Spirit

would inspire both men and women in the course of worship (1 Cor. 11.5), and nothing is said about presidency at the Eucharist. If a Jewish pattern was followed we may expect that the head of the family would normally have presided. Normally this would have been the duty of a man, though it is very likely that in some of the more enthusiastic communities and in those households where a woman was the head (e.g., 1 Cor. 1.11), this might have been a woman. Possibly it was a female prophet who exercised this role (after all, according to Didache 10 the prophets may give thanks (*eucharistēin*) as much as they will). Women prophets formed part of the Montanist movement and there is evidence of them presiding at the Eucharist in Montanist circles (see Cyprian, *Epistle* 75.110).³⁴

Elsewhere in the later New Testament writings nothing is said in the list of duties of the Christian minister about any function as president at the Eucharist; it is the teaching function which is most important. The situation is very different in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, however, written while he was travelling to Rome for execution. Addressing communities in situations where false teaching was a particular problem, Ignatius stresses the central role of the bishop in the eucharistic worship of the Church.³⁵

See that you all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows the Father, and the presbytery as if it were the apostles. And reverence the deacons as the command of God. Let no one do anything appertaining to the church without the bishop. Let that be considered a valid eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints. Wherever the bishop appears let the congregation be present; just as wherever Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold *agape* without the bishop; but whatever he approves, this is also pleasing to God, that everything which you do may be secure and valid. (*Smyrnaeans* 8)

In the light of the repeated emphasis throughout his letters on the centrality of the bishop within the order of the Church, we may surmise that this pattern was by no means universally accepted, and needed the authoritative persuasion of the would-be martyr from Antioch to guarantee its consideration. In situations where there was schism and deviant teaching (as is apparent from the letters), the emphasis upon one person as the focus of unity and right teaching was potent remedy against division. The Letter to the Hebrews contains an elaborate argument about the heavenly high priesthood of Christ and his sacrifice, which enabled him to enter the holiest place in heaven behind the veil (Heb. 6.19f.; cf. 9.24). Its main concern is with the death of Christ, and no attempt is made to link this with the eucharistic meal of the assembled Christians; nor is there any suggestion that the minister functions as the representative of the heavenly high priest on earth. For the writer to the Hebrews there is no earthly shrine which can compare with the

heavenly, and it is to this through the ministry of Christ that believers have been allowed to draw near.

A glance at the roughly contemporary *Didache* and 1 Clement shows that few churches were prepared to go as far along the road of having one leader in charge of the Church. Indeed, in the *Didache*, prominence is given to the role of the prophets, despite the problems which they were causing in some of the communities (e.g., *Didache* 11.7ff.; cf. Rev. 2.20; *Didache* 13.6). Nevertheless, what we find in Ignatius' letters is indicative of a trend which was to gain momentum throughout the second century, particularly as the need increased to repudiate deviant teaching by the appeal to tradition and clearer community boundaries.³⁶

(c) Use of Scripture

There is a close relationship between the theological ideas and practices outlined in the New Testament and what one finds in the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, the precise character of that relationship has been the subject of considerable debate. On the one hand there are those who want to maintain an intimate connection between the two, arguing that one cannot understand the New Testament writings themselves unless one has an intimate knowledge of their (earlier) biblical antecedents and the context of the biblical allusions. Thus the original context of a passage quoted in the New Testament is a condition for the way in which the texts are referred to and to some extent control the way in which early Christian writers use the Bible.

On the other hand, is an approach which assumes that biblical citation is more atomistic and does not assume that the original context is determinative of the use of the biblical text in the New Testament passage. Thus, when Paul quotes two passages which speak of justification by faith (Gen. 15.7 and Hab. 2 in Rom. 1.17, 4.3 and Gal. 3.6, 11) to promote his conviction about the priority of faith over obedience to the letter of the Law, he does so in order to downgrade the importance of the Sinai covenant compared with the Abrahamic covenant, itself the anticipation of the new covenant in Christ. The use of these texts is not determined by their original context, for such texts have become an interpretative key which offers a clue to interpreting the Scriptures from the perspective of the life of the new age. The constraints of the earlier biblical context are not as great and the writers engage in a much freer approach to Scripture, constrained more by their convictions about the new life in Christ than by the written word. The use of scriptural texts is seen as just one of several ways of constructing the biblical material in which the texts are made to serve the emergence of a different kind of religion (much as the Gnostic readings of the Bible in the second and third centuries, which may seem to us to offer

perverse readings of the biblical texts, though their writers want to see themselves in the light of those texts).

The problem with the first version of events is that it fails adequately to appreciate the differences of perspective which led the Christian communities, at least in the Pauline sphere, to being almost entirely separate from Jewish communities. We cannot know how biblically literate the Pauline communities were. They may well have been able to bring an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures and the original contexts of the citations (assuming that they could pick up the allusions in the first place). This seems unlikely, however. Scriptural passages were cited and their importance stressed because of the way they were used within a new discourse, which either subtly shifted the meaning, or offered a very different way, of construing the details of the original scriptural texts. There are also theological issues at stake. One effect of the first theory is to bind the two parts of the Christian Bible close to one another and to increase the degree of continuity between Christianity and Judaism.

Christians were engaged in 'recycling' Scripture, giving it a new meaning appropriate to their own time, not casting it off but reusing it in new and creative ways. Recycling takes different forms. On the one hand one can destroy the old and produce an entirely new product (this comes pretty close to the method found in some of the gnostic texts discovered at Nag Hammadi, where the book of Genesis is deconstructed and a very different version of the story emerges on the basis of that rereading: Cain and the serpent become heroes, not villains, for example). On the other hand, one can find a new use for texts which may seem to be obsolete but turn out to provide a way of understanding present experience which may be at variance with their original purpose. The following analogy illustrates the difference:

Some years ago, we were given two large earthenware coffee cups; as coffee cups, we found them useless: they were so heavy that they were difficult to lift, so thick that they were unpleasant to drink from, so wide that the coffee quickly went cold. So we recycled them and used them as soup bowls. That was not their original purpose, but they proved excellent for soup, and who is to say that we were wrong to use them in that way? We looked at the coffee cups in a new light, and saw soup bowls. Now here you have something that is conceived of, bought, wrapped up and given as one thing, but received, unpacked and used as something quite different. Are we to say that they were intended to be coffee cups, so it is illegitimate to use them as soup bowls? Or that these vessels have an intrinsic identity as coffee cups, and that we are doing violence to that identity when we misuse them? Or that the receiver can use the gift in whatever way he wishes, and the way he wishes constitutes the authentic way? If you answer yes to that last suggestion, and commonsense dictates that you should, cannot something similar

be said about the Bible? Must we suppose that meaning can be supplied only by the giver? Is not the vital point in the life of a text the moment when it is *read*, rather than the point at which it was written? The mere writing effects nothing. It is when the text is read that things happen.³⁷

This illustrates exactly what is going on in the New Testament. Paul made much of the fact that what now counted was the spirit, not the letter, of the text. That enabled him to read passages christologically where there was no actual reference to Jesus Christ and to ignore the literal meaning of the text (Abraham was circumcised). In so doing, the interpretative approach was similar to that of many of their contemporaries, Jewish and pagan. What differed was the control of the experience, the peculiar story in which the Christians found themselves caught up. The New Testament writers (and even more so their readers) were not engaged in an exegesis of the Scriptures detached from the practice of faith. Earlier Scriptures had to be read in the light of the convictions about Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection. Knowledge of God is not dependent on those with the detailed knowledge of the Scriptures (the Scribes and the guardians of tradition, for example), those who have been appointed to be a religion's functionaries as the result of their apprenticeship in the religious traditions. God speaks directly; Scripture and tradition provide a secondary support for insight obtained by other means. The important thing is to respond to the prompting of the Spirit and subordinate the letter to the Spirit, a view expressed most clearly by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2.10–16 and 2 Corinthians 3, however awkward the social and theological problems that prompted. In 1 Corinthians 2.11ff. Paul claims that life in the Spirit enables the truly spiritual person to have the mind of Christ and to understand the things of God. It would appear that there is no need for an external code. And yet in the second half of 1 Corinthians that is what Paul seems to offer in his advice to the Corinthians. There we find a rather different pattern of religion where rules and appeal to tradition and common practice predominate. In his use of Scripture Paul believes that he pierces to the real meaning of the text. At times this attitude may manifest itself as a rejection of the priority of the written text of Scripture and a subordination of it to the inner understanding which comes through the Spirit. A consistent application of this kind of spiritual interpretation, linked as it is with a critique of literalism and an anti-Jewish polemic following very much in Paul's steps in 2 Corinthians 3, is found in the Epistle of Barnabas. Biblical laws and institutions are interpreted in the light of the convictions of the new community, and their spiritual, rather than literal, meaning prioritized.³⁸

The Emergence of Beliefs About Jesus

(a) The Foundations of Christology¹

In contrast with the debates of the succeeding centuries, the evidence of christological exposition appears to be absent from the earliest Christian writings. That is not to suggest that the first Christians were uninterested in the person of Christ: the pages of the New Testament themselves affirm unequivocally that Jesus of Nazareth was the key to salvation. What is apparent is that, with the exception of the Fourth Gospel, and one or two passages elsewhere in the epistles (e.g., Col. 1.15ff.; Phil. 2.6ff.; Heb. 1.1ff.), there is hardly any extended christological exposition in the New Testament. There were other more pressing factors which governed the development of doctrinal interest. The evidence from the Pauline letters indicates that problems concerning the person of Christ were not the main issues with which Paul was having to contend. It is only in the letter to the Colossians that we have any hint of any uncertainty about the unique status of the person of Christ, though there are hints that within the Johannine community there were problems similar to those which confront us in the false teaching combated by the Church in the centuries to come (e.g., 1 John 4.2). In addition, however, early Christian sources are largely not the kind of abstract discussions which characterize much later theology. They are in large part stories, arising out of living experience. Their narrative form contrasts with the attempts to distil theological wisdom from narrative form in later theological texts.

We have located the main thrust of Jesus' message and work in his proclamation of the imminent reign of God. Thus, while it would be true to say that the central place of Jesus in this proclamation is everywhere presupposed, what is dominant is the initiation of this reign of peace and righteousness. Concentration, therefore, is on the narrative of what is offered by God rather than detailed explanation about the character of the one who gave it. Jesus is the key to the gift of salvation but all attention is focused on the opportunity of divine salvation that is offered. We have already noted that in the teaching of Jesus himself there are signs that a Christology of a profound kind is either implied or explicitly outlined.²

According to the Acts of the Apostles,³ the earliest titles which were applied to Jesus were Lord and Christ (Acts 2.36). These two are by far the most common in the Pauline letters, and their use indicates why the early Christians thought Jesus of Nazareth so important for their experience of

salvation: he was the anointed one, the fulfiller of God's purposes. The messianic question was bound to be important for the first Christians. Their teacher, who had been put to death, had, they believed, been vindicated by God. Jesus was regarded as the key to the coming of the messianic age (Rev. 5.5f.). Even if he did not correspond exactly to the pattern of some Jewish expectations concerning the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth was, as far as the Christians were concerned, the one who had been the means whereby God's eschatological promises were being fulfilled. He it was who, by his life, death and resurrection, was God's means of initiating the fulfilment of the promises: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to God' (2 Cor. 5.19).⁴

In contrast to the title Christ, Lord⁵ (*Kyrios*), as it is used in the New Testament, does not have its origins with Jesus. It is true that there are examples of Jesus being addressed as such, but in all likelihood it is used as a polite designation reserved for a teacher (e.g., Luke 9.54).⁶ Elsewhere in the New Testament, probably in usage derived from Psalm 110⁷ ('The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a stool for your feet'), the title 'Lord' speaks of the divine dominion delegated to the exalted Christ by God (Acts 2.33ff.; 1 Cor. 15.24f.; cf. Matt. 28.18; Dan. 7.13). As Messiah, Christ would have his part to play in the final demonstration of God's sovereignty (2 Thess. 2.8f.) and this lordship, delegated to him temporarily by God (1 Cor. 15.28), would finally be manifested over the powers opposed to God when in the end all would worship before him and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2.11).

The final verses of Matthew's Gospel suggest that early Christian interpretation had attributed to the resurrected Christ the authority and dominion which Daniel's prophecy had bestowed on the 'Son of Man' (Matt. 28.13). It is a central feature of early Christian belief that the manifestation of divine sovereignty through God's agent, the Christ, has started but has still to be completed. Meanwhile heaven must receive the Christ 'until the time for the establishing of all that God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from of old' (Acts 3.20f.). In the Pauline letters (but also note James 5.7) the title Lord or *Kyrios* is used in contexts dealing with the return of Jesus (e.g., 1 Thess. 4.15; 2 Thess. 2.8) who would come to complete the work started on the cross and in the resurrection.⁸

With these two titles we are at the heart of the New Testament conviction about the significance of the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In them are expressed the twin affirmations of early Christian belief of the eschatological character of the activity of Christ and the delegation of divine sovereignty and power, which takes place at his exaltation. Jesus is endowed with that power and character of the almighty God as the expression of God's purposes in his person and work, and the one will reign until such time as 'God would be all in all' (1 Cor. 15.28).

A peculiarly profound christological exposition in narrative form is to be

found in the Gospel of John.⁹ Some of the editorial comments interspersed in the text by the writer demonstrate the nature of the issues which are confronting the community. According to the Gospel, the Jews believe that Jesus is arrogating to himself divine power: 'he also called God his Father, making himself equal with God' (John 5.18). The claims which Jesus makes (e.g., John 8.58; 10.30f.) suggest a threat to Jewish beliefs about the unique authority of God, but Jesus never 'makes himself equal with God' but repeatedly stresses subordination (e.g. John 7.17). The Evangelist offers in the prologue to the exposition of the life of Jesus the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was none other than the eternal Word or Logos incarnate. It was no use, in Paul's words, to view Christ merely from a human point of view (cf. 2 Cor. 5.16), for in the Evangelist's estimation Jesus was the one who made known the unseen Father (John 1.18). Nevertheless, the Gospel which has so much to say about the divine emissary sent by God still continues to stress the importance of the messiahship of Jesus (John 7.44; 20.31; cf. 1 John 2.22-3).

Twin themes dominate the Gospel: the compatibility of belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the unique emissary of the Father with Jewish beliefs about God; and that in the life of Jesus of Nazareth the character and nature of the invisible God were made known. The background to such concerns was the growing tension between non-Christian Jews and Jewish Christians probably towards the end of the first century CE.¹⁰ Thus the Gospel was written to show those who are already believers (John 20.31f.) that their confession of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, was in fact in full accord with the traditions of Judaism (cf. John 5.39, 45) and did not involve an abdication of their central beliefs about God.¹¹ We have in the Fourth Gospel the most extended Christology in the New Testament, whose importance may be gauged by the enormous influence it has had on subsequent debates about the person of Christ.¹² The essential contours of that christological presentation are set out in the first twelve chapters and in the so-called 'High Priestly' prayer in chapter 17.¹³

At the heart of the christological presentation of the Fourth Evangelist is the conviction that the one who has seen Jesus has seen the Father (John 14.9); no one has ever seen God at any time (1.18). Even the claims of those who in the past said that they had seen God had to be questioned (John 5.37). Those seers and prophets who had been fortunate to glimpse a theophany had not seen God but the pre-existent Christ¹⁴ (John 12.41). 'Not that any one has seen the Father, except the one who is from God; that one has seen the Father' (John 6.46). The basis of the christological claim offered in the Gospel is that, unlike all other emissaries sent from God, Jesus alone has seen the Father and as a result is the authentic revealer of God. That revelation was not a revelation of propositions about the nature of God, for the Revealer descended from heaven to reveal God in his own person;¹⁵ 'the only

Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known' (1.18). Drawing on traditions which are now known to us from Jewish apocalyptic angelology, the Fourth Evangelist was able to stand firmly within the Jewish theological tradition and yet stress that another being with a will of his own who still subordinated that will to the will of the one who sent him (cf. John 7.16)¹⁶ was able to be the complete embodiment of divine character (cf. Col. 2.9).¹⁷

Throughout the Gospel there is an emphasis on Jesus as the emissary of the Father. Exploration of the background of this theme in Jewish texts has revealed how important the notion of agency is for an understanding of the Christology of the Gospel.¹⁸ The agent is the plenipotentiary of the one who sent him. Those who receive the agent must treat that one as if they were receiving the one who is the sender. The repeated stress on sending, and on the subordination of the will of the agent to the one who sends, is a key to the understanding of how it is that Jesus, the one sent, can function as the perfect fulfilment, and embodiment, of the divine purposes and character. What is stressed throughout the Gospel is the simple fact that Jesus sets out only to do the will of his Father. The unity of will between the Father and the Son, the sender and the agent, is brought out most forcefully in the statement of Jesus which leads to an attempted stoning: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10.30).

The Gospel enables us to see an attempt to expound the relationship of Jesus, the Word made flesh, to the rest of Jewish tradition. The position of the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry makes it likely that the Evangelist regards the locus of divine revelation in the only-begotten son as *the* place where God's presence is located. It is the 'Son of Man' to whom angels descend, not Bethel (John 1.51).¹⁹ Similarly, it is the Risen Christ who after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem is the place where the true worshippers will come to find God (John 4.23f.).

The one to whom Jewish custom and tradition bear witness has come, and that one is Jesus. For Samaritans²⁰ (ch. 4), as well as orthodox Jews like Nicodemus, the revelation of God through Jesus is the way to a new relationship with God, entry into the kingdom of God. The Jewish festivals²¹ (John 7-8), the experience of Israel in the past and the Torah itself (John 3.39) all point to the greater reality which is manifest in Jesus.²² God did not intend existing Jewish ideas and traditions as the final revelation. They pointed beyond themselves to that definitive revelation, which now has taken place in the Son. Any attempt to ignore that revelation and assume that what had been given in the past was of itself the definitive way to God (cf. John 9.29) made those traditions serve a purpose for which they had never been intended, and those who espoused such a use of them risked ending up opposing God (John 8.41ff.).²³

The narrative suggests that the christological claims were no threat to the authority of the one God. It is not the case that there are two divine powers

in heaven, two independent gods.²⁴ The application of the sending formula to the exposition of Jesus' relationship with the Father indicates that for the writer the relationship of such intimacy was based entirely on the subordination of the one sent to the sender. It was because the Son who came from heaven did not do his own will, but the will of the sender and sought the glory of the sender (John 7.18), that the completeness of the disclosure of the divine nature could be effected. In this we have an exposition of Christology which affirms in the most basic form the essential character of that theology which was to become one of the distinctive marks of Christian thought. Even if the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel is not yet an area of theological discussion,²⁵ the relationship of Jesus with the Father as set out in these pages exhibits all the characteristics of the later trinitarian formulations.

Behind the Johannine phrase 'eternal life' there lies the Hebrew concept of the life of the age to come.²⁶ To enter the kingdom of God is to gain eternal life (John 3.3–5, 16). The eschatological character of the phrase 'eternal life' is illustrated by the Greek of Daniel 12.2. The uniqueness of the revealer is that he brings the life of the age to come. Even the eschatological Spirit breathed upon the disciples on the first Easter Sunday, bringing a new creative act (John 20.22), functions not as an agent of new revelation but to remind the disciples of the unique revelation of God in Christ (John 16.12ff.). To believe in Jesus as the Messiah (John 20.31) and to taste of the Spirit of God is to know eternal life, the life of the age to come, which new birth by water and spirit has brought about (John 3.3f.). Possibly the Johannine traditions are in danger of losing touch with that eschatological dimension, as we shall suggest, but the presentation of them in the Fourth Gospel (and particularly 1 John 2.22) has by no means lost that interest in ultimate salvation which has been offered by God's unique emissary. The Johannine interpretation of the person of Christ, influenced as it is by the Church's struggles, possibly with its Jewish neighbours, is rooted in the belief that their interpretation of commonly held traditions in the Jewish community represented the definitive understanding of the purposes of God.

(b) The Gradual Dissolution of the Eschatological Framework of Primitive Christology

Much of the energy of students of early Christianity has been devoted to the study of the development of ideas connected with the person of Christ. A glance at a handbook of early Christian doctrine will reveal what a central place the study of Christology has within presentations of early Christianity.²⁷ We cannot understand the early Christian movement simply by explaining its Christology, however. The historical and social context needs to be explored, though with the recognition that we are hindered in our task by the fact that the evidence will not allow us to do this as adequately as we

would like.²⁸ The importance of eschatology in christological development has been recognized. Following Albert Schweitzer, an attempt has been made to trace the growth of Christian doctrine within the framework of a treatment of eschatology.²⁹ Martin Werner's work has continued to have great influence,³⁰ particularly his theory about the Delay of the Parousia (the problem posed by the non-appearance of the kingdom of God), though less so in connection with christological development.³¹

Christological conflicts became an ever more pressing reason for precision and theological clarity; there were reasons for suspicion over the Arian christology, for example,³² as an exposition of the heart of New Testament Christology, though preoccupation with such matters led to distasteful strife and an unhealthy preoccupation with this area of doctrine at the expense of the ethical life.³³

One of the most interesting features of the development of Christology is the way in which the attention of ancient commentators moved from the use of eschatological categories to speak of Christ and his work, to rather different ones, which did not bear that distinctive eschatological stamp. The point may well be illustrated by the development of the use of the title 'Messiah'.³⁴ From the very earliest period of the Christian movement this title offered a way of expressing the first disciples' convictions about Jesus of Nazareth (Mark 8.29; Acts 2.36f.; John 9.22; 20.31; Acts 13.23). He was the one who was to come; there was no need to look for another (Matt. 11.2ff.). Early Christian experience convinced Christians that Jesus of Nazareth was the anointed of God, the agent of the future reign of God. This conviction undergirds much early Christian belief. Even Paul, who often uses the word 'Christ' virtually as a proper name, retains the eschatological dimension in his use (e.g., 2 Cor. 5.19).³⁵

Early Christians did not rest content with the title 'Messiah' to express their convictions about Jesus. When they wanted to explore the relationship between God and Christ, Christian writers used two streams, one of which has been explored in some detail in New Testament scholarship, the Wisdom tradition,³⁶ and the other, about which less has been written, the angelomorphic ideas developing in ancient Judaism.³⁷ In using these categories early Christians gave a very different twist to Christology.

The origin of the use of Wisdom ideas in early Christianity is much debated, though it probably has its origin in some sayings of Jesus (e.g., Matt. 11.28ff.; Luke 11.49).³⁸ They are apparent in some of Paul's letters (1 Cor. 8.6; Col. 1.15ff.) and were taken up in the prologues to both the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 1.1ff.) and the Fourth Gospel (John 1.1ff.).³⁹ While this framework did enable early Christians to maintain the unity of being and purpose between Jesus and God, the use of the Wisdom tradition had the effect of diminishing the centrality of eschatology. What we have in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, for example, is a confession of the

unique manifestation of the divine Logos ('the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1.14)), but also a continuation of a process which had been at work long before (assuming that John 1.1–13 refers to the work of the pre-existent divine Logos, with the reference to John the Baptist in 1.6 being an insertion at this point to underline the unique importance of the Baptist's witness). Hitherto people had only glimpsed God in a glass darkly, but in Jesus they had come face to face with the very image of the invisible God (to quote Colossians 1.15). With this Gospel the heart of the Christian gospel becomes more focused on the one who has come from the Father and who brings divine light and life. To know the Father is to know Christ. Belief in Christ becomes inextricably linked with the need to see God in him and through his actions. It is a unique and definitive disclosure, therefore, and one that effects a critical division between the children of light and the children of darkness.

The use of the Wisdom terminology has two effects. First of all, it tends to encapsulate God in a particular person; and as a result makes christological confession the key to a relationship with God. Second, Wisdom categories tend to play down the radical disjuncture between this age and the age to come which the messianic belief effects. In the biblical Wisdom tradition, Wisdom is always present in the world, always active and always there to be received by humanity. What we have in the Fourth Gospel is a narrative in which we read that in Jesus there is a unique disclosure of God's Word/Wisdom, differing only in degree rather than kind from other manifestations of the immanent Wisdom of God. The focus of this Christology is revelation (albeit of a complete kind transcending all previous manifestations of the Logos),⁴⁰ knowledge, rather than disruption and transformation of the world. While some traditional eschatological language remains (e.g., 5.24ff.; 6.40), the Fourth Gospel tends to be individualistic in its concerns. The concern is with the salvation of the individual soul.⁴¹ Absent is the concern with the liberation of the cosmos (Rom. 8.22ff.; Rev. 20–2), which is so characteristic of the eschatological beliefs of Judaism and other texts of early Christianity alike. Throughout the Fourth Gospel the world seems to be of little interest as something to be redeemed. The elect themselves are to be taken out of the world when the Lord takes them to himself (John 14.3; 17.24; cf. Mark 13.26).⁴² A characteristic feature of the growing Wisdom tradition of Judaism is the way in which a pattern of descent and ascent was linked with Wisdom (e.g., Ecclus. 24; 1 Enoch 42).⁴³ The heaven/earth orientation of that Wisdom myth has found its way into the christological presentation of the Fourth Gospel (e.g., 3.13; 6.61). Jesus is the one who comes from the realm of light and goes back there again. That 'vertical' dimension is a dominant pattern in the Gospel.⁴⁴

Similar themes can be found in the use of angelomorphic categories.⁴⁵ There is evidence of the emergence of beliefs in angelic intermediaries in

Jewish texts of the Second Temple period, some of whom were believed to be embodiments of the divine glory. These angels descended from heaven to earth to be the agents of the divine purposes and to bear the divine glory in the world. Belief that another figure in heaven could embody the divine glory was an important framework which was used for the christological expression of the earliest Christians. Once those traditions, which enabled Jesus to be related closely to God while maintaining his separate identity, were used, the christological focus centred on the descent of the divine being from heaven and his manifestation in the world. Salvation was very much bound up with recognition of this figure and the goal of being where this figure would lead (cf. Heb. 6.19f.). It was only eschatological in the sense that it concerned the ultimate destiny of those individuals who accepted or rejected the divine emissary.

Wisdom and angelomorphic elements come together in one of the most remarkable Jewish texts of the period, only now extant in part in Origen's commentary on John 1.6 (in Origen's estimation the work is a Jewish pseudepigraphon). Not only does the fragment bear witness to the idea of incarnation of a heavenly being but also the terminology is similar to that found in John 1.14 and Ecclesiasticus 24.8:

I Jacob, who am speaking to you, am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit. Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But I, Jacob, whom people call Jacob but whose name is Israel am he whom God called Israel which means one seeing God, because I am the first born of every living thing to whom God gives life. And when I was coming up from Syrian Mesopotamia, Uriel, the angel of the Lord, came forth and said that I [Jacob-Israel] had descended to earth and I had tabernacled among humanity, and that I had been called by the name of Jacob. He envied me and fought with me saying that his name and the name that is before every angel was to be above mine. I told him his name and what rank he had among the sons of God. Are you not Uriel, the eighth after me? and I, Israel, the archangel of the power of the Lord and the chief captain among the sons of God. Am I not Israel, the first minister before the face of God? And I called upon my God by the inextinguishable name. (*The Prayer of Joseph*)

The eschatological dimension of the coming of Christ has not been entirely lost in the Fourth Gospel⁴⁶ (e.g., John 5.26; 6.53; 6.44; 6.39; cf. 1 John 3.2; 2.28). Nevertheless, there is a concentration on the being and activity of God in a single person (John 1.14) and beyond him an elect group (14.23). The Gospel of John has had a profound influence on both the form of the Christian message and Christology alike in subsequent Christian doctrinal formulation. It suggests the hidden Christ, calling his own to himself from a naughty world, an evocative picture which has dominated

the Christian imagination. Opposed to him is a world whose nature and character are not expected to change. Into this darkness the light descends, to be recognized by all who are children of light. This is more the language of the Wisdom tradition; it is not the language of messianism, where the arrival of the anointed one of God effects a crisis in the course of this age and starts the inexorable process towards the establishment of the new. In this respect the Christology⁴⁷ and eschatology of the two major Johannine writings in the New Testament stand far apart. In the Revelation the exaltation of the Lamb means not only sharing the throne of God in the millennium (Rev. 20.4; cf. 3.21; Matt. 19.28) but also heralds the start of that process, which will lead to the establishment of the messianic reign on earth and the replacement of the old aeon by the new heavens and the new earth. Christ, one like a lamb which was slain (Rev. 5.6), starts the cosmic process of the fulfilment of God's saving purposes. In the Fourth Gospel the coming of the Christ into the world effects a division between the children of light and the children of darkness;⁴⁸ and what is more, brings about judgement (3.17f.). To this extent the Fourth Gospel continues an eschatological theme. Nevertheless, the coming of Christ is not intended to change *the world*; that is merely an arena where the shepherd seeks to gather all his sheep into the fold. The difference can be characterized in simple terms as a contrast between a 'horizontal' and 'vertical' outlook with regard to the saving purposes. In the Fourth Gospel the myth of the descent and ascent of the Saviour confirms the orientation of believers towards heaven as the goal of their aspirations; in the book of Revelation the eyes of the communities are pointed forward to the kingdom of God on earth, where sorrow and sighing will flee away: 'To them that overcome I will make them a pillar in the Temple of my God; never shall they go out of it, and I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name' (Rev. 3.12).

Much has been written about the origin of the doctrine of the incarnation.⁴⁹ Wherever we locate its entrance into early Christian thought, it is probably no accident that it emerges in its most explicit form in a document where concern with the transformation of the cosmos has all but disappeared. We shall note in Paul's doctrine of ministry a basis for the doctrine of the holy person, centred on inward transformation through identification with Jesus. The doctrine of the incarnation is an example of a similar trend in Christology. God comes to the world not through the complex process of historical events, by putting down the mighty from their seat and exalting the humble and meek, but through the Word made flesh. Those who belong to God recognize Jesus for what he truly is, just as those who know what true holiness is see in the life of the suffering apostle the authentic presence of Christ. The hidden Logos amidst the flux of a decaying world becomes a

more compelling paradigm in late antiquity than the 'Son of Man', vindicator of the downtrodden, or the prophet of the kingdom of God, proclaiming the imminent overthrow of empire and the establishment of a divine commonwealth on earth. For Christian spirituality the doctrine of the incarnation offered a model of existence, which meant that Christian discipleship was concerned with bearing witness to the divine Logos, present yet unseen, amidst the vicissitudes of human affairs, and with being the locus of that presence through the indwelling Spirit.⁵⁰

3

Differing Models of Ministry

We need to be aware of certain trends within first-century Judaism¹ in order to appreciate the emphasis on the role of the whole people of God in the understanding of ministry which emerges in the major writings of the New Testament. Alongside an elaborate cultic apparatus in the Temple in Jerusalem were trends of piety, movements which sought to create the circumstances in which the whole of Israel would be responsive to God's command 'You shall be holy, even as I am holy' (Lev. 19.2). Within the hierarchical framework of the Qumran sect, we can see a similar trend: all members of the community were part of a holy enclave, an extension of the citizens of heaven on earth.² In the Gospels the imminence of the reign of God presented all with a challenge to prepare for it.³ Access to God depended on nothing but the trust and dependence of a child (Mark 10.15). Jesus appealed to many who were not part of religious élites. Jesus taught his disciples to address God as father (*Abba*),⁴ a familiar address of a child (Luke 11.2; cf. Mark 14.36). This was the fulfilment of the eschatological hope of Judaism, the dwelling of God with humanity (*Jub.* 1.24; Rev. 21.3ff.). Being aware of God's presence did not depend on the mediation of the cult. Upon the disciples was laid the obligation to continue that message (Luke 10.16). Whatever distinctive role Jesus may have given Peter (Matt. 16.16ff.),⁵ the disciples as a whole were those who had the privilege of a reward in the age to come (Mark 10.29f.; Matt. 18.18). The Twelve had a significant eschatological role (Matt. 19.28). Those who left all to follow Jesus knew the joy of the kingdom of God (Matt. 13.45; Mark 10.29ff.; Luke 9.57ff.; cf. Rev. 20.2).

(a) Paul's Letters⁶

Sharing Jesus' relationship with God is at the basis of Paul's theology (Gal. 4.6; Rom. 8.15ff.). Those who have faith in Christ have direct access to God through the Spirit without the mediation of Law or cult (Rom. 5.1f.). Divine 'sonship' and kinship with Christ by the Spirit are the prerogatives of every Christian (Rom. 8.14, 29). That is not to diminish the great variety of personalities within the Church, but it does mean that in the Church there can be no longer any divisions and no pre-eminence on the basis of status or class (Gal. 3.28; 1 Cor. 12.13). As in one body there are many limbs and organs, each in their different ways contributing to the well-being of the whole, so in the Church, in which barriers have been broken down, the gifts given by the Spirit enable the community of believers to grow in love.

The vision of the holiness of the whole people of God is captured by Paul also (1 Cor. 6.11). In Christ all share the same level of holiness; all are saints (*hagioi*), for all together are the Temple, where the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Cor. 3.16). The spiritualizing of cultic language gave the priests no special status in the people of God, and, as we have already noted, Paul has little to say about ecclesiastical offices.⁷

Even if Paul says nothing about formal offices, it does not mean that he was unconcerned with ministry. Paul writes about the gifts of the Spirit for the ministry in the Church (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12). It is in connection with his own ministry as an apostle that Paul makes some of the most eloquent comments about ministry in the whole of early Christian literature. There is a profound exposition of the intimate relationship which exists between the life and work of the Christian apostle and the living Christ.⁸ Despite all the vicissitudes of his career, Paul lived with the conviction that he was the minister of a new covenant, which far outweighed in glory the splendour of the covenant given by Moses on Mount Sinai (2 Cor. 3.7f.).⁹ This claim was linked with the firm conviction that the guarantee of the apostolic ministry of the new covenant was the identification with the crucified Christ. In contrast to those apostolic delegates who had appeared in Corinth and had made much of various indications of their justification for apostolic office – letters of recommendation (2 Cor. 3.1), speaking ability (10.10f.) and fulfilment of the commands of Jesus (1 Cor. 9.14f.; cf. 2 Cor. 11.7) – Paul seems to fall far short (though he is anxious to point out that even he can boast of spectacular experiences (2 Cor. 12.2ff., 12)). In a remarkable contrast between his ministry and that of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul concludes that the ministry of the gospel reflects the glory of God in a way which has never been possible before (2 Cor. 3.18; 4.5f.). The destruction of the outward person amidst sufferings and persecutions is the mark of true apostleship (2 Cor. 4.16f.). It is precisely because the apostle is weak that he can truly reflect the weakness of the suffering Jesus in the cross; that is the means

whereby the power of God is manifest (2 Cor. 4.11, 16; cf. 12.8f.). The apostle's task is to be an imitator of Christ (1 Cor. 11.1). The true apostles are those who are always bearing in the body the death of Jesus (2 Cor. 4.10). They offer an example of true discipleship to the churches.

When Paul talks about bearing the marks of Jesus' death and his suffering, he does so in letters to churches which are in a rather difficult relationship with himself, primarily because they have questioned his apostolic authority. Indeed, we find that Paul's greatest emphasis on authority and his position as an apostle are to be found particularly in those contexts where the particular church's attitude to himself is most inimical. The attitude of a community like that at Corinth involved questioning of the apostle's credentials. That had the effect of separating the apostle and his circle from the community and revealing in the starkest possible way the gap between Paul's understanding of ministry and the church's. Paul envisages the apostle's task to be a living example of the life in Christ, which should be the responsibility of all those who have died with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6), but which is not perceived by the recipients of his letters.

There is also an extra dimension to the work of an apostle, for by his suffering he repairs the lack of costly obedience in those communities where the full implications of the cost of discipleship have not been realized (Col. 1.24). In Corinth, for example, the Corinthian community has, according to Paul's sarcastic remark in 1 Corinthians 4.8, 'already come into its kingdom'. Its excessive triumphalism stands in marked contrast to the suffering apostles (1 Cor. 4.10; cf. 2 Cor. 1.5f.; 2.15; Gal. 2.17; 6.14, 17), and Paul offers himself to the church as the type of what life in Christ involves (1 Cor. 4.15; 11.1). The church is in need of the apostolic example as a guide back to the fulfilment of what is, after all, its own calling, to reflect Jesus' obedience to death (Phil. 2.8; cf. 2.5). The apostle's extensive dealings with the church at Corinth show how anxious he is to communicate the ideal of dying with Christ to a church which has not perceived its implications, or for that matter noticed the fulfilment of the ideal in Paul himself.

Paul's emphasis on himself as the type of Christ in the Corinthian correspondence is to be contrasted with what he writes to the Philippians and, to some extent, the Thessalonians.¹⁰ In these two churches the response to Paul and his gospel had been more positive, and Paul's change of attitude is revealing. We still find him referring to his own afflictions as an example of Christian service, but many of the references in this letter are merely in order to give information about himself rather than to compare the church with himself (Phil. 1.13, 20, 24; 2.17; 4.9). Such references should be balanced by those which speak of the Philippians themselves participating in the suffering which elsewhere he had characterized as belonging to the apostle. Now Paul tells them: 'It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine' (Phil. 1.29; cf. 1.7; 2.4f.; 4.14, 18). That is not to say that Paul's example had no more part to play, as 3.17 makes plain, but that the great gulf between the apostle and the church, which had existed in Paul's relations with the Corinthian church, did not exist in Philippi. The Philippians were beginning to reflect the character of the apostolic ministry in their own lives, for what they do is also characterized as an acceptable offering to God (Phil. 4.18; cf. 2.17; 2 Cor. 2.15). It is hardly a coincidence that this particular letter offers us one of the few examples of the *imitatio Christi*¹¹ in the Pauline letters (Phil. 2.5–11; cf. 1 Pet. 2.21f.). The church is now in a position to follow the example of Christ directly without needing the mediated presence of Christ through the apostle.

Similar ideas are found in 1 Thessalonians. Not only does Paul link this church, which is undergoing suffering on behalf of Christ, with himself (1 Thess. 1.6), but also with the churches in Judaea, which are suffering (1 Thess. 2.14). In addition, we note that, as in Philippians, the Thessalonian church has attained a position where it can now actively assist in the apostolic ministry through encouraging Paul by its development in the Christian life (1 Thess. 3.7f.; cf. Phil. 4.14f.), whereas in the Corinthian correspondence it is the apostle who, by his suffering, is bringing life to the church (2 Cor. 1.6) and does not feel himself to be in a position to accept any support from a church whose response to Christ is so superficial. Probably the church at Thessalonica, like the church at Philippi, helped with Paul's financial commitments (2 Cor. 11.9; cf. 1 Thess. 1.7).

In a church where the response to the gospel had been growing consistently, the role of the apostolic ministry gradually decreases in importance. When a community, by its daily dying with Christ, begins to fulfil the responsibilities of baptism, then it reaches a maturity where the apostolic example is no longer so necessary. The need for his presence and interference in the life of a church comes precisely at those times when there is a failure of the church to live up to its calling. It is Paul's aim as an apostle to enable every member of the body of Christ to fulfil his or her baptismal dying with Christ. The task of ministry is to serve the Church, but to serve it by itself first living out the suffering redeeming life of Christ in the world, in order that the Church as a whole may do likewise. There is no suggestion that the ministry can do anything which the Church as a whole cannot do.¹²

As we have already noted, we should not neglect those passages, like 1 Corinthians 16.15 and 1 Thessalonians 5.12ff., which indicate that Paul singled out for special consideration those whose labours of ministry demanded respect and honour in the church. Such a ministry is justified on the basis of its proven worth, though the relatively higher social status of such Christians should not be ignored as a factor in their assumption of authority.¹³ What is more, in stressing the importance of the totality of the

ministry of the body of Christ, we should not ignore the distinctive role the apostle Paul played in the lives of his churches in promoting relationships between them. The focus of unity between those scattered communities around the Eastern Mediterranean was the apostle. He it was who could guarantee a degree of uniformity between those far-flung churches (1 Cor. 11.16; cf. 4.17; 7.17). The apostle remained indispensable as a focus of unity and means of ensuring catholicity.

Paul had a clear vision of the equal responsibility before God of all believers, to reflect the heart of discipleship, symbolically represented at baptism in their dying with Christ. How Paul maintained that aim, particularly when there was a possibility that he would be removed from the scene by death, we can only answer with difficulty; unless, that is, we consider that the Pastoral Epistles reflect at least in general terms the mind of Paul. What we have in the Pauline letters is a phase in the emergence of communities, in which the anarchic and the ordered and disciplined jostle together. The rather didactic, authoritarian tone which emerges in the Pastoral Epistles also is found in the midst of a chapter (1 Corinthians 14) which exhibits the most participative sketch of ecclesial life in the New Testament. Paul's admonition about the silence of women (1 Cor. 14.34; cf. 1 Tim. 2.12) and his desire to ensure uniformity of practice anticipates developments in a less charismatic period of the church's life. The seeds of order already sown grow into a pattern of ministry which, whatever its suitability for the peculiar needs of the period, did quench the prophetic spirit at work within the whole body of Christ.

This development of Paul's understanding of ministry has had significant ramifications for Christian religion.¹⁴ The sign of the true apostle is the identification with the crucified Jesus. In stressing this view within the context of his conflict with the Corinthians, Paul has begun to outline the paradigm of the true Christian, and particularly its holy person. Obedience to the Messiah consists of representing him and his obedience to death on a cross in everyday life. In other words, the apostle or holy person becomes the locus of the divine presence in the world.¹⁵ This marks the beginning of an understanding of holiness which enabled a religious movement to internalize its radical demand when there seemed little possibility of radical, individual change in the order of this world.¹⁶ The duty of following Jesus could thus concentrate on radical internal change through the identification with the model offered by the Messiah; it need not concern itself with a society whose very complexity seemed to yield few signs of the desired transformation promised by God. The creation of internal holiness becomes a goal in itself rather than the endeavour to create that infinite holy space in the world which the inauguration of the kingdom of God involves. Paul probably longed for that to happen, but his own conception of his ministry opened the door for an understanding of spirituality which need not involve itself too much with the holiness of God's world.

(b) The Johannine Literature¹⁷

The function of the first two letters of John is not to deal with church order; yet two things stand out in them. First, there is an emphasis on tradition. This is most apparent in 1 John. The author sets the scene at the very beginning of the epistle by stressing the importance of continuity with the revelation of which he and the Church are witnesses (1 John 1.1; cf. John 1.14). In 2 John 9 there is criticism of those who seek to move on in their doctrine, leaving behind the beliefs previously held. Such claims to subsequent revelation and initiation are firmly repudiated by the author of 1 John (2.27f.). What is all important is that the Church abides in that which it has received from the beginning (1 John 2.24).

Second, the writer of both epistles thinks that he is in a position of authority to address the Church and correct the abuses which have taken place.¹⁸ So much so, that he is quite prepared to categorize those who have left the community as 'antichrists' (1 John 2.18) and emissaries of the devil (3.8ff.). At the beginning of 2 John the writer describes himself as the elder, a position which is mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Tim. 5.17; 1 Pet. 5.1). The author sets himself up as the paragon of orthodoxy, with whom it was necessary for all true believers to agree. In a remarkable statement in 1 John 4.6 he sets this out in a most uncompromising fashion:

We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Here is one of the most unequivocal claims to orthodoxy and authority in the New Testament.¹⁹ No room is found for any divergence from the interpretation of the tradition offered by the elder. Paul in 1 Corinthians 5.2-5 may have thought in the same way, but his approach is more participative.

A community problem seems to lie behind the third letter of John. The doctrinal issues, centring on the reality of Jesus' humanity which had loomed so large in 1 John 4.2; 5.6 and 2 John 7, have now given way to a dispute between the elder and a member of another church, Diotrephes, who refused to accept emissaries from the elder. There is little to suggest that the reason for this rejection by Diotrephes was because of a doctrinal disagreement.²⁰ Two problems might lie behind this dispute between Diotrephes and the elder: either the suspicion which had begun to attend the activities of wandering missionaries (v.5) or the claim to autonomy by Diotrephes and his companion in the face of the elder's extension of his authority over a wider area (the kind of exercise contemplated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.34 and possibly the cause of tension between him and other apostles, according to 2 Corinthians 10.14). Perhaps it was a mixture of all these issues. Diotrephes

did not acknowledge the authority of the elder (3 John 9) and as a result did not welcome the colleagues who had set out from the elder's community. The problem of wandering prophets and teachers was a continuing difficulty for the primitive Church (Didache 12). Some of Paul's problems with the church at Corinth could have been alleviated if there had not been so much evidence of other Christian missionaries with their varying approaches in the Corinthian church.

The impression with which the Johannine letters leave us is of tightly knit communities²¹ for whom false teaching was something which was a new phenomenon, as also was the idea of any division. It has been suggested, with some plausibility, that the Johannine communities were indeed inward-looking groups who managed to maintain a high degree of cohesion, possibly at the expense of any extensive intercourse with the world.²² Their concept of community life is perfectionist, reflecting a tight-knit and fairly homogenous group. The command to love one another is the key to social relationships (1 John 3.11; 4.7ff.; 2 John 5; cf. John 13.34). Nothing is said about any structure which ensures the fulfilment of this command, and the establishment of right teaching (the references to children, fathers and young men are probably not references to offices in the Church in 1 John 2.12ff.). It is in a community where few problems sully the purity of relationships and the harsh realities of the world hardly intrude, that the idealism of the community life can flourish, perhaps with the belief that they lived in complete sinlessness (1 John 3.9; 5.18; cf. 1.8). It is the life of perfection, the life of the kingdom of God on earth (cf. 1 Cor. 4.8), similar in its religious intensity to the holiness of the Qumran community, which ensured thereby its participation with the lot of the holy ones (1 QS 11; cf. Col. 1.12).²³

We have started with the Johannine epistles, though there is a widely held view that the material in the Gospel of John is merely a reflection of the beliefs, problems and social relationships with the community which produced it.²⁴ What we find there substantially supports what we find in the Epistles. The contrast between light and darkness, the believer and the unbeliever, life and death all confirm that what we have is a clear division between the sheep who are in the safety of the fold (chapter 10) and an evil world which is massed against the elect. That is not to say that the world is intrinsically evil, but that humanity preferred darkness to light (John 3.19). The traditions which the author has chosen to include in the Gospel themselves reflect this feeling of alienation from the world and the heavenward orientation of the community. Jesus will come again not to transform the cosmos, but in order that the disciples may go to be with Jesus (John 14.2) and to see his glory (John 17.24). The pattern of descent and ascent,²⁵ which forms such a crucial part of the presentation of Johannine Christology, also stresses that it is the 'vertical', heavenly dimension of existence which is so important rather than the relationship with the world.²⁶ The disciples are in

the world but not of it (John 17.16). The world is the arena of the saving process, which must go on after Jesus' departure, so that all the sheep may enter the sheepfold (John 10.6). Jesus prays only for his disciples, not for the world (John 17.9). It is the community of believers which is the locus of the divine presence (John 14.23). In its life together the community is characterized by the presence of the Spirit-Paraclete (John 14-16) whom the world cannot receive (John 14.17), and the world will know the disciples of Jesus because of the love they have towards each other (John 13.34f.). In this respect the Gospel confirms the simple acceptance of the perfectionism possible for the disciples of Jesus. Like the Epistles, the Gospel manifests its concern for the past and tradition, both in its historical perspective (John 1.14; 19.35) and also in its doctrine of the Paraclete, whose function it is above all to point backwards, to Jesus (16.12ff.); though alongside, and in tension, with this retrospective activity of the Paraclete is a more charismatic and revelatory role (John 16.13-14).

The charismatic flavour, which we noticed in the Pauline letters, is found particularly in the book of Revelation, the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ.²⁷ While making due allowance for the fact that the author is not setting out to deal with church order in the pragmatic way in which Paul does in his letters but to communicate a disclosure of heavenly mysteries, what comes across is a view of community which stresses the obligation to prophesy and to bear witness. There is a stress on the importance of prophecy (e.g., 1.3, 10-11; 19.10). John's own call does not lead to the claim to have been with Jesus or, for that matter, to be a bearer of tradition, which qualifies the visionary John to speak. John's authority to write to the angels of the seven churches is based entirely on his conviction that he has had a vision of the risen Lord, who commissioned him directly to write to the seven churches of Asia Minor (1.10). It is those who share this view of divine ministry who are particularly singled out for attention in the book, 'for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (19.10). There are signs that all God's people are called to be prophets and to share the fate of the prophetic witnesses in bearing their testimony before the world (Rev. 11).²⁸ All are called to be priests, and those who suffer like him will reign with him in glory (Rev. 1.6; 5.10; 20.4).

Nevertheless, unlike the Pauline letters, where the bounds between holy community and wider world are more clearly defined, and it is possible to identify a problem and root it out (1 Cor. 5.4-5), in the book of Revelation the sense of belonging to a haven of safety is completely lacking. Indeed, there is little sense of security, for the simple reason that the supposed holy groups are themselves pervaded with the power of the beast and Babylon. In the midst of the injustice unveiled in the world by the exaltation of the lamb, the vocation of those who follow the lamb is witness and prophecy before a complacent and uncomprehending world (Rev. 11.1-4).

Whether the belief that the consummation of all things was near affected

the approach to church order in the book is not clear. In the light of the central role given to Prophets in the early part of the history of the Church, we may suppose that the eschatological expectation had some influence on the prominence given to prophecy.²⁹ As we have already seen, the return of the Spirit and the return of the prophetic voice were both linked with the eschatological realities which, the members of the primitive Church believed, were being activated in their midst and in the world at large (Acts 2.17ff.). To that extent, it would probably be fair to say that the continued existence of the Church necessitated at least the regulation of prophetic activity, such as we find in Didache 12 and, in some circumstances, the denial of its validity in favour of a safer form of ministry (e.g., Pastors). The fact that a century later the Montanists in Phrygia³⁰ claimed that they were the true heirs to the early Christian experience, in emphasizing the importance of prophecy and the activity of the Spirit-Paraclete, is an indication that this form of activity was deeply ingrained within the Christian experience. This was particularly the case in an area like Asia Minor, from which the book of Revelation, and according to tradition, the Gospel of John, emerged.³¹

(c) The Church in Jerusalem³²

The picture we have of the Jerusalem church from Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles is one which converges in certain important respects. The spontaneity which characterized some of the Pauline churches is not apparent there after the initial burst of enthusiasm (Acts 2).³³ The Jerusalem church was characterized by a formality which stressed the importance of tradition and catholicity. According to Acts 8 and 11, the extension of the mission had to be ratified by the Jerusalem church. This is all the more significant in the case of Acts 10-11, where Peter had to justify not only his action, based on his vision, but also the validity of the conversion of the Gentiles, characterized as that was by an outburst of religious enthusiasm.

Despite the great embarrassment that it caused him, Paul was compelled to admit, however reluctantly, that he went to Jerusalem to receive some kind of legitimization of his role as an apostle to the Gentiles from those who were apostles before him (Gal. 1.18; 2.2). The authority which the Jerusalem church attempted to wield was probably a source of friction. This can be seen in the incident at Antioch which Paul recounts in Galatians 2.10f. In this, James attempts to assert his influence in the church in Syria by sending envoys to persuade Jews not to eat with Gentiles.³⁴ In the incident, which Paul relates, Peter bows before the will of James, the person who became the dominant figure in the Jerusalem church.

The account of the Apostolic Council in Acts 15 shows James as the prime figure,³⁵ conducting a session, which contrasts with the more democratic character of the meeting described in 1 Corinthians 14. The brief account of

the decision-making process shows that James' voice and judgement were of central importance (Acts 15.13ff.). The writer of Acts tells us nothing about James' rise to power.³⁶ He comes on the scene out of the blue in Acts 12.17 and is accepted as one of the 'pillar' apostles by Paul, according to Galatians 1–2. From the early tradition in 1 Corinthians 15, we can glean that he too was the recipient of a resurrection appearance (15.7)³⁷ which, it is suggested, may have proved a turning point in his relationship with Jesus, which had hitherto been hostile (cf. John 7.5). His position in the Jerusalem church was of such prominence that it attracted the attention of the Jewish historian Josephus (*Ant.* 20.200). This passage is testimony enough to James' reputation for holiness and, we may suspect, strict observance of the law (cf. Acts 21.20). Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that he too attracted hostility and was put to death by the priestly group. Hostility from certain quarters towards the church in Jerusalem is confirmed by Paul himself, when he mentions the persecution which that church had undergone (1 Thess. 2.14; cf. Acts 3–12).

The pre-eminence of James in the Jerusalem church is hardly surprising. We know that in contemporary Jewish sects it was quite common for the leadership of the sect to be kept within the same family. This is true of the Zealots (*War* 2.433) and also of the Hillelite wing of Pharisaism (e.g., Rabban Gamaliel II).³⁸ According to Eusebius (*EH* 3.11.1), the 'see' of Jerusalem was kept within Jesus' family after the death of James, an indication that a dynastic principle was the factor which brought James to prominence. Thus the leading role which James plays in the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 probably rests on his blood-relationship with Jesus of Nazareth.

What we can reconstruct of the church in Jerusalem suggests that its leaders were more doctrinal authorities and interpreters of the tradition.³⁹ Their approach to tradition and authority, if Acts is to be believed, depended much on varying types of relationship with Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 1.21ff.). Such an outlook would naturally have led to suspicion of those who, like Paul, claimed a similar kind of authority on the basis of experience only. The tension between charisma and tradition thus had its origins not in the emerging structures which succeeded the initial enthusiastic communities but in the varied patterns of response, which were to be found in the Jerusalem church and its relationship with other Christian missionaries.

(d) Post-Pauline Developments

(i) Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles⁴⁰

In Ephesians we have a vision of the Church universal existing for a long time to come (cf. 1 Cor. 7.26), with a variety of ministries bestowed upon it by the ascended Christ (Eph. 4.11) as his departing indispensable gift to the

Church. The ministries mentioned here are much more akin to those outlined in Romans and 1 Corinthians 12. There is emphasis on the maintenance of unity and purity of doctrine (4.14), as well as the Church's understanding of the faith. The vision of the Church is still the vision of the body with varying ministries. To this extent Ephesians contrasts with the Pastoral Epistles, where the variety of gifts within the Body of Christ (an image which does not make its appearance in these letters) is not to be found.

The Pastoral Epistles reflect the needs of churches after Paul had been (or was about to be) removed from the scene. They do not communicate the vitality of Paul's varying degrees of involvement with his churches, which we find in the indisputably authentic letters. We find churches which were threatened by deviant teaching (1 Tim. 4.1; 2 Tim. 2.17), and there is a strong emphasis on guarding the faith handed down from perversion (2 Tim. 3.14). Throughout these letters we find that the task of Timothy and Titus is to maintain orthodox doctrine in the face of heretical incursions and to appoint suitable persons to guarantee the survival of the faith in its pristine form. The guarantors of orthodox teaching are designated by ordination (1 Tim. 4.14; 2 Tim. 1.6), a rite familiar to us from Judaism as the mark of a fully trained rabbi.⁴¹ In emerging rabbinic Judaism, after 70 CE, the rite of ordination (*semikab*) became a means of authorizing those equipped to pass on the tradition handed down from generations past to the future generations. Knowledge of what had been said in the past and the ability to use it in such a way that there would be essential continuity of the faith taught from one generation to another is the main concern of the Pastoral Epistles. The ecclesial officer's task is to represent a sober, upright and inoffensive face to the world (1 Tim. 3.1ff.) and to guard the tradition (1 Tim. 4.16). It is this rather than any function in the worship of the Church which is stressed by the Pastorals.

(ii) Ignatius⁴²

In his letters to the churches en route to martyrdom Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch expounds a view of the ministry which is without parallel in the earliest Christian literature. As with the author of the Pastoral Epistles, Ignatius is dealing with situations where there have been considerable incursions by deviant teaching (*Ephesians* 7; *Magnesians* 8; *Trallians* 6 and 10). He lays great emphasis on the bishop as the focal point of unity and the remedy against schism and heresy (*Ephesians* 5; *Magnesians* 7; *Trallians* 2 and 7). It is the bishop alone who celebrates valid Eucharist (*Philadelphians* 3f.; *Smyrnaeans* 8), and the sign of belonging to the Church is belonging to the bishop (*Philadelphians* 3). Indeed, the bishop is regarded as the Lord (*Ephesians* 6). In the situations confronting Ignatius, it is not too difficult to understand why he should have wanted to stress the cultic as well as the doctrinal position of the bishop as a remedy against schism and heterodoxy. The confluence of

cultic and doctrinal function makes its first explicit appearance in early Christian literature. The role of authorized teacher that we find in the Pastoral Epistles is linked in Ignatius's letters with the cultic in a way which was to be of significance for the development of ministry within the Church in succeeding centuries.

In the early second century CE the fissures which had begun to appear in relationships between Christians and certain Jewish groups gradually widened. One feature of early Christian apologetic was to use biblical cultic imagery of the saving work of Christ (e.g., in Hebrews) and of life in the Christian Church (e.g., Epistle of Barnabas).⁴³ One of the most significant developments was the transference of priestly language to the Christian ministry. There is the occasional hint of it in the New Testament (e.g., Rom. 15.16), but largely such language is reserved either for Christ (as in the letter to the Hebrews) or the Church as a whole (e.g., 1 Pet. 2.9; Rev. 1.6). There are signs of the transference beginning to take place in 1 Clement 40f. and Didache 13.3 (though Justin can still call the Church as a whole a priestly race in his *Dialogue with Trypho* 116.3).⁴⁴ It is in the earliest extant liturgy known as the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus that we find language which indicates that biblical priestly concepts had been transferred to the office of bishop. We read the following in the prayer for the consecration of a bishop:

Father, who knowest the hearts of all, grant upon this thy servant whom thou hast chosen for the episcopate to feed thy holy flock and serve as thine high priest, that he may minister blamelessly by night and day, that he may ceaselessly behold and propitiate thy countenance and offer to thee the gifts of thy holy church.⁴⁵

Such use of priestly language in connection with the Christian ministry is of profound significance. In it there is the implicit abandonment of the trend, in first-century Judaism and taken up in the Pauline churches, where the priesthood of the whole of God's people was stressed. By adopting such cultic patterns as we find in texts like the *Apostolic Tradition*, the Christian Church began to create the kind of divisions between priest and lay within the people of God, which were being undermined in some trends in Second Temple Judaism. With the acceptance of the sacerdotal aspect of Christian ministry the priestly obligation of the whole of the people of God is edged out. Spirit-inspired ministry is confined to those who are qualified for it by their gender (i.e., men and not women).⁴⁶ Ministry in the Church came to be identified with an élite, who exercised a priestly ministry, vicariously, for the whole people of God.

(e) Tradition and Charismatic Authority

Tradition

Texts are few and far between which discuss the relative importance of oral and written tradition. From Papias (early second-century Asia Minor in *EH* 3.39.3–4) we have an indication of a clear preference at a time when written sources were beginning to be widely used (Papias probably knew at least the Gospels of Matthew and Mark):

I rejoiced in those who taught the truth . . . and in those who recall the commandments given by the Lord . . . if any one came who followed the elders . . . I enquired of the words of the presbyters . . . I did not suppose that information from books would help so much as the word of a living and surviving voice.

The view of Papias is backed up by important evidence for our discussion from the history of the transmission of the New Testament. One way of interpreting the evidence from early Christian sources (e.g., Justin) is to suggest that sayings of Jesus continued to circulate orally in different forms from what appears in the earliest manuscripts and indicates signs of conflation between versions of the same saying, a phenomenon which we know continued into the written harmonies of the gospels at the end of the second century.

In 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus there is a repeated emphasis on the need to pass on tradition in the face of threats from opponents, usually inside rather than outside the church (1 Tim. 4.14–16) and evidence concerning the testing of the tradition and its bearers. Yet the authentic letters of Paul also include attempts at uniformity and the importance of attending to the passing on of tradition (including tradition from and about Jesus). For example, Paul reminds his readers about traditions concerned with the Last Supper (1 Cor. 11.23), and later in 1 Corinthians 14.33 he stresses the need for a degree of homogeneity of practice among geographically separate communities, with himself as a kind of guarantor of connection between them. Other, more general traditions were also passed on, including a summary of the main items of the religion (e.g., 1 Cor. 15.3). Even allowing for Paul's additions to this text in order to make him part of the chain of tradition of witnesses concerning Jesus' resurrection, there is in the opening summary an ancient tradition which may go back to the earliest days of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

The sign of authentic tradition is the laying on of hands (2 Tim. 1.6). Alongside this, the authenticity of the tradition is proved by style of life of the bearer of the tradition (1 Tim. 3; Didache 11.7; Tertullian *De Praescript. Haer.* 20). This theme is implicit on virtually every page of Paul's writings, in

which the marks of a true and false apostle of Christ are explored by Paul as part of an ongoing apologia for his person. Paul stresses the need of imitation of Christ. Ignatius of Antioch at the beginning of the second century CE stresses communion with the local bishop as the focal point of unity, the key to connection to authentic tradition and a remedy against schism and heresy (*Ephesians* 5; *Magnesians* 7; *Trallians* 2 and 7).

In the face of conflicting interpretations of the written Scriptures, there emerged the rule of faith, possibly linked with the kind of summary in 1 Corinthians 15.3. For Irenaeus in the second half of the second century CE (*AH* 3.3.1), who was a major champion of the emerging orthodoxy, the public character of the tradition and the verifiability of the chain of tradition were important checks against innovatory, but heterodox, teaching. The authentic tradition is a public rather than an esoteric tradition (which contrasted with the importance of an esoteric tradition in some other Christian groups, from which Irenaeus was wanting to distinguish emerging orthodoxy; it is not impossible that an esoteric tradition played a more important role than some of the orthodox allowed, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* I (1) 11.1–3; *Stromateis* VII (17) 106–8, on ‘ecclesiastical’ catholic and heterodox gnostic claims to rival traditions).

From the earliest days of Christianity there was a dispute about what constituted Scripture. Suffice it to say that the emergence of the New Testament canon as we know it took centuries, even though the main components were probably settled fairly early. The extent of the other Scriptures (what are now known as the Old Testament) was a matter for debate and remains a difference between the various churches. How widespread the radical solution of the mid-second-century teacher Marcion was, namely, that the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament should be abandoned on theological grounds, is difficult to assess. Passages in some of Paul’s letters and the Epistle of Barnabas suggest at the very least that the Jewish Scriptures form part of an earlier dispensation in God’s purposes. What emerges in the use of the biblical texts is that they needed to be accompanied by an approach to them which focused on the spirit rather than the letter (to quote Paul in 2 Corinthians 3.6), and to stress their role as preparation for the ultimate revelation in Christ, utilizing the pattern of promise and fulfilment, or the more radical expedient of a ‘take over’ of the Scriptures suggesting that they applied to Christianity all along (1 Cor. 10.11; Luke 24.27).

Notwithstanding Papias’ preference for the oral over the written, Christians took the steps of forming their own new Scriptures, particularly the words of Jesus. What led the words of Jesus to be committed to writing after they had circulated for decades in oral form is not easy to discover. Papias tells us that the Gospel of Mark was an attempt to put on paper the reminiscences of Peter (though not all modern commentators have trusted Papias’ testimony). Justin writes of the ‘memoirs of the apostles’ (*Apology* 1.65),

though it is not clear whether these are written texts or oral tradition, or a mixture of both. Revelation 22.18 offers an indication of the significance attached to the words of Jesus, though here it is the risen Jesus speaking through his Prophet:

I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if any one adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book, and if any one takes away from the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and the holy city, which are described in this book.

These words echo Deuteronomy 4.2 and suggest that the words of Jesus recorded in the Apocalypse have the same force as the words of Torah. So, if the words of the Risen Jesus were regarded in this way, it is likely that those of the earthly Jesus were regarded similarly and written down with the authority of Scripture. Papias seems to suggest that he regards Jesus' words like 'oracles' (*logia*), the profundity of whose meaning needs to be plumbed by later interpreters (*EH* 3.3.14–16: 'Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language and every one interpreted (*hermeneusen*) them as best they could'). Paul reminds the Corinthians of words of the Lord in 1 Corinthians 7.10. Paul unusually here makes a distinction between the authority of his own words and those of the Lord. He is prepared to appeal to these words, though, equally, he does not feel bound by their authority according to 1 Corinthians 9.14–15. In this passage a word of Jesus is recalled but is not considered binding in every circumstance.

In the early days of Christianity prophecy played a vital role. Here was the living voice of Christ to complement recollections of what he may have said which had been handed down. The beginning of the Apocalypse (Rev. 1.1) indicates that this is a written text whose ultimate source is God speaking through the living Christ. Despite Paul's occasional reference to words of the Lord, he is the one who, as an agent or apostle, speaks for God here and now. Prophecy was widespread in early Christianity and has been a persistent feature in the history of the Church. Its role became problematic in the later part of the second century as the result of Montanism in Phrygia, which was treated with increasing suspicion by other Christians, although it attracted high-profile support from a distinguished writer like Tertullian (e.g. *EH* 5.16.7; Hippolytus, *Ref.* 8.19).

In his debates with opponents, Paul lays more and more stress on the presence of the living and dying Christ in his own person (e.g., 2 Cor. 4.10; Gal. 2.20: 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'). Similarly, Ignatius of Antioch, who calls himself 'God-bearer', stresses the importance of the quiet dignity of the leader reflecting and embodying Christ (*Magnesians* 1; *Trallians* 4–5). The emerging

martyr narratives reflect this ethos too, offering an example of the way in which the tradition is transmitted by being embodied in imitation of the martyr Christ. In 1 Timothy 6.16 Christ's witness before Pontius Pilate is the basis for the imitation by Timothy. The martyr acts is a genre which was to have a long history in Christianity, and has as one of its earliest exemplars the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*. This records an event which took place at the beginning of the third century. In this remarkable text, brimful of visions and their importance, great authority is given to the utterance of those on the brink of martyrdom. Here are ordinary Christians remembered in narrative and probably also, from an early date, liturgically.

Paul's use of the death and resurrection theme meant that carrying around in oneself Jesus' death was not confined to the extreme act of martyrdom but applied also to the daily renunciation and the differentiation that went on from the wider society. So, although evidence suggests that persecution was only sporadic in our period, the peculiar privilege granted to the martyrs to imitate Christ gave them a prominent status in the annals of the communities. They offered only an extreme example of the contrasting style of life which was expected of all those who by baptism had renounced the old, demonic pattern of existence. In addition to the inspiration offered by the words of Jesus through prophetic inspiration, there was a belief that Jesus inspired Prophets to speak new words to communities. The difficulties raised by the Montanist movement in the second half of the second century CE increased suspicion of this particular form of the adaptation and transmission of the Jesus tradition.

The emerging rituals of Christianity exemplify the way in which the elements of the religion were transmitted. From the very start the Eucharist probably involved telling the story of Jesus' betrayal and death and may explain the existence of a continuous story of the last days of his life, which contrasts with the lack of a close-knit, chronological account elsewhere in the canonical gospels. The regular repetition of the rite of Eucharist goes back at least to the mid-50s and probably much earlier. The earliest baptismal liturgies, with their stark contrasts between the old life and the new, echo imagery from the New Testament (especially Romans 6 and 1 Peter 1-2). The evidence of conversion stories parallels the stark contrasts between the old life and the new, and the ethical dimension which pervades the rite of baptism and the preparation for it in emerging Christian catechesis. The baptismal rite may also have provided a setting for the recounting of traditions about Jesus, particularly the account of his baptism by John and possibly the exorcism stories, as well as the account of the deliverance of God's people through the Red Sea.

Charisma

Within Jewish sources there was suspicion of claims to authority via dream, vision or heavenly voice, as we have seen reflected in the famous story concerning Eliezer ben Hyrcanus reported in *bBaba Metzia* 59a.⁴⁷ This was also an issue of some importance for early Christianity, as indicated by the evidence of the New Testament itself.

In the Acts of the Apostles there are several examples of visions and related experiences proving to be the basis for critically important action.⁴⁸ Among these incidents is the report of Peter's vision of the sail containing clean and unclean animals in Acts 10. This, together with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Gentiles (10.44f.), manifested in the form of glossolalia, formed the basis for Peter's judgement that the gospel could go to the Gentiles and that they could become inheritors of the promises of God on the basis of faith in Christ. But it is the most notable of all the visions recounted in Acts, which epitomizes the problem that such claims posed not only for Judaism but also Christianity; namely, the conversion-vision of Paul on the road to Damascus. This has a central place in the account in Acts, no fewer than three versions being included in the work.⁴⁹ Whatever we make of the historicity of these stories, for the author of Acts the event marks a decisive turning-point in the history of the early Christian mission. The point is that, as with the case of the conversion of Cornelius, this event was one which was initiated by an experience of a dramatic kind.

In the Pauline letters, particularly Galatians, Paul claimed that his right to preach the good news concerning Jesus of Nazareth and the particular version of that good news came as the direct result of his commission by Jesus (Gal. 1.16).⁵⁰ The letter to the Galatians is testimony of Paul's concern to demonstrate the lack of human contact in this appointment. Even if one believes, as the evidence of Galatians 1.1 would seem to suggest, that Paul's opponents claimed a right to control Paul, because of the superior claim to authority of the other apostles,⁵¹ Paul himself believes that the significance of all human contact was entirely secondary to the primacy of the revelation and the call to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Whereas the journeys to Jerusalem could have been regarded by Paul's opponents as evidence of his dependence on the church in Jerusalem and the need for ratification of the gospel,⁵² Paul is clear in his own mind that such excursions formed only a minor part in his preparation. Indeed, if Galatians 2.1ff. is to be believed, they served only to confirm a course of action entered upon some considerable time before the decisive visit. It may, of course, be true that Paul's strong rejection of any human part in his call to the apostolic ministry is the result of an excessive embarrassment on the apostle's part concerning certain events in his life, such as the circumcision of Timothy mentioned in Acts 16.3.⁵³

There is a twofold problem of early Christianity. On the one hand it made

claims about Jesus which were based, in Paul's case and, we may suppose, in the case of others too,⁵⁴ on inner conviction. While many Christians would have accepted many, if not all, of Paul's claims about Jesus, it is difficult to see how some of the leading Christians, perhaps including the church in Jerusalem, could have accepted the claims being made by Paul to share *equal* authority with them to expound the Christian message and make provision for its dissemination. Indeed, the more vehemently Paul claims the right to have authority to act as the representative of Christ independently of those who were Christians before him, the more acute the problem which confronts the early Christian movement. It may be true that Paul wanted to assert an essential link between himself and those who had been apostles before him (1 Cor. 15.8),⁵⁵ thus separating himself from any similar claims to authority based on the sight of the vision of the Risen Lord. The problem with this, however, is that Paul's position is itself vulnerable, as it cannot easily be shown why the distinctive appearance of Jesus should have stopped with Paul.

That we are dealing here with a real problem in the life of the Church and not just a hypothetical case is shown by the parallel visionary phenomena, which turn up elsewhere, not to mention the charismatic activity evident in Corinthian Christianity.⁵⁶

One example from within the New Testament itself is the book of Revelation. All the evidence would lead us to suppose that the book is only apostolic in that, like those who had been commissioned before him, John of Patmos considers that he too has been commissioned as an envoy to communicate God's purposes to the seven churches in Asia Minor (1.9ff.).⁵⁷ It is the vision of the Risen Christ in Revelation 1.13ff. which is the basis of all the authority that is subsequently claimed for the book (22.18). We are not in a position to know what the immediate reaction to the vision was nor what view of it was taken by church leaders at the end of the first century. Information about deviant teaching in the area after the Pauline period is scanty and has to be gleaned from the few hints which we find in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch to the various churches in the area in the opening decade of the second century.⁵⁸

Attitudes to the book of Revelation during the second century were positive, because it was a classic witness to God's reign on earth and a counter to Gnostic spiritualism. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the third century or thereabouts it was rather different.⁵⁹ We know from one or two later writers that doubts were expressed about the book, mainly because it became one of the major inspirations of the Montanist movement in the last quarter of the second century. This movement, which swept through the churches of Asia Minor and North Africa,⁶⁰ claimed to have recovered the pristine character of the primitive Church. In the face of a growing institutionalism the Montanists claimed to be inspired by the Spirit (the work of

the Paraclete) which plays such an important part in the New Testament writings. While, as far as we can gather, there is little about the Montanist theology which is suspect, their emphasis on the charismatic ministry, the role of women and the implicit challenge to emerging structures implicit in their claims to authority would have been a threat to a Church which was still emerging from the long and painful struggle with gnosticism and its claims to esoteric revelation.

Even if the doctrinal threat from Montanism was not great, the same cannot be said for the teaching of Elchesai, and possibly also Cerinthus.⁶¹ If Eusebius is to be believed, the call of Cerinthus to be a teacher of the Christian religion came, like that of John of Patmos and Paul, by means of a divine intermediary. Similarly also, Elchesai's teaching came as the result of the appearance of the Son of God, who communicated to him various doctrines. Also, we find that in the gnostic literature the literary genre of the apocalypse has a place of some prominence.⁶² Here the esoteric teaching is communicated direct to the apostle by some intermediary figure and, as a result, the cloak of authority is given to the teaching by its revelatory form. The evidence from the Nag Hammadi texts suggests that there was a significant contribution to gnostic religion from the apocalyptic tradition of Judaism,⁶³ not only with regard to the literary form of many of the gnostic texts but also in terms of ideas.

What this material indicates is that the authority claimed for visionary experience of God and God's world was something which had a continuing history within early Christianity. In the case of the Montanists, there was considerable suspicion within early Christianity with regard to the claims to experience made by the Montanist prophets (e.g., *EH* 5.17.2f.). Those who suppose that there is a fundamental distinction between the ecstasy of the Montanists and similar features recorded in the early Christian texts, fail to do justice to the centrality of these phenomena within earliest Christianity.⁶⁴ The problem posed by the Montanists in the second century was exactly like that posed by parts of the early Christian movement in the middle of the first. In the former case we have an increasingly institutionalized religious group being challenged by a group which claimed an authority for its speech and actions which was to a great degree independent of the institution.

The evidence from the New Testament itself suggests that threats from individuals or groups who claimed to teach on the basis of such authority was widespread within the Early Church. In 1 Corinthians we find Paul dealing with a church whose members stressed freedom and charismatic inspiration and had to be guided by the apostle into less enthusiastic channels. In the later Pauline tradition, particularly the Pastoral Epistles, we find the first hints of a rebuke to those who would claim to have inspiration from God. In 1 Timothy (e.g., 4.1) the writer warns his readers against 'giving heed to deceitful spirits and the doctrines of demons' (cf. 2 Pet. 2.1.; Jude 4ff.).⁶⁵

Instead there is a stress throughout these letters on sound teaching and the tradition handed down by authorized teachers. A church under threat is reflected in these documents, a threat countered by the appeal to tradition.⁶⁶ That there is a resort to such a means of conveying authority in the Pastoral Epistles is by no means surprising given the unpredictability of relying on charismatic authority for the pursuit of religion.⁶⁷ The consequences of allowing such a free rein are hinted at in the first letter of John (2.27; cf. 4.2).⁶⁸

Similar problems also emerge in the *Didache*.⁶⁹ Here we find a stress on the importance of the prophetic office in the life of the Church but also a matching concern with the problems that office presented for individual Christian communities. Congregations are now troubled by prophets who travel around taking advantage of the congregations (*Didache* 16.3). The test of the true prophet is some kind of accord between the lifestyle of the prophet and the claim to be from God (*Didache* 11.3ff.). Congregations are in danger of allowing themselves to be taken over by people of spiritual power whose teaching can be allowed to pass with virtually no criticism.⁷⁰

At the centre of the New Testament there stand the letters of one whose position for developing Christianity was an ambivalent one. On the one hand we find in the Corinthian correspondence, and probably more so in the initial preaching, a concern for freedom in the Spirit and little or no hierarchical structure established in the churches of the new converts. It may be true that certain items of traditional teaching were passed on (e.g., 1 Cor. 11.23; 15.3ff.), but there is little evidence of any regularized oversight, except that ordained by the Spirit within the mutual ministry of the Body of Christ. What is more, the transference of the allegiance of Saul from pharisaic Judaism to the early Christian group was of such a kind that it questioned patterns of authority, which sought to base themselves on tradition and continuity rather than the occasional inspiration of the prophet or visionary. Indeed, there is an ambivalence in the Pauline correspondence on precisely this issue. Freedom, newness and the like are all catchwords which come naturally to a commentator on Paul's letters. Alongside the break with the past (the accent on the new age and particularly the rejection of a particular approach to the Law) there exists a concern for order, tradition and sobriety which, while not totally inconsistent with the stress on innovation, is in tension with it. It will not surprise us to find the accounts of Paul's conversion being used at a later time by Mani in his attempt to speak of his own prophetic office,⁷¹ nor the Pauline corpus being the centrepiece of Marcion's radical attempt to separate Christianity from its Jewish matrix.⁷² The letters of Paul and, we may suspect, through them the character of the apostle himself, bequeathed to later interpreters an ambiguous and often apparently contradictory attitude towards authority and the role which charisma played in the establishment of the ecclesiastical order.⁷³

Coming to Terms with the Old Age

(a) The Common Life¹

According to the Acts of the Apostles, one of the features of the primitive Christian community in Jerusalem was its practice of the community of goods. Doubts have been cast upon the veracity of this account of early Christian practice, because it is regarded as an example of Luke's idealizing the life of the Early Church.² Such scepticism is not entirely justified, however. According to the Synoptic tradition, it would appear that attitudes to property, either among those who preserved (or created) certain groups of sayings (e.g., Matt. 6.25ff.) or in the immediate circle of Jesus, involved, at the very least, a rejection of most conventional patterns of living.³ There was probably a common purse (John 12.6; 13.29), and Jesus had nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9.58). The likelihood is, therefore, in the light of the practice of Jesus' circle as recorded in the gospel tradition, that there continued to be a style of life which differed markedly from what became typical in the Pauline churches.

Uncertainty attaches to the precise nature of this practice: was it a voluntary activity, which was not a prerequisite of discipleship; or did the primitive Christian movement demand renunciation of property as a condition of membership of the people of the Way?⁴ The emphasis in Acts 2.44 and 4.32 on having all things in common looks like a deliberate pattern of behaviour, which was regarded as normative for the Christian group. But if this was the case, the story of Ananias and Sapphira fits awkwardly into this pattern. According to the statement of Peter, there was no question of Ananias and Sapphira being compelled to sell their property and lay it at the apostle's feet. At first sight, if this story is anything to go by, we do not have compulsory community of goods as condition of membership.⁵ What we have in Acts 5.4 is a pattern of behaviour which was voluntary, but while being such, it was so typical that it provided a pattern which was usually adopted. Community of goods was not a condition of entry into the community, but the normal practice of those who became Christians. According to Luke, this practice had the effect of leaving no one in need. But the pattern outlined in the Gospels meant that the risks were great (cf. Matt. 10.40–2). Indeed, all the evidence from the Pauline letters and elsewhere in Acts suggests that this practice did lead to problems for the primitive communities (Acts 11.27ff.; cf. Gal. 2.10). It might have been such problems which prompted Paul to promote the collection (1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 8–9; cf. 1 Thess. 2.14f.; Rom.

15.26f.). The problem with the practice of the primitive community in Jerusalem was that it was not productive; it depended on a regular influx of capital for its survival; (cf. Luke 8.3). As far as we can ascertain, its practice did not include the common ownership of the means of production, even within the narrow confines of the Christian community. This left it open to the vicissitudes of the extent of the membership and the viability of the economy of society at large. The viability of Essene practice may well have been its concern to do something about common ownership of the means of production, so that it functioned as a kind of co-operative venture in which the benefits of economic activity, at least within the religious group, were shared by all.⁶

As far as we can ascertain, community of goods was not typical of the Pauline churches. Indeed, the kind of injunction which we find in 2 Thessalonians 3.6ff. ('If anyone will not work, let him not eat') suggests that the pattern of behaviour outlined in passages like Matthew 6.28ff. would not have been readily accepted by Paul. The common life is now located in the occasional meetings of the Christian fellowship.⁷ The household regulations (e.g., Col. 3-4; Eph. 5-6)⁸ hardly represent a radical departure from patterns which would have normally applied.⁹ What we find in the Pauline letters is a different social atmosphere from what is reflected in the Synoptic Gospels. Paul and Barnabas espoused a slightly different type of ministerial activity from that which had operated in Palestine. They were itinerants, but Paul makes much of the fact that he laboured with his own hands (1 Cor. 9.6).¹⁰ Unlike the wandering charismatics inspired by Jesus, who had nothing to call their own, Paul and Barnabas worked for their living, not relying on the magnanimity of their local communities (1 Cor. 9.14f.). It was this attitude which probably caused some of the problems in Corinth, when the Corinthian Christians became aware of another pattern of apostolic activity different from Paul's, in which reliance on the community was paramount (cf. Didache 2).

There were also problems in Corinth related to the social backgrounds of the various members of the church there (e.g., 1 Cor. 11.17ff.), but it is most noticeable that in this church there is little sign of the practice which was so characteristic of Palestinian churches. Enthusiasm of various kinds is not absent from the descriptions of the Corinthian church. Nevertheless, the assumption throughout the letter is that the Christians come together for worship with some owning homes of their own (1 Cor. 11.34). The exhortation by Paul to share adequately at the Lord's Supper indicates that they are part of a world where any extensive sharing of resources was not common (11.21ff.).¹¹ The form of Christianity which Paul allows to emerge in Corinth and (from what we can gather from the other letters) in other cities as well, tended to stress the *individual's* obligation to live in obedience to God. There was not always dramatic transformation in attitudes about the

circumstances in which the Christian discipleship is lived (1 Cor. 7.17ff.), nor was there to be any offence given to outsiders (1 Cor. 14.23; 1 Tim. 3.7; 1 Pet. 3.2; 2.12).

Community of goods continued to be important within the Early Church. We have already noted that the *Didache* gives evidence of the form of religious practice, which differed from Paul's and is more akin to the outline of missionary conduct set out in the gospel tradition (e.g., Luke 10). Throughout early Christian literature this practice seems to have carried on. It was not just Tertullian who spoke of the practice as common in his day at the beginning of the third century (*Apol.* 39.11).¹² Apparent quietism needs to be set alongside passages from early Christian literature (such as the conversion narratives already quoted) which bring out the counter-cultural character of Christian discipleship. While we may suppose that by and large the Christian communities tended to follow the lead of Paul, there was a significant strand within early Christian practice which reaffirmed the importance of an alternative ideal.

The practice of community of goods, though by no means novel in the ancient world,¹³ does exhibit a kind of idealism which is entirely comprehensible in a movement with such an intense eschatological dimension. The interesting thing about early Christian literature is that in the Pauline correspondence there is little sign of this kind of ethical radicalism. The changes seem to be marginal; the fabric of society remains as before. That is not to suppose that Paul did not think that things would change; it is evident that he did (1 Cor. 7.31). Nevertheless, continued existence within the present order, without unnecessary provocation of the powers that be, was the appropriate response. Demonstrative and radically alternative patterns of behaviour and outlook were not repudiated, but attempts were made to modify the offence caused by their counter-cultural character.

Even if community of goods finds few echoes in the Pauline letters, the importance of mutual support in almsgiving is not neglected. Almsgiving became a central feature of Christian charitable activity.¹⁴ Even this activity is not regarded as an essential part of discipleship. Thus, for example, in discussing the collection for the saints in Jerusalem in 2 Corinthians 9.6ff. Paul has to plead with the Corinthians. The non-fulfilment of his request did not in Paul's eyes (as far as we can tell) affect the ultimate salvation of the Corinthians. The social and economic cost of discipleship was considerable for Paul; whether it was true of all his converts is by no means so evident. Indeed, it is possible that texts like the Gospel of Luke represent the attempt by a second-generation Christian writer to remind comfortable Christians of the centrality of an obligation to the poor and outcast.

Many Christian writers never lose sight of the idealism of the earliest days as set out in the Acts of the Apostles. We find several protests against the pattern of response initiated by Paul. The 'leaven in the lump' philosophy,

which presupposes that by being involved in society one will change it from the inside, has its effects on the character of discipleship; compromises with the old order are inevitable. From the Montanists to the monastic movement,¹⁵ we find the response which cries 'Halt' to the swallowing-up of Christian radicalism by the old aeon. Of these two responses, it is the monastic movement which has most left its mark on the Church. From its very beginning in the deserts of Egypt and the solitary protests of Christian ascetics against contemporary society, via Pachomius to the rule of Benedict in the sixth century and the revival movements in the medieval period, we find that same Christian idealism which flourished in the first decades of the Christian movement in Palestine. This was especially true of the early years of the radical Franciscan movement in the thirteenth century, which was so much inspired by the apocalyptic radicalism of Joachim of Fiore, which is itself a clear echo of the apocalypticism and messianism of earliest Christianity.¹⁶

(b) The Problem of Ethics in the New Age¹⁷

One of the most fascinating things about Paul's letters is the way in which they have been claimed by radicals and traditionalists alike as the basis of their views of religion and society. Already in the second century we find that Paul is looked to as an authority by extreme gnostic antinomians to support their radical views of the Christian tradition.¹⁸ We find that at the Reformation some of the regulations concerning social ethics and the State have been appealed to by those who would seek to maintain the existing order, though there were those from the Radical Reformation tradition who found in a passage like 1 Corinthians 14 an inspiration for a more egalitarian ecclesiology.¹⁹ This varied use of Paul illustrates one of the contradictions which is most evident in the Pauline corpus. On the one hand, we discover that some of the radical hopes of Jewish eschatology have been taken up by Paul; Christians are in Christ a new creation (Gal. 6.15; cf. 2 Cor. 5.17). On the other hand, the regulations for the Christian household, which are to be found at the end of Colossians and Ephesians and which themselves take up themes already hinted at in 1 Corinthians 7, are hardly immediately disturbing of the existing social order. Slaves are to be obedient to their masters (Col. 3.22f.), or are to remain in whatever state they were called by God (1 Cor. 7.20f.). In the account of the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 nothing is written about the effect of that event on his membership of Caesar's army, an issue which was to loom large in the experience of later converts.²⁰ The ambivalence in the Pauline ethics is one of the most important features of early Christian tradition and helps us to understand some of the varied features of the Christian religion throughout the centuries. The fact that both Thomas Müntzer²¹ and Martin Luther could have come to such radically different

conclusions when reading the same Scriptures is hardly surprising, when in the writings ascribed to Paul we find an ambivalence which reflects the writer's own dilemma. In this regard, the English radical poet and visionary William Blake wisely wrote in his *The Everlasting Gospel*, 'Both read the Bible day and night, but thou readst black where I read white.' The appreciation of this in the early Christian literature may go some way towards explaining why it is that the Christian traditions still seem to provide the resources for both radical and conservative groups.²²

We have already seen that the heart of Jesus' proclamation was the conviction that the kingdom of God was at hand. Even if Jesus refused to throw in his lot with the Jewish fight for freedom,²³ the impression left by his teaching was of a clear challenge to the existing social order of his day, particularly the Temple in Jerusalem. In the tradition of his sayings there are some radical views of normal patterns of social intercourse: rejection of families and acquaintances (Luke 14.25f.), placing of all human need and provision in the hands of God (Matt. 6.25ff.), and the appearance of Jesus and his disciples as a group of wandering figures stirring up the people.²⁴ Whatever happened in the desert when Jesus fed the multitudes (Mark 6.30ff.) it is likely that such activity would have attracted the attention of the authorities, afraid as they were of the repetition of the unrest caused by similar messianic pretenders.²⁵ Two traditions in the Fourth Gospel remind us of the disquiet which Jesus' activity probably caused. In John 6.14 the attempt by the crowds to take Jesus and make him king is probably an indication of the kind of popular feeling which was prevalent at the time and which might have provoked the meeting that was called to discuss the threat to public order posed by Jesus (John 11.47ff.).

While such disquiet on political grounds is not as obvious in the Pauline tradition, we do find that in the reports concerning Paul in Acts, there is the widespread belief that Paul and his friends are the ones whose activities in the synagogues are 'turning the world upside down' (Acts 17.6).²⁶ Throughout Acts there are put on the lips of the opponents of the Christians charges which relate to the subversive activities of the Christians. Indeed, this is probably a theme which forms a significant part of the author's purpose.²⁷ Paul is presented as one whose doctrines and teaching are found to be uncontroversial, at least in the eyes of the authorities (Acts 26.31), though the author of Acts is forced to deal with the attempts made on Paul's life and the threat to public order which his 'demonstration' seemed to pose when the apostle arrived in that city with his companions (Acts 21.19ff.). Thus we find in Acts that, while the popular impression of Paul's activity was that it was either turning the world upside down or causing a significant Jewish minority within the Empire a great deal of disquiet, the author presents Paul as a figure whose views are examined by the politically powerful and judged to be harmless.²⁸

Paul uses eschatological categories of the new life which Christian faith brings.²⁹ Baptism and receipt of the Spirit mean entry into a community in which new values, new patterns and norms of behaviour and relationships are to be expected (1 Cor. 12.13; Col. 3.10; Gal. 3.28).³⁰ In 1 Corinthians Paul is having to deal with a series of what he regards as serious ethical and social problems, some of which he has heard about from a letter or letters written to him by the Corinthian community and from information which he had received by word of mouth. There is a degree of anarchy within the community, which has culminated in scandalous behaviour by some individuals (1 Cor. 5.1). There has been much speculation about the origin of this condition. Suggestions have been made, ranging from the proverbial iniquity of the city of Corinth itself to the influence of gnostic teaching on the nascent Christian communities.³¹ Whatever weight we give to these various interpretations, it must be said that a certain degree of responsibility for the condition of the church in Corinth attaches to Paul.³² Thus, the Paul who spoke in tongues more than all the rest of the Corinthians is now forced in this letter to put the gift of tongues in the context of the ministry of the Spirit as a whole and to defuse a potentially damaging situation by playing down its importance.

The character of Paul's initial preaching to the Corinthians is not easily ascertained. We have to rely on hints from 1 Corinthians itself about its content, as the account in Acts tells us very little about Paul's activity in the city (Acts 18.1ff.). The reconstruction of Paul's initial teaching has depended greatly on the interpretation of certain catchwords and phrases which make their appearance in the response Paul makes to inquiries from the church (e.g., 6.12; 7.1; 8.1; 10.23). We cannot be certain what led to the use of these slogans by certain Corinthian Christians, but it is difficult to believe that the Corinthian slogans *all* represent a move away from Paul's initial preaching, a contamination of the pure Pauline gospel. What the Corinthians are saying reflects their beliefs about the content of the Pauline gospel and its implications for life and conduct. Indeed, when we read of Paul's attempt in Romans 6.1ff. to repudiate antinomianism, and the dramatic use of the resurrection imagery of the present experience of Christians in Colossians 3.1f., it becomes a little easier to see why Corinthian Christians could have interpreted the Pauline message in radically counter-cultural terms (1 Cor. 10.23) and considered that they had already achieved the glory of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 4.8ff.).

The new life of Christians meant that they had already passed from the old order into the new: 'If any one is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5.17). Participation in the Spirit meant sharing in the glory of the age to come. In that respect they could taste the glory of the new age (cf. Heb. 6.4); the Messiah had come. Some of the Corinthian ideas were in fact very close to Paul's original

proclamation of the gospel. So in 1 Corinthians Paul moves away from a radically discontinuous view of the Christian life, which he had preached originally to the Corinthians, and in its place offers a view of human relationships which was much less controversial than that implied in his original proclamation and which allowed the possibility of greater accommodation with the wider society.³³ In the authentic Pauline letters there is a tension between the eschatological realization of a totally new order and a reluctance to pursue the implications of this theme. Indeed, we can see the contradictions which can be found even in one letter like 1 Corinthians, particularly over the issue of the role of women in the worship of the community (11.5; cf. 14.34). Such disjunctions can be explained by the growing reserve which Paul had towards the uninhibited expression of the messianic lifestyle. The climax of this process is to be found in the Pastoral Epistles, where there is the concern to present a sober face to the wider world (1 Tim. 3.7).

What we find in the Pastorals is not confined to these documents alone. There is a fundamental uncertainty about the nature of the Christian response, not only with regard to the State (Rom. 13; cf. Rev. 13),³⁴ but also with regard to issues like the role of women,³⁵ slavery and wealth.³⁶ The formula 'in the world but not of the world' may seem to be an over-used way of speaking about the emerging understanding of Christian existence; yet in a very real sense it expresses the fundamental conflict within the Pauline letters between the conviction that already, in some sense, a new order had arrived, which was changing both individuals and groups, and the (ultimately stronger) conviction that there was need for Christians to live within an order which did not recognize the demands of the new and which may well have regarded them as entirely subversive of the existing order.³⁷ The fact is that the Church began to come to terms with the old order and found itself playing down those aspects of its message which might seem to threaten the world as it was.³⁸ That is not to say that the Christian gospel ceased to have an effect on the society of late antiquity. Its uncompromising demand of allegiance to another lord than Caesar was bound to have a gradual undermining effect on the fabric of society, however strongly the Christians protested to the contrary.

Throughout Acts, as we have seen, Christians are brought face to face with civil authorities on the charge of subversion. Indeed, the charge of 'turning the world upside down' (Acts 17.6) is one which is found on the lips of outsiders or opponents of the Christian movement rather than the Christians themselves. So although the Christians find themselves in very difficult situations, whether facing an angry crowd in Ephesus (19.23) or suspicious Jews in Jerusalem (21.27), the problem is not one which is posed by the religious beliefs of the Christians, which are shown to be relatively harmless (e.g., 18.14), but by the intransigence of Jews (18.12) or the economic interests of pagans (19.27). The Christian message is not seen by the

authorities to be one which threatens the well-being of the Empire, despite the fact that its adherents frequently found themselves involved in trouble. Gallio somewhat wearily comments that what the Jews of Corinth are bringing to him is a quibble about the Jewish law, and therefore an internal matter which is no concern of Rome, an attitude which Christians would probably have been keen to foster. The picture we have does not place an insuperable barrier before those wealthy and influential people who would become Christians, therefore.³⁹

Within Christian experience from the very beginning there existed the tension between the need to reach a *modus vivendi* with contemporary society and the earnest expectation that God would bring about a new order, in which sorrow and sighing would be no more. But once it had emerged that the identity of Christian groups (or at least the majority of them) was to involve life *within* a non-redeemed society, then it was inevitable that the need would arise to temper some of those radical ideals which characterize parts of the Jesus tradition. Attitudes to women and slaves which cut right across the patterns normally accepted were not sustained, and later revivals of early Christian radicalism were suppressed.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, there existed at the heart of its doctrine a subversive strain which meant that an acceptance of the *status quo* could never entirely satisfy the demands made by its traditions; complacency could never be justified for long.⁴¹ To be a follower of Jesus meant following the path of one who was regarded as an outcast by certain members of the ruling élite in his own day. It also meant looking forward to the establishment of a kingdom which would in due course take the place of Rome. As the book of Revelation so graphically demonstrates, there could be no room for both Caesar and Christ in either this age or the new age. What Revelation 5 proclaims is an alternative politics. The meaning of history is the formation of a new human race, international in character, around the lamb that was slain. This is not determined by Caesar's rule, based as it is on violence. The lamb's suffering for the cause of right overturns the principalities and powers. The hymnic proclamation in Revelation 5.9 heralds the beginning of a new politics: Jesus gave his life for his enemies, which meant an end to violence and the destruction of enemies.

Whatever injunctions may have been given by church leaders about acceptance of the *status quo* in the present (e.g., in 1 Pet. 2.13ff.; Titus 3.1ff.), the eschatological beliefs of necessity put a question mark against both the loyalty of Christians and the implicit demand that all barriers were to be broken down in Christ. Even Romans 13 implies that if the present meant acceptance of the powers that be (though not, let it be noted, obedience to them), in God's good time the world empires would themselves be subject to the just, peaceable rule of Christ (as had been predicted in Daniel 2 and 7). Until such time, those who earnestly looked forward to the day of liberation

had to implement, within the parameters of historical circumstance, such evidence of the coming kingdom of God as was politically possible.

Another problem which was never fully resolved in early Christianity was behaviour which sat loose to law and morality, known as antinomianism (hints of which are found in the need for Paul to react as he does in Romans 3.8; cf. Romans 6). The early Christians came to the conclusion that the Law of Moses had been replaced by Christ. As such they accepted the Pauline view, which finds parallels in other parts of the New Testament, particularly the letter to the Hebrews. This was a long process and one which was not met by universal approval, as the continuation of alternative, more positive views of the Law would seem to suggest. Nevertheless, the fact that many of the Christian communities were composed of former Gentiles accelerated the process whereby the Church loosed its ties with the demands made by the Torah.⁴²

Paul balanced his more relaxed attitude to the Law of Moses with a continuing demand for a high moral content in Christian ethics, as is evident throughout his Epistles.⁴³ Paul's view of the Law of Moses as part of a past aeon led to difficulties in the articulation of Christian ethics, however.⁴⁴ The law of the Spirit of life has taken the place of the law of sin and death in forming the Christian attitudes towards moral problems (Rom. 8.1f.).⁴⁵ The indwelling Spirit, which manifested itself in particular types of behaviour, enabled the Christians to bring forth good works (Gal. 5.22ff.). The extraordinary character of new life in the Spirit is nowhere better demonstrated than in 1 Corinthians 2.9ff. The defeat of the cosmic powers and the coming of the Spirit have enabled those in whom the Spirit dwells to know instinctively the mind of God and follow what God wills without recourse to an external moral code. The problem, when such an emphasis is placed on the inward promptings of the Spirit, is that it becomes very difficult to ascertain what is and what is not in accord with the demand of God. Thus a corollary of the move away from the Law of Moses, notwithstanding Paul's firm grasp of the centrality of ethical responses for those in Christ, is that precise norms for behaviour disappear, to be replaced by an emphasis on individual freedom (e.g., 1 Cor. 8).⁴⁶ Paul lays great stress on the centrality of the law of love (Rom. 13.10) and suggests, at least in Romans, that there is a degree of continuity between the old and new covenants in that an ethical response is an essential feature of the new as well as the old; but he does not articulate the nature of that response. The reason for this is that in the community of the new age those who have been baptized with the Spirit will know instinctively what the law of the Spirit of life is (1 Cor. 2.10ff.). Such a view of the nature of Christian existence, however defensible it may have been in theory, was difficult to sustain in practice, as the Corinthian correspondence, and possibly also 1 Thessalonians, makes plain. In the later Pauline correspondence, particularly Colossians and in the letters which are often ascribed to

followers of Paul (namely, Ephesians and the Pastorals), we find the introduction of ethical lists,⁴⁷ which enable members of the Christian community to regulate their lives in accordance with precepts which inculcate good order and inoffensive behaviour.

While Paul, in particular, nowhere intended problems for moral rectitude, the *effect* of the Pauline ethical teaching probably meant that this may have been the case in practice.⁴⁸ To say this is not to deny the profound link which Paul found between the new life in Christ and the social and moral consequences which would result.⁴⁹ Rather, the problem is the general nature of the guidance (Rom. 13.11) and the spiritual means for fulfilling God's will.⁵⁰ Paul himself seems to have had no doubt about the firm link which existed between the fact of salvation and the demands made upon those who participated in it. While this theological connection can be demonstrated, it is more difficult to show why it was that particular ethical principles were taken on by Christians as the corollaries of this theological conviction: how, for example, did Paul relate the belief that all the political powers were ordained by God and had, therefore, to be obeyed, with central features of his theology?⁵¹ While it may be true to say that the New Testament writers nowhere assert the need for violent action, exercised by humans to overthrow the existing order, the prophetic witness over against the world in Revelation 11 and the cry of Peter and the apostles in Acts 5.29, 'We must obey God rather than human authorities', indicate that there was no mere passive acceptance of the *status quo* among early Christians (an important verse for later writers like Calvin, *On Secular Authority* 32).⁵²

The teaching about the State in Romans 13 is very much influenced by Paul's knowledge of the political situation in the capital of the Empire in the mid-50s and should be understood in the light of this and be seen in its appropriate context.⁵³ The way in which circumstances dictated the character of ethical responses is a theme of considerable importance for our understanding of the New Testament literature.⁵⁴ If we take seriously the fact that many of the New Testament documents are only occasional pieces, the probability is that the advice contained in them will also be dictated by the circumstances of the people addressed and as a result betray varying degrees of inconsistency with other parts of the corpus of writing, stemming from a particular author. Different weight can be attached to passages like Galatians 3.28 compared with 1 Corinthians 11.2ff. (not to mention 1 Corinthians 12.13 and Colossians 3.10, both of which are closely related to Galatians 3.28);⁵⁵ stress may be put on circumstances as the reason which dictated the particular response. We should give full weight to the contradictions as a demonstration of the existence of the struggle between idealism and pragmatism, between the utopian spirit and the need for caution in attempting to realize the eschatological glory in the present.⁵⁶ Paul's attitudes are not neatly categorized. There is a sense in which his vision of a

new creation does subvert the present order. This is even evident in those passages where his views seem to be most conformed to the old aeon, for example when he deals with slavery. Thus there is reason to suppose that Paul's views did actually lead to a way of life which was significantly different from the prevailing order (Philemon v.21; 1 Cor. 2.5).⁵⁷

With regard to his ancestral religion, Paul was actively engaged in the subversion of much contemporary practice. The beginnings of the fulfilment of the scriptural promises meant for him that barriers to the participation in the people of God of those Gentiles who were called must be removed. He had a vision of Jew and Greek united in Christ which *had* to become a reality, whatever the practice of the present order might demand. Paul's career is an example of that outlook which, when translated into reality, tends to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time. Circumcision was denied as a necessary qualification for membership of the people of God; table-fellowship was central, and all that hindered it in the Torah must be repudiated. In this area Paul's actions indicate that his ideals definitely influenced his conduct.

Paul's inaugurated eschatology demands that present transformation, both inward and outward, is already a present reality: already the new age has dawned; already the eschatological spirit has been poured out (cf. Heb. 6.4), and therefore it is only to be expected that the norms of the new creation will be apparent in the individual lives and in the corporate existence of the new community.⁵⁸ But what we find in 1 Corinthians is the beginning of Paul's retreat from the first flush of eschatological enthusiasm to an outlook which admits that in Christ there is a new creation but without this having a disturbing effect on the present order. There is evidence of an attitude which gradually replaces radical views. Emphasis on the transforming power of the Spirit is there, but the effects on the present order are marginal. The circumstances in Corinth probably needed a careful and considered response. In 1 Corinthians Paul is in danger of undermining that central utopian element in the Christian experience and outlook which gave the movement such an initial impetus, however. In his great contribution to the eschatology of early Christianity, Paul had himself been instrumental in allowing a radicalism influenced by contemporary Jewish eschatology to disturb the current pattern of relationships between Jews and Gentiles over the issue of their admission into the people of God. In giving effect to this, Paul never wavered; but with regard to its effects on society at large, he remained rather ambivalent.⁵⁹

Ideology, even when it starts life as a reflection of the socio-economic circumstances, can have an influence on the nature of the very circumstances from which it had its origin.⁶⁰ The contrast between the present order of things and the future can act as a spur to work for a future goal. On the other hand, ideology frequently functions as a legitimating of the interests of the

economically and politically powerful, by offering a justification for its continued presence within the divine purposes. All these types may be found in early Christian literature. Yet throughout pre-Constantinian Christianity, early Christians looked forward to a new kind of polity; but having little power to bring about change in the wider society in the present, they sought to exemplify something of what they hoped for in their common life. As many ancient and modern writers have pointed out, Christians presented an alternative to the State.⁶¹ They were not indistinguishable from other citizens; they refused to acknowledge the gods of the state and to do military service, for example. Arguably, it was only with the capitulation of the Church to Rome under Constantine that a sea-change took place in Christian attitudes. The repeated emergence of radical movements in Christian history has shown that Christendom could never be the last word for a movement whose central tenet is the expectation that 'the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our lord and of the messiah' (Rev. 11.15).⁶²

(c) The Delay of the Parousia: was it a Problem?⁶³

Much has been made in this study of the centrality of the eschatological convictions for the understanding of the emerging Christian movement. This is in line with most recent scholarship on the New Testament since the beginning of this century. The theory that the emergence of Christianity as an institution and as a doctrinal system was, in part at least, a reaction to the failure of the Parousia hope to materialize has been a cornerstone of twentieth-century scholarship.⁶⁴ From the Gospel of Matthew to the book of Revelation, evidence has been offered of the influence of the delay of the Parousia. The thesis itself has many attractions. If we assume on the basis of sayings like Mark 9.1 that Jesus expected the kingdom of God to be established on earth within a very short time, it seems plausible that the concerns which normally dominate the world-views of those who do not share such a belief would not be so important. Jesus tells his disciples not to be anxious about their needs and to assume that God will provide for them (Matt. 6.25ff.). What is more, his dispositions for his disciples after his death are rudimentary and, in the view of some, non-existent. All in all, the Gospels (with the possible exception of the Farewell Discourses in John) leave us with the impression that since Jesus expected the consummation of history in the near future, he showed no interest whatsoever in establishing an organization to carry on his work.

Likewise, the picture of the charismatic community in 1 Corinthians may be a reflection of the kind of messianic idealism which does not have to accept the problems posed by the 'real world'. Paul also is full of urgency in

his mission, convinced that his task may itself be the very fulcrum on which the final consummation hinges. His role as apostle to the Gentiles is the prelude to the establishment of God's kingdom (Rom. 11.25; cf. Mark 13.10). Once that is completed, the short interval before the return of Christ will be over and the events of the last days will take their course (2 Thess. 2.5ff.).

Most of the earliest New Testament documents have very little to say about church order. All are imbued with a sense of being on the brink of the climax of a process whose crisis has already come and which carries along the community with little or no need for structures to ensure continuity.⁶⁵ It is only in documents like the Pastoral Epistles that we begin to find attempts to deal with deviant teachings by means of the establishment of authoritative officers. In documents like these, it is suggested, we are to find the first signs of that need to ensure the continuity of the faith in the face of the growing uncertainty about the imminence of the return of Christ. Once there are doubts about this, the freedom from anxiety, which carried the initial communities along, would disappear and be replaced with the need to consolidate. That does not mean that the Parousia hope disappears; what it does mean is that the intimate link which existed between the events of Jesus' life on earth and his return again in glory has been dissolved, so that eschatology can become a part of doctrine, one belief among many which are important for Christians, instead of the underlying framework of all early Christian convictions.

We have noted that in the New Testament there is a close link between resurrection-faith, experience of the Spirit and the imminent return of Christ.⁶⁶ If Jesus is raised, it can only mean that the new age has dawned and that final deliverance will not be delayed. When this hope was not fulfilled, the character of the original resurrection-faith subtly changed. Instead of its being a sign of the coming of the new age, it becomes a sign of hope for the individual,⁶⁷ so that just as Jesus has gone into new life with God, so also those who follow him will do the same (cf. John 14.2ff.). The close ties, which bind the Parousia expectation and the resurrection-faith, are loosened. Instead of living in the expectation that at any point the age to come would arrive and regarding all that is experienced as a mark of that arrival, the present becomes not the overlap of the ages, but a period of pilgrimage through an alien world waiting for something better in the next.

The influence of this theory should not lead us to ignore the fact that the New Testament itself does not actually give us much direct evidence that it was a problem. Indeed, there is a danger of our assuming that what *we* consider to be a problem *must* also have been one for the early Christians. It is in 2 Peter that we have the clearest indication that the community addressed was having to wrestle with the issue:

This is now the second letter that I have written to you, beloved, and in both of them I have aroused your sincere mind by way of reminder; that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles. First of all, you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions, and saying, Where is now the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation. (2 Pet. 3.1ff.)⁶⁸

Lack of explicit evidence elsewhere has not prevented commentators from finding other, less obvious examples within the New Testament. We can categorize the bulk of the evidence of the problem of the delay of the Parousia as *implicit* evidence, unlike the passage just quoted from 2 Peter, which is explicit evidence. The implicit evidence can itself be divided into two subdivisions: material which deals with the delay of the Parousia by re-emphasizing the Parousia hope (much in the way that 2 Peter does); and material which tends to play down an imminent expectation, either by omitting mention of the hope, or by subtly altering the character of the history of salvation.

Of the documents with the most pronounced eschatological expectation in the New Testament, the book of Revelation is a case in point; it is a document with the belief in an imminent expectation of God's reign on earth, which is directed to communities that are going through a period of moral and spiritual laxity and possibly some persecution.⁶⁹ The first of the letters to the seven churches is to Christians who 'have lost their first love' (Rev. 2.4); the last is to Christians who think much of their spiritual status but in the eyes of Christ are spiritually poor (Rev. 3.17). In Matthew's Gospel the theme of the disciples of Jesus endeavouring to ensure that their righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees is a constant preoccupation (Matt. 5.20). Linked to this we find that some of the Parousia parables stress the fact that there has been a delay and urge readiness for the coming of Christ at a time which disciples may not expect (24.45ff.; 25.1ff.; 25.14ff.). It is not those who say 'Lord, Lord', who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of God (Matt. 7.21). The theme of uncertainty pervades the Gospel. The believers do not know precisely when the end will come, nor can they be sure who will be saved (e.g., Matt. 13.24ff.). The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest; it is only then that they will be separated. There is a mixed community of righteous and unrighteous, and the separation between the sheep and the goats will take place at the end (cf. Matt. 25.31ff.). Meanwhile it is necessary for the Christians to endeavour to enter by the narrow way (7.13).⁷⁰

The problem of the non-appearance of the Parousia manifests itself in a slightly different form in Paul's early letters to the Thessalonians. In both

letters eschatological issues are dominant concerns. In the first it is apparent that there has been a question about the death of Christians before the Parousia (1 Thess, 4.13ff.). It would appear that the Thessalonians thought that those who died before the arrival of Christ would be at a disadvantage and would not participate in the life of the age to come. Such a belief is consistent with Jewish eschatology where, generally speaking, only those who were alive when the Messiah came would be fortunate enough to participate in the life of the messianic kingdom (Syr. Baruch 29; cf. Syr. Baruch 51.).⁷¹ Paul deals with this problem by asserting that those who have died will in fact *precede* those left alive, in being united with the returning Christ (1 Thess. 4.16). The advice given concerning the arrival of the kingdom in 5.1ff. suggests that the community was in a state of expectancy and was perplexed about its non-arrival.

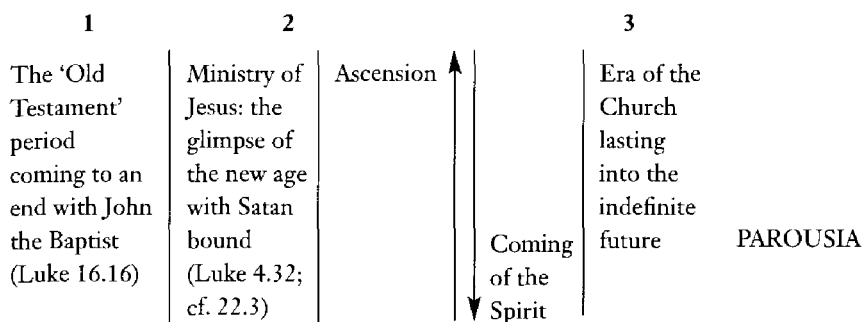
In 2 Thessalonians a different issue emerges. Already in 1 Thessalonians Paul had advised the Christians to live as children of the new age (1 Thess. 5.4ff.) and to work with their hands to avoid giving offence to those outside the Church (4.11f.). A more specific problem emerges in 2 Thessalonians. It seems that some of the Christians had decided that, with the imminence of the coming of Christ, there was no need to live a normal life in the world (3.6ff.). Such people are rebuked by the apostle. In order to dampen eschatological enthusiasm, which had emerged in the community, Paul sets out an eschatological programme which is intended to *diminish* the intensity of expectation (2.3ff.). Certain things have to take place before Christ will return. Until they do, there is no point in idleness; Christians should carry on with their normal lives and not be carried away with their enthusiasm.

The Gospel of Mark is not an easy document to interpret as far as its eschatology is concerned. One of the most influential studies of the Gospel argued that it was shot through with an imminent eschatological expectation, being written during the Jewish war amidst an expectation that the Lord would return to gather his elect in Galilee (13.26; cf. 16.7). Mark 13.10 may indicate that, far from being written when the end was in sight, there was still a significant period of time which had to elapse before Christ would vindicate the elect. It is more likely that the Gospel challenges Christians to maintain a way of non-violence and opt for a 'third way' between violence and political conformity, that of 'counter-cultural' politics.⁷²

Among those New Testament documents which are regarded as marking a move away from the primitive eschatological expectation, pride of place must go to the Gospel of Luke and the companion volume, the Acts of the Apostles.⁷³ Luke presents a picture of salvation history in which there seems to be divisions between three epochs of God's activity (the old covenant, the era of Jesus and the era of the new covenant in the life of the Church). Also, whereas the primitive preaching presupposed that there was an intimate link between the events of Easter and the establishment of the kingdom of God

and the return of Christ, Luke dissolves this link by inserting an extended period between the departure of Christ and his return in glory: the era of the Church. The centrality of the ascension is the means whereby Luke marks the boundary between the second and the third periods in his salvation history. The departure of Christ at the end of the Gospel and the beginning of Acts leaves the stage clear for the era of the Church/Spirit, which has to take its course until the return of Christ.

This suggests the following scheme for Luke's understanding of history:



Three other pieces of evidence are indicated to show that Luke was writing in a period when the Parousia hope had faded. First, the Lucan rewriting of Mark 13 indicates that an attempt is being made to 'update' this tradition in the light of history:

- 1 The abomination of desolation is equated with the fall of Jerusalem (Luke 21.20; cf. Mark 13.14).
- 2 The times of the Gentiles have to be fulfilled before there can be a change in Jerusalem's fortunes (Luke 21.24).
- 3 There is omission of the references to messianic pretenders in Mark 13.21ff.
- 4 There is a dissolution of the links between the fall of Jerusalem and the coming of the 'Son of Man'.
- 5 There is an emphasis on the suddenness of the coming (cf. Luke 17.24, but note Mark 13.36).⁷⁴

In Acts there is an interest in both church history and church order, both of which, it is suggested, manifest those concerns of the later Church, when it had to come to terms with the need to continue its existence in the world. The writing of an apologia for Christianity to Theophilus comes when the need arises to establish the religion and its continued existence in the eyes of the world. Signs of church order can be found in Acts in the emphasis on apostolic ordering of events (Acts 8 and 20.28), the organized apostolic

council in Acts 15, and the uniformity in belief and practice which Luke presents as the ideal for church life. Lucan ethics tone down the radicalism of Jesus and the primitive Church. Luke includes the rigorous demands of Jesus and the portrait of the Jerusalem church practising communism but, at the same time, he makes response to Jesus a stern but possible exercise: Zacchaeus is said to have given away only half his goods (Luke 19.8; cf. 18.24f.); Ananias and Sapphira are judged not because they refused to lay all their wealth at the apostles' feet but because they deceived the Holy Spirit (Acts 5.4); and, finally, the picture of the relationship between Christians and Romans indicates a wish to come to some kind of accommodation with the State by showing that Roman leaders found nothing wrong with the Christian religion.⁷⁵

Whereas Luke still retains those traditions which speak about the coming of Christ but has used them, it is argued, in such a way that he has subtly played down the centrality of the eschatological expectation, there are other New Testament documents where the Parousia hope of a public demonstration of God's dominion has faded into the background. Prime among these is the Gospel of John. Here the emphasis is on the new life which can be experienced *now* through belief in Jesus (John 5.24). The references to the future consummation are there, but are not numerous. The tenor of the Gospel is the relationship which believers can enjoy with Christ and, through him, with God (John 14.23).⁷⁶ Similarly, in the letter to the Ephesians the hope for the future consummation, while present (e.g., Eph. 1.10), has moved to the periphery in favour of the present relationship of believers with the exalted Christ (1.23).⁷⁷ In Hebrews the heavenly world is the focus of salvation and the orientation of believers. Christ has gone into the heavens, behind the veil, and is there as a sure anchor of hope for those who follow him (Heb. 6.19f.). The hope for a future establishment of the reign of God on earth has not entirely disappeared (12.26), but has receded into the background.⁷⁸

All this evidence has led scholars to argue that already within the New Testament we can find evidence of the disappointment at the failure of the Parousia hope to materialize and the need to come to terms with a situation where the Church might be expected to exist far into the future. The consequence of this was the emergence of what is called 'primitive catholicism' (*Frühkatholizismus*).⁷⁹ It has the following characteristics:

- 1 A move away from the belief that the goal of the salvation of God is the manifestation of God's righteousness in the world, to be replaced by an emphasis on the salvation of the individual and his union with the exalted Christ (e.g., John 14.2; 17.24).
- 2 The need for an ecclesiastical structure to preserve the faith of the apostles from distortions; and consequently, the need for a pattern of

ministry which is such that it would act as the prime defence against attack and the main instrument of propaganda.

- 3 The consolidation and organization of church life, worship and doctrine as the means of keeping the faithful within the scope of the divine saving activity, involving clarity in the delineation of boundaries between true and false religion, those inside and those outside, by initiation and confirmatory rites and actions and a pattern of life which would be the minimum acceptable for those who joined the community.

That there was a diminution in the hope of the establishment of God's kingdom on earth and the emphasis on the transcendent realm as the goal of the Christian soul can be seen from trends within the early Christian texts. We note with interest, for example, the condescending attitude of the early church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (fourth century) who poured scorn on Papias of Hierapolis (early second century) because of his view that the kingdom of God would be set up on earth (*EH* 3.39.11; cf. Cerinthus in *EH* 3.28.2). But to speak of the move of a this-worldly eschatology to the margin does not necessarily mean that the delay of the coming of that kingdom was a *problem*. It is not impossible that the failure to see the realization at an early date of the hopes for the coming of the kingdom of God would have caused some embarrassment and disappointment. Thus, the deaths of those who were expected to 'sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matt. 19.28) plausibly caused a sense of disappointment. John 21.23 indicates that there was an expectation abroad that the beloved disciple would not die before the return of Christ. His death placed a question mark over the present as part of the propitious moment when the Last Things are coming to pass. Nevertheless, we must beware that we do not read into the texts an assumption that it was the non-appearance of Christ which necessarily led to a radical rethinking of early Christian thought, away from eschatology to other doctrinal concerns.⁸⁰

The number of documents from early Christianity covered in the survey of implicit evidence of the delay of the Parousia is a reflection of the way in which this issue has pervaded interpretation of the New Testament. Nevertheless, one should recognize that such an approach to these documents is not universally accepted.⁸¹ Other explanations may be offered of those differences which exist between Luke and Mark, particularly in Luke 21.5ff., not least that we have in Luke 21 an alternative form of the eschatological discourse rather than a rewriting of Mark by Luke.⁸² What is evident in Luke/Acts (and for that matter the Pastorals also) is the concern to come to terms with the world and present a view of the Christian religion which will enable it to find acceptance by society at large. The need to do this and to tell the story of its origin may *in part* indicate the perspective of those who now feel that an accommodation is needed with the world, because of the

problem of having to accept continued existence in it. As such we would be talking about subtle changes in the world-view of the Christians rather than a conscious attempt to answer the problem of the delay of the Parousia.

This need to consider the change of emphasis is an important one and corresponds to aspects of Jewish eschatology which we have examined already. We noted earlier that in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls there was a clear emphasis on the way in which the holy community could share the lot of heaven, even eschatological bliss, in the present. To be a member of the holy enclave enabled the elect to share the lot of the angels and the joy of the age to come. Jewish apocalypticism has an important 'vertical' dimension to its thought. Thus the apocalyptic seer can already see the glory of the age to come, which is stored up in the treasure-house of heaven.⁸³ Such a 'vertical' dimension of apocalyptic cosmology may well lie behind the description of the saving process within the letter to the Hebrews. It is not the case, therefore, that the eschatological hope has been abandoned or transferred. Rather, there is concentration in the vertical dimension of that hope, always inherent in Jewish texts, rather than the fulfilment in history. The fact that God's kingdom already exists with God in heaven before it is realized on earth means that to participate in it now means to enjoy the bliss of heaven, which will in due course be manifest on earth. When the letter to the Ephesians speaks of the Church being 'in the heavenly places in Christ' (Eph. 1.20; 2.6; 3.10; 6.12),⁸⁴ and the Jewish-Christian Odes of Solomon depict life within the Christian community as the life of Paradise, we are seeing the switch from the horizontal eschatological expectation to the vertical, from the hope for the realization in history to the experience of that salvation which already exists with God in the realm above. The two positions are not mutually exclusive.

At the heart of the early Christian message was the belief that in Christ God had acted decisively in history to introduce the promised new age, which would ultimately be manifested in human affairs. The central characteristic of New Testament eschatology, therefore, was the tension between the 'now' and the 'not yet'. Already the Christians believed that 'they had tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come' (Heb. 6.5), but that the final completion of God's saving purposes still had to take place. We have noted that within the apocalyptic framework adopted by the early Christians there lies the resource to cope with the delay in the fulfilment of the promise. As Paul writes to the Colossians, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory' (Col. 3.3f.). Christ was enthroned in heaven, waiting to come to bring to completion the work which had been started in his ministry, at Calvary and in the resurrection (1 Cor. 15.22ff.; Rev. 19.11).⁸⁵ Meanwhile it was possible to enjoy the benefits of that heavenly dimension to earthly existence, that inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1.12) in the

old aeon. When fulfilment is delayed and little sign of it is to be seen, an adequate compensation can be found in the present communion with the exalted Christ in heaven (Eph. 1.21). In addition, when believers died and it became imperative to decide their fate in the time which had to pass before Christ came again, the belief in the presence of the soul with Christ gradually emerged, already hinted at in a fragmentary way by Paul himself (Phil. 1.23; 2 Cor. 5; Rev. 6.9–10).⁸⁶ Thus the temporary relationship with the exalted Christ, while the Parousia was awaited, readily became of central importance in itself. What was sought was that reward which was laid up in heaven: freedom from this world and union with Christ in his presence and that of the Father for ever.

There emerged an understanding of Christian discipleship which speaks of an earthly pilgrimage and a heavenly destination (1 Pet. 1.4; 2.11; 1.9; 1.17).⁸⁷ The use of this language, however, immediately transfers the focus of interest of the believer from his or her present world to the joys of heaven. This world is not to be changed in the present; it is a place of pilgrimage; even, at times, a snare which might prevent those who seek the new Jerusalem from reaching their true home. Such an outlook contrasts with the bulk of New Testament eschatology and the way in which the apocalyptic cosmology functions in Revelation. In Revelation the present tension between heaven and earth, the life of the age to come and this age, is nothing other than a *temporary* phenomenon and cannot be considered a fact which is accepted as a permanent theological datum.

In the opening chapter of the vision John reaffirms the cosmological dualism, which we find elsewhere in the New Testament. God is enthroned in glory and praised by living creatures and elders. God is hymned as creator of the whole universe, the all-holy God (Rev. 4.11, 8). There is an implicit contrast in this chapter between the dwelling of the holy God in heaven, where God's name is acknowledged and glorified, and the earth below where the ways of God are rejected.⁸⁸ The references to the unwillingness of humankind to repent later in the vision indicate that the world below did not share the beliefs of the heavenly hosts as they sang the praises of God (e.g., 9.20f.). This is also confirmed when we look at Revelation 5. Here the seer is shown a scroll which no one had been found worthy to open (5.3). As we soon learn, the scroll's opening is of great importance because it inaugurates the eschatological woes which must precede the setting up of the kingdom of God (Rev. 6. 8–9, 16). The seer weeps because no one has been found who can open the scroll. Once again the implication is that the purposes of God in the world are not being carried out, and the grief of the seer indicates the longing for that day of righteousness (cf. 6.9). The coming of a lamb who bore the marks of slaughter to God to receive and open the scroll is the essential initiative which marks the beginning of the fulfilment of the purposes of God.

There is a contrast between these two chapters and the consummation of God's purposes in chapter 21. At the climax of the vision John sees a new heaven and a new earth; but the significant thing about the new creation is that the dualistic contrast of the old creation has gone; heaven is no longer the dwelling place of the holy God separated from humanity which dwells on earth. Now the tabernacle of God is with men and women (Rev. 21.3). A situation in which there existed a contrast between heaven and earth, above and below, is no longer maintained. It is contrary to the divine purpose, which is directed towards the abolition of that dichotomy which exists between the kingdom of God in heaven and its absence on earth. What we find in the book of Revelation is how the petition of the Lord's Prayer is fulfilled: how God's kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven. In it we have no fixed cosmology, in which earth and heaven are eternally polarized. Heaven cannot be seen as an escape from things on earth, at least as a permanent solution to the problems of humanity and theology. The controlling vision is the new creation; in it the dichotomy is swept away and the tension resolved. Present participation in that new creation is already a possibility, however.

A religious outlook which fossilizes the present contrast between heaven and earth as being of the essence of things risks transforming visionary poetry into escapism. To make the pilgrimage to heaven the goal of the Christian discipleship is to accept the cosmos as it is, with its principalities and powers intact, and to treat the realm above as a haven from the world, whose end is destruction and nature evil.⁸⁹

(d) The Separation of Church and Synagogue

The impact of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE on Christians as well as Jews rivals the issue of the Delay of the Parousia as a catalyst for the interpretation of early Christian writings. Much has been written in particular of the 'council' (if such it was) of Jewish rabbis, which met at Jamnia (Yavneh) and which influenced the rebuilding of Judaism after the débâcle of 70.⁹⁰ There is still much uncertainty about the various resolutions which were carried during the years after the end of the First Jewish Revolt.⁹¹ The Eighteen Benedictions (*Shemoneh Esreh*) included one (the twelfth) which effectively excluded all significantly deviant religious groups from participating in the religious life of the synagogues.⁹² The *birkath ha-minim* (the 'blessing', ironically meant, of the *minim*, or heretics) makes it difficult to participate in the synagogue liturgy. There has been much debate over whether the earliest version of this benediction also included a specific reference to the Christians. One of the extant versions of the benediction does indeed explicitly mention the Christians (*Notzrim*):

For the renegades let there be no hope, and may the arrogant kingdom soon be rooted out in our days, and the Nazarenes (*Notzrim*) and the *minim* perish as in a moment and be blotted out from the book of life and with the righteous may they not be inscribed. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.⁹³

Justin tells us that by his day (the mid-second century CE), a curse on the Christians did form part of the regular pattern of synagogue worship. Evidence from the New Testament itself, which can be dated before 70 CE, suggests that, long before this time, various groups had disciplinary measures which allowed them to punish, and ultimately to exclude, those who deviated to any great degree from the pattern of religion which the group found acceptable. In 2 Corinthians 11.24f. Paul talks of punishment from fellow-Jews, and even if we are to date Acts after the fall of Jerusalem it is difficult to ignore the evidence that we find there of official harassment of Christians (Acts 4.5ff.; 5.27ff.; 6.12ff.), exclusion from synagogues (Acts 13.45f.) and Jewish suspicion (Acts 17.5f.; 18.12ff.; 20.3; 21.27; 23.20; cf. 28.21). Nevertheless the picture, as it emerges in Acts, is hardly of the situation where Christians found themselves excluded from the Jewish synagogues on a regular basis. Indeed, according to Acts 17.1ff. (cf. 21.21) Paul is presented as being able to go into the various synagogues to dispute with those who attended. Thus it would appear that the situation, as it is portrayed in Acts, is much more fluid than was the case in Justin's day.

In a sense, this is exactly what we should expect within the Judaism which existed before 70 CE. From what we know of Jewish religion before the fall of Jerusalem, the very variety made control of belief and practice impossible. After a terrible war when many had been killed and the future looked bleak, the chances of a small group taking the initiative and directing the course of a religious tradition was much more possible. What struggles went on before this group eventually triumphed, we have no means of knowing, however. After all, the Jewish traditions which have come down to us are in the main the property of the triumphant party, or at least have been subject to later reflection by that party. With the exception of the Christian texts which, at least explicitly, are silent on this issue, the tensions felt by those who could not wholeheartedly subscribe to the emerging hegemonic position cannot now be known. That Sadducees, Essenes and more closely related groups like Shammaite Pharisaism did experience great heart-searching is likely, as gradually pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism emerged as the dominant religious force.⁹⁴ The disentanglement of the relationship between the Christians and the rabbis of Jamnia is a task which still awaits completion; though, of course, the paucity of information at our disposal makes the completion of it a very difficult enterprise.⁹⁵

(e) You are his Disciples but we are Disciples of Moses

Hints of relations between Christians and other Jews have been found in the Fourth Gospel and such hints have been a major influence on the recent interpretation of the origin of the Gospel.⁹⁶ Throughout the first twelve chapters it is *Jewish* issues (festivals, practices, authority) which are examined in the light of the claim made right at the start of the Gospel that in Jesus of Nazareth 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. There is evidence of knowledge of a vast range of Jewish traditions barely beneath the surface of the Gospel. Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls we have had what may be called the 'New Look' at the Fourth Gospel.⁹⁷ Various parts of the Scrolls have confirmed not that the Dead Sea Scrolls provided the *origin* of the Johannine imagery but that the kind of ideas which we find in the Gospel would have been entirely at home within Second Temple Judaism (of particular importance are the strong dualistic ideas evident in both the Gospel of John and texts like the Manual of Discipline, e.g. 1 QS 3.17–25).

Even the most ardent supporter of the Jewish approach to the theology of the New Testament cannot fail to note the very polemical statement which we find from time to time in the Fourth Gospel, however. In it the hostility between Jesus and his Jewish opponents reaches such a level that in John 8.44 Jesus accuses the Jews of having the Devil as their father. This anti-Jewish tone should not be mistaken for a rejection of the Jewish heritage or even an incipient anti-Semitism. The Fourth Gospel seems to be most anti-Jewish just at the points it most reflects contemporary Jewish ideas.⁹⁸ Virulent polemic against the Jews is a reflection of the rejection not of the insights and traditions of Judaism, but the use which was made of them which led some Jews to reject Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, throughout the Gospel we find a concern to demonstrate that the very traditions which, other Jews assert, point in the direction of *their* particular interpretation, and should rather be seen as vindicating the Jewish-Christian position. Thus Moses is summoned as a witness to Jesus (John 5.45), as also is Abraham (John 8.56). Scripture itself points forward to Jesus (John 5.39f.), and the Prophet Isaiah saw the glory of the pre-existent one (John 12.41). What is going on in the Fourth Gospel, therefore, is an attempt to harness those same traditions, which also formed the basis of the rival group's interpretation of religion, in favour of the Christian position.

There is a subordination of the Torah to the revelation of God in Jesus (John 1.17). The antithesis between the Law, which came through Moses, and the grace and truth, which came through Jesus Christ, does not mean that there is an implicit denial that *any* grace and truth was manifested in the Law. Rather, 1.17 should be seen as a perspective on the Law in the light of the coming of Christ.⁹⁹ The Gospel presents the Scriptures as being on the Christian side of the argument. Thus, although it is clear that the Evangelist

still wants to appeal to the Law, the disparaging references to the Law, as if it was something alien from the Christians (8.17; 10.34; 15.25), are best explained as references to the way in which the Law was interpreted by Jewish opponents. With the advent of the Word made flesh, the Law had to be seen in a completely new light. The Law of Moses had ceased to be a means by which the whole of existence could be organized as if it alone were the definitive revelation of God, but something which pointed forward to the revelation of the way, the truth and the life of Christ (John 14.6).

Study of the Fourth Gospel over the last two decades has moved in the direction of considering the Gospel and the related Epistles as the products of a Jewish-Christian community engaged in the struggle to justify their existence over against Jews who disagree profoundly about the relationship of Jesus to Jewish traditions.¹⁰⁰ It is a struggle not so much between two religions as between rival interpretations by two (possibly more) mutually antagonistic groups.¹⁰¹ Of course, we are in possession of only one side of this debate, and we have to face the fact that the position of the opponents, as it is reflected in the Fourth Gospel, may be something of a caricature. What we can do at present, however, is to see how, in one important episode, the Fourth Evangelist characterizes the relationship between the opponents and his own group as evidence of the feelings of the Christian side with regard to their opponents, if not the actual position of the opponents themselves.

In John 9 we have the account of the healing of a blind man by Jesus, which took place on the sabbath day (John 9.14).¹⁰² In performing the healing, Jesus actually engaged in work by making clay with which he anointed the man's eyes (v.6), after which the man born blind went to bathe in the pool of Siloam. The man born blind is denounced to the Pharisees, and an inquiry is initiated by the Pharisees as to the nature of the healing (9.15f.). In this process Jesus plays no part and is only mentioned in the discussion; he appears finally to receive the confession of faith of the man born blind at the end of the chapter (9.35ff.). Throughout the interrogation the blind man steadfastly maintains his belief that Jesus must be one sent from God (9.33), even a prophet (9.17). The miracle is differently interpreted by the pharisaic opponents. Some refuse to believe that a person who broke the sabbath could be from God, whereas others emphasize the importance of the miracle as a sign of the divine commission (9.16). Finally, the man born blind is faced with a test: 'Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner' (9.24). In the following verses it becomes apparent that there will be no going back by the man born blind on his conviction that the person who wrought such a wonderful deed on his behalf must be from God (9.33). The issue is then polarized by the opponents: the choice is between those who can trace its origin back to Moses, and the new-fangled interpretations, whose authority stems only from 'this man' (9.28f.). The unwillingness of the man born blind to deny that Jesus was sent from God leads to his expul-

sion from the synagogue (it may be assumed in the light of 9.22 that this was from the synagogue, though this is not stated in 9.34). After this he meets Jesus and confesses his faith in Jesus as the 'Son of Man' (9.38).

In the light of the editorial addition in 9.22, it is possible that an issue is being considered in this chapter which has *direct* relevance to the life of the Johannine community and its relationship with Jews, who did not accept Jesus as Messiah. The fear of the parents of the man born blind is indicative of a fear of overt Christian profession in the light of a formal decision to exclude Christians from the synagogue (cf. John 7.13; 20.19). The word *apodynamogon* is used three times in the Gospel, and only in this work in the whole of the New Testament (9.22; 12.42; 16.2; cf. Luke 6.22).¹⁰³ Most commentators are agreed that it refers to one of the problems confronting the Johannine community, as it seeks to understand its position over against other Jews.¹⁰⁴ As part of this process of self-understanding, the story of the man born blind plays a significant part. His behaviour is a paradigm for a community on trial.

The story of the healing itself contains some fairly explicit Christian features. There is an interpretative gloss on the meaning of Siloam (9.7). The identification of bathing in Siloam with the one who is sent picks up one of the dominant christological themes in the Gospel. The implication of 9.7, therefore, is that bathing in the pool of Siloam is seen by the Evangelist as a type of Christian baptism, a belief which seems to be confirmed when we note that language about anointing and enlightening (9.6, 39) is also used, both of which have baptismal overtones.¹⁰⁵ The man born blind, whose healing leads him to affirm that Jesus is a prophet sent from God, finds himself put in the position of being on trial for his conviction. At last he is brought before the Pharisees and commanded, 'Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner' (9.24).¹⁰⁶ This formula, familiar to us from the Bible, is a means whereby an individual is asked to confess his sin, in this case his conviction that a person who, by his healing on the sabbath, has shown himself to be a sinner (Jos. 7.19; 1 Sam. 6.5; cf. *mSanhedrin* 6.2). The purpose of this demand is to persuade the man to withdraw his earlier support for Jesus (9.17), by indicating to him that in the eyes of the Pharisees what Jesus has done rather suggests that he is a sinner inspired by the Devil (cf. Luke 11.15). Thus those who side with a person like this put themselves in an incriminating position also.¹⁰⁷ The refusal of the man born blind to accept the position of the Pharisees and instead to affirm that such a miracle must indicate a divine origin for Jesus' authority (cf. 8.48; *bSanhedrin* 90a; *bBerakoth* 58a)¹⁰⁸ can only lead to his rejection as the disciple of a charlatan whose authority and office have not been authenticated (9.29).

This story has been the starting point for several discussions of the provenance of the Fourth Gospel, in which the chapter is regarded as a skilful projection onto the life of Jesus of the debate between Jews and Chris-

tians going on in the Evangelist's day.¹⁰⁹ The assumption has been that the bulk of the story of the encounter between the man born blind and the Jewish authorities is considered to be in its present form the work of the Evangelist. The gloss added by the Evangelist in 9.22, which makes the story particularly related to the messiahship of Jesus, appears to suggest a fairly permanent ban rather than a temporary exclusion. The incident dealing with the exclusion of a man whose blindness is healed by Jesus on the sabbath has become a paradigm of the way of true discipleship for the Church of his own day. The Pharisees and Jews in the story, therefore, are typical of the hostility of Jews in his day whose determination was to rid themselves of the rival, Christian interpretation of the Torah, and to take the extreme course of excluding Christians from their synagogues.

It is when we begin to interpret the Johannine traditions (some of which may well have a long history in the community, going back to the very beginnings of its existence)¹¹⁰ in the light of the pressing, contemporary, need of Christians to explain their beliefs about Jesus over against the rival interpretations of non-Christian Judaism, that we can begin to understand the way in which the polemic is directed in the Gospel. At many points we can find echoes of charges levelled against Jesus which make their appearance from time to time within the Jewish traditions. For example, Jesus' role as a magician and deceiver (*bSanhedrin* 43a; cf. 89a, 107b; *bSotah* 47a; *Dialogue* 69; Origen, *Contra Celsum*. 3.4)¹¹¹ is hinted at in various places (John 7.14ff.; 7.45ff.; 9.24ff.; 18.19ff.; cf. Deut. 13, 18.20–2). What is more, the origin of Jesus in heaven and his authority is an issue which provokes much discussion (John 7.15ff.; 8.23ff.). The claim to exclusive revelation and the validity of the descent and ascent to heaven is maintained in the face not only of rejection of the validity of such claims in some quarters (*bSukkah* 5a; *jTa'anith* 65b) but also the frequency of the belief that others as well as Jesus had ascended into the world above and had ascertained the divine secrets (John 3.13). What we have in the Fourth Gospel, therefore, is an attempt to present Jesus' origin and authority in the light of the conviction that he has descended from heaven, direct from the Father's side as the authentic revelation of the Father and the speaker of his words (John 6.46; cf. 1.18). Thus those interpretations of Jesus which view his claims as contumacious, his miracles as diabolically inspired, and his activity generally as indicative of heresy rather than divine vocation, are rejected as stemming from an inadequate view of the divine origin of his person and work.

This feature of the theology of the Fourth Gospel raises an issue of considerable importance in the discussions between Jesus and his opponents in the Gospel. The quotation from John 9 which heads this section indicates not only a polarization of opinions, but also a contrast in the different understandings of authority which exist between the two sets of disciples. The issue of authority is a theme which runs throughout the Gospel, and is

particularly prominent in the opening twelve chapters. When Jesus cleanses the Temple in Jerusalem, this act is taken as a sign of prophetic authority, and the opponents ask Jesus to justify the basis of this authority (John 2.18f.).¹¹² In the discourse with Nicodemus, Jesus, for the first time, indicates his importance by telling Nicodemus of his heavenly knowledge (John 3.11ff.), a theme taken up in the strange soliloquy of the Baptist in John 3.31ff. The link between authority and the one who sent Jesus makes its first appearance on the lips of Jesus in John 4.34, and it is a theme which is taken up on many occasions throughout the Gospel: Jesus is the one who is sent by the Father to do his works and speak his words.¹¹³

Little justification is offered for this claim, apart from Jesus' own testimony that he has been with the Father and heard directly from him and seen his face (John 6.46; 3.13). The fact that Jesus is of the world above is basis enough for the claim he makes to speak directly of the things of God (John 8.23). The proof of Jesus' authority, however, falls far short of demonstration. The claim is made more problematical by virtue of the fact that it involves the claimant in acts which seem to be flagrant denials of the validity of the usual patterns of authority and prescriptions for action (John 9.16). The Gospel of John presents us with the most consistent attempt to focus on the important issue of authority and the implications for faith in Jesus. What we see in the Fourth Gospel is a literary reflection of one issue which might have helped precipitate the 'parting of the ways' between some Jewish Christians (though not all) and those Jews who did not accept the messiahship of Jesus.¹¹⁴

Elsewhere in the New Testament there is a similar setting for these disputes. In Hebrews, for example, discussion focuses on the cult in an argument which stresses the inferiority of present cultic practice and its religious efficacy, compared with the priestly offering of Jesus (Heb. 7–10).¹¹⁵ Christ has entered the heavenly shrine, where God dwells.¹¹⁶ There is nothing un-Jewish about the ideas used here, but the circumstances have demanded that contrasts be made between the use of tradition by Christians, in particular their eschatological framework (e.g., Heb. 1.2), and Jewish use, the latter being considered unfavourably. Opponents had played down the significance of Christ (Heb. 1–2) and the recipients of the letter were in danger of relapsing into a pattern of interpretation, which they had once held and which did not allow for the messiahship of Jesus (Heb. 6.5f.; 10.26; 10.32f.; 12.25ff.; 10.10f.).¹¹⁷ Accordingly, the writer finds it necessary to define the boundaries anew and thereby affirms the ultimate character of the Christ-event and its consequences for the interpretation of the Jewish tradition. In Matthew, discussion over righteousness¹¹⁸ involves a recognition of both positive and negative features of contemporary Jewish practice (Matt. 23.2f.) and a demand that the Christian response should exceed that of the Scribes (Matt. 5.22).¹¹⁹ It represents another testimony to that necessity felt

by some Jewish Christians to crystallize the differences between their interpretation and that of those who disagreed with them.

The history of Jewish-Christian relations in the early centuries of the Common Era is complex. The separation effected by Paul and already in existence at the time he wrote his letters in the 50s initiated a separation which was consolidated, particularly after the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70. In places there continued to be links, and at times mutually interactive influences. In the third century Origen had an intimate knowledge of the Judaism of Caesarea, and at the margins of emerging orthodox Christianity there were those who maintained a form of Christian piety which maintained a significant Jewish element. So, at different rates in different places, the separation became fixed, and hostility of Christians towards Jews increased as the latter came to be presented as types of all that was opposed to God; a presentation aided by the use of polemical language which had its antecedents in many parts of the New Testament.¹²⁰

(f) The Rise of Gnosticism¹²¹

The focus on the heavenly dimension to earthly existence and human salvation is found in its most acute form in Gnosticism, a religious outlook one of whose main features is its claim to radical otherworldliness. From the second century onwards we have documentary evidence of religious systems which purport to offer explanations of the origin of the world and of evil, together with the means whereby the individual can achieve salvation in a world beyond. The key to this process of salvation is 'gnosis', knowledge. Gnosticism is salvation by knowledge, 'knowing whence one has come and whither one will go' (*Pirke Aboth*. 3.1).¹²²

Apart from their claim to offer salvation by knowledge the gnostic systems of the second century and later are characterized by the rigid separation of the cosmos into two separate realms, of darkness and light, of spirit and matter. Care is needed not to assume such characteristics of all the Gnostic texts, however, particularly those discovered at Nag Hammadi, in which there is a lack of homogeneity. The cosmological separation manifests itself in many gnostic texts in two ways: first of all, a separation between the created world and a higher realm, the former being the creation of an inferior divinity, usually identified with the God of Israel; second, theological dualism, the division between a supreme being and an inferior being, the product of a mistake in the cosmic process. In the developed systems much is made of the reasons why this lesser being was created and all that emanates from this mistake, as well as of the relationship between humanity and the highest divine being. Humanity is the result of the creation of the lower being (demiurge) but is also the result of some knowledge of the character of the highest beings. Thus in the gnostic work, the Hypostasis of the

Archons,¹²³ Adam is said to have been created in the image of a reflection in the waters of something greater, glimpsed by the inferior divine being. The fact that humanity has the spark of divinity indicates why it is that some have the glimpse of eternity and by their knowledge of their origin and destiny are enabled to see creation for what it really is and seek their true origin in the highest celestial spheres.

The consequences of this kind of religious system were manifold. First, it could lead to a disparagement of this world as part of a lower order.¹²⁴ This rejection of the world finds its classic expression in the religion of the Manichees,¹²⁵ to which Augustine for a time gave his allegiance.¹²⁶ Second, it led to a conflicting attitude towards ethical behaviour. On the one hand, there were those who argued that because the world and the flesh were the creations of an inferior being and that human nature had nothing to do with this world, it mattered little how they behaved.¹²⁷ On the other hand, there were those whose behaviour can be characterized as ascetic. For them it was necessary to eschew the things of this world as tainted by the flesh and to pursue only the things of the Spirit. Abstinence from sexual activity and from certain kinds of food and drink as well as the avoidance of too much contact with society at large are all features of this kind of attitude.¹²⁸

The major problem for the student of early Christianity is the issue of gnostic origins. By the middle of the second century CE, Gnosticism was a series of major religious systems, and the ideas were probably the dominant form of Christianity, espoused by several religious communities.¹²⁹ There are wide differences of opinion among scholars about the extent to which the New Testament writings themselves exhibit the influence of gnostic religion.¹³⁰ Some would argue that Gnosticism is essentially a Christian heresy. While there may be hints in the New Testament that ideas similar to those found in the later gnostic texts may have been in the air at the time, it is suggested that Christianity was the catalyst which led to the formation of these ideas into the coherent religious systems which we find in fully fledged Gnosticism.¹³¹ For these scholars there can be no suggestion that Gnosticism as we know it in the second century was a major factor in the development of Christian doctrine, at least in the most formative period of its development.

The evidence adduced in support of this position is quite substantial. It is pointed out that the documentary evidence for Gnosticism comes from a period well *after* the emergence of Christianity. The great gnostic systems of Marcion, Basilides and Valentinus emerged during a period well into the second century CE. What is more, many of the gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi in Egypt, which have been discovered over recent years, exhibit Christian influence either explicitly or implicitly. The fact that the documentary evidence comes from a period later than the time of writing of the bulk of the New Testament has persuaded many that we should not assume that

Gnosticism was a significant religious movement at the time of the emergence of Christianity.

On the other side, there are those who refuse to accept that Gnosticism is only a deviant form of Christianity and argue that the Christian elements are merely an alien accretion to an otherwise coherent religious system which evinces the major characteristics of the spirit of the late Hellenistic age. The discovery of the library of gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt has set the study of Gnosticism on a completely new footing. The texts as they stand were written much later than the first century, but there are signs that they may contain systems which have little or no Christian influence. While it may be true that the systems of Basilides *et al.* do not themselves seem to have influenced early Christian writers in the first century CE, there are indications from the Nag Hammadi texts that a pre- (and therefore non-) Christian Gnosticism looks much more likely.

The essential features of fully-fledged Gnosticism are not clearly pre-Christian. That characteristic of Gnosticism, metaphysical dualism, cannot be shown to have existed before the first century CE. But there are indications that suggest that several religious currents may have been well on the way to what was later to emerge as Gnosticism. This was also probably the case in Judaism,¹³² which may be a very surprising assertion, in the light of the fact that several of the gnostic texts are explicitly anti-Jewish in character. In Marcion's system, for example, the God of the Jews is relegated to a subordinate position as creator of the world, the God of the Bible, opposed to the God revealed by Jesus and his apostle Paul, the supreme being unknown to the biblical writers. The ridicule attached to the God of the Jews seems to indicate that Gnosticism emerged in an environment separated from Judaism. Much evidence suggests that the reverse may at least sometimes have been the case.¹³³ There are many Jewish elements in the gnostic texts, which could not have been assimilated from the Bible alone and indicate influence from extra-canonical Jewish material.¹³⁴ By the time we reach the second-century systems, we have viewpoints which are clearly anti-Jewish. What we have to ask ourselves is whether in the process which led to this position, we may not have evidence of the theological ideas of certain groups on the fringe of Judaism. There are signs that certain parts of Jewish theology had made a distinction between the appearance of God and his indefinable essence.¹³⁵ Dualism of quite a significant kind can be found in several documents from pre-Christian Judaism. The connection between this dualistic language and the abandonment of the God of Israel is tenuous and the links in the chain are at present obscure. The hints are that some kind of link does indeed exist, even if we cannot at present be entirely sure what led to the conclusions of the second-century Gnostics.¹³⁶

(g) Witness against the Beast and Babylon

The early Christians did from time to time meet with disapproval and penalties from administrators, but there was probably no coherent policy laid down by the imperial powers or their representatives which was ruthlessly prosecuted throughout the various territories under Roman jurisdiction.¹³⁷ There was suspicion of Christians, particularly among sections of the élite. Tacitus may have spoken for many in describing Christians disdainfully as 'hated by the whole human race' (*odium humani generis*). Celsus at the end of the second century CE, in what is one of the earliest extant attacks on Christianity, which prompted a detailed rebuttal by Origen, writes disparagingly of Christian doctrine and the fact that the movement seemed to him to attract the lower classes. In the light of this, it is no surprise to see regular harassment of Christians as a minority group which presumed to regard themselves as the microcosm of society as it ought to be, bearing witness to that vision before an uncomprehending world. Martyrdom is about bearing witness, though it has come to be linked with the specific example of bearing witness for one's cause even if it means losing one's life.¹³⁸

Martyrdom was not something which was unfamiliar to the Jewish religious tradition from which early Christianity emerged. There is evidence in ancient Jewish texts of the vicarious significance of martyrdom (e.g., 4 Macc. 6.28–9), and similar themes are to be found in most early Christian works, stemming, of course, from what Christians regarded as the ultimate example of martyrdom, the death of Jesus of Nazareth. The letters of Ignatius show the intense preoccupation with death which gripped the Bishop of Antioch as he journeyed to Rome. To follow in the steps of Jesus was a calling greater than any which could be offered, and Ignatius is anxious to avoid any hindrance to the fulfilment of this goal. Similar examples can be found in the martyrologies of the early Christian period.

The incident which is described during the last moments of the venerable Bishop of Smyrna (Martyrdom of Polycarp 9.2), Polycarp, graphically illustrates the problem posed by Christians. In this story the aged Christian refuses the rather irritated and weary plea of the Roman officer to save himself by burning incense to the genius of the Emperor. When it came to the crunch, could Christians really be trusted as loyal citizens? Were they not after all subversives who were not ultimately interested in the well-being of the Empire? Did they not despise the local and imperial gods by refusing to worship them? When things went wrong, therefore, the fault was laid at the door of those who had been guilty of angering the gods. This may already have happened in the case of the fire of Rome in the early 60s when Nero laid the blame on the Christians and, so Tacitus tells us (*Annals* 15.44), many suffered as a result. But it is also true that at other times Christians proved to be scapegoats because of their ambivalence with regard to the

state. Tertullian (*Apol.* 40.2) makes the point that when things were going wrong in city, or Empire, scapegoats were needed and the Christians proved to be eminently suitable candidates.¹³⁹ The reason for this was the unpatriotic nature of Christian belief and practice. Like the Jews, most Christians refused to worship the gods of the Romans or to show allegiance to the Empire by burning a pinch of incense to the genius of the Emperor. Such pagan suspicion lies behind Augustine's monumental work *The City of God*, for in it he seeks to answer the pagan critics of a later age who seek to lay the blame for the downfall of Rome at the door of Christianity and the way it subverted traditional Roman values.

The hostility towards Christians did not always manifest itself in the form of *official* opprobrium. The evidence of Pliny's correspondence with Trajan in 112 CE suggests that Christians and their activities had come to the notice of the governor of Bithynia, but, notwithstanding whatever may have happened under Nero half a century before, there seemed to be little awareness on Trajan's part about an official policy with regard to the Christians. The line taken by Roman authorities was to 'let sleeping dogs lie' and not to be proactive in searching out Christians.

Usually, however, the fears of the majority with regard to deviants in their society were the main cause of hostility and persecution. Despite all the protestations of the Christian apologists, nothing could be said which could remove the stigma of disloyalty to the Empire, which manifested itself in what to early Christians seemed to be entirely religious scruples, the wholehearted devotion to the God and the Messiah, the agent of God, by whom a new polity was going to be established on earth. One of the principal reasons for taking this kind of action was the subversion of traditional Roman values, which was believed to have taken place as the result of the growing influence of Christianity throughout the Empire. The religion of the state was eschewed by the Christians. Those who were adherents of the new religion rejected the pattern of practices which were at the heart of the traditional religion. This applied just as much to the position of Christians within the local city-states. Their attitude towards the local tutelary gods was equally uncompromising. It is only by understanding this political dimension to the refusal of Christians to acknowledge Roman and local deities in the customary way that we can understand why it was that at times so much hostility was generated against early Christians throughout the Empire,¹⁴⁰ more by local pressure than the edicts of the Roman administrators.¹⁴¹

EPILOGUE

Throughout the writing of this book I have been conscious of the complex process of interpretation which goes on in any attempt to write on Christian origins. The choice and the presentation of the material and the methodological assumptions tell as much about the interpreter's view of reality as the character of the ideas and the movements which he or she is examining. The perceptive reader will have noted, without too much difficulty, the theological struggle which has been going on in the foregoing pages. It is one which has beset Christians in every generation, namely the conflicting claims of a radical message and the pragmatic approach needed to deal with an unjust world. I hope that what I have written, particularly in the last part of the book, is not merely a projection of a present problem for Christians, though I recognize that it is a concern which has catalysed the presentation of the issues. It is not my primary concern in this book to answer twentieth-century problems via first-century texts and ideas. Nevertheless, I believe that it has been possible to isolate a recurring issue for Christians of all shades of opinion: the maintenance of the tension (if that is the appropriate goal) between the vision of the new creation and the necessity of living life in the old aeon. It has been a central thesis of this book that a fundamental feature of early Christian literature, particularly the Pauline corpus of writings, is dealing with this radical eschatological inheritance.

I am aware that I have done this all the way through this book, and there will be many occasions when I have shown my ignorance not only of particular fields of Judaism and Christianity but also of other theological disciplines, ancient history and the social sciences. Yet the future of exegesis lies with the attempt to say more than what actually happened. Some of the most stimulating exegesis has come from the pens of those who have had a profound interest in wider theological and social issues. One only has to mention the name of Rudolf Bultmann to be reminded how exegesis and theology can come together in a creative and provocative way. It may be argued that it was precisely because Bultmann allowed his exegesis to be clouded with other assumptions that his work has not stood the test of time. For all the shortcomings of his interpretation, the stimulating exposition of central New Testament themes, dependent as it is on a debt to contemporary philosophy, has yielded many profound insights which, arguably, would not have been forthcoming without that creative interaction. There is the possibility of a mutually beneficial hermeneutic in which the present can stimulate

a way of looking afresh at ancient texts and offering perspectives which we may not have noticed before. Assertion of common ground between modernity and the historical struggles of antiquity should not be taken as a datum, but should always be open to the criticism of further information of the world of late antiquity and the different perspectives on common problems which that world offered. The mutually informative hermeneutic suggested by Brazilian theologian Clodovis Boff in his model of the 'correspondence of relationships' deserves to be better known. He has suggested that engagement in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro is the condition for an approach to the Scriptures which may enable understanding. Such situations provide a hermeneutical catalyst in which understanding of these texts, which have often ceased to resonate with the members of the comfortable 'Northern' academy, may be facilitated.

Today, in our concern about violence, oppression and poverty, we still find ourselves, sometimes reluctantly, driven back into dialogue with the Jesus tradition. This is nothing new: the apostle Paul found himself doing the same thing within a couple of decades of the crucifixion (see 1 Cor. 9.14f.). The wider ramifications of the dialectic between the constraints of 'the real world' and the radical practice of Jesus have been the major theme of this study of Christian origins. Like Paul, many in the modern world, inside and outside the churches, are seeking to do justice to the wisdom and vision manifest in the Jesus tradition. The struggle to give effect to the prayer 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' is at the heart of the history of Christian discipleship, beset as it is with the temptation to follow a path which leads away from the Jesus tradition and the proclamation of the kingdom of God. This is something as real today as it was for those who first of all, however reluctantly, found it necessary to turn their backs on the practice of the reign of God and its inauguration on earth to look for an altogether less controversial religion.

APPENDIX: THE SOURCES

Recognition of the great importance of Jewish literature for our understanding of Christian origins has meant that in the last decade or so there has been a considerable amount of scholarly energy devoted to the study of what is loosely described as the intertestamental literature. This is a blanket term (and an inaccurate one since some of the texts post-date the New Testament, and parts of others, like 1 Enoch, are earlier than the latest parts of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament) used to describe those works which failed to get into the Hebrew canon and yet were written by non-Christian Jews. In fact, the term is stretched to include works which were written after the bulk of the New Testament (e.g., 4 Ezra and Syr. Baruch). It would be wrong to confine the term 'intertestamental literature' to those works which can with certainty be dated before the rise of Christianity or, for that matter, to drive too sharp a wedge between those books which do not form part of the canon of the Hebrew Bible, and the later portions of the canon, with which the intertestamental works often have a great deal of affinity. Of great importance in this area are the versions in languages other than Hebrew of the Bible, particularly in Greek, attention to which is a basic datum of study of Christian origins because of the probability that it was a Greek version which was the Bible of the first Christians. Doubts are expressed about the use of this intertestamental material only when we want to use portions of works which were clearly influenced by Christianity for the detailed exegesis of the New Testament. Thus we should not feel the need to limit the scope of our consideration of Jewish literature which can shed light on the character of early Judaism, only to that group of texts which can with certainty be dated before the first century CE.

The literature which we could include in this category is enormous and of great variety. On the one hand, we have the vast corpus of rabbinic literature, which includes legal pronouncements, stories of rabbis, parables and legends, as well as scriptural exposition of various kinds. On the other hand, we have what are loosely described as the pseudepigrapha, so called because the various works are often attributed to figures of Israel's past, such as Enoch, Abraham, Isaiah, Ezra, etc. Then we have the historical works of Flavius Josephus and the interpretative treatises of Philo of Alexandria. Finally, of course, there are the discoveries which have been made in the desert of Judaea and published over the past 50 years or so, the Dead Sea Scrolls, many of which fall outside the scope of many of the categories so far

mentioned, although several works known hitherto have also turned up there, and have now been published in their entirety.

1

Jewish Literature

(a) The Dead Sea Scrolls¹

Since their discovery just after the Second World War and their gradual publication ever since, culminating in the complete publication of all the available material in the last decade, they have revolutionized our understanding of first-century Judaism; they have enabled a shift in perspective, which has made it understandable why a group like the early Christians could have existed under the umbrella of Judaism for so long.

Whether or not all the material is the product of one group over a significant length of time is a matter for debate. As far as the reconstruction of a sect's beliefs is concerned, the Manual of Discipline (1 *QS*) and the Damascus Document (*CD*), known already from a version in the Cairo Geniza, are the most important. The distinctive biblical interpretation is well demonstrated by the commentary on Habakkuk (1 *QpHab.*). This is a verse-by-verse commentary that includes exegesis, which relates scriptural prophecies to events which have taken place in the life of the community. Other texts of importance are the moving and intensely personal Thanksgiving Hymns (1 *QH*), the precise details of the War Scroll (1 *QM*), which sets out the story of the final struggle of the sons of light against the sons of darkness. Other texts which are of interest to the student of early Christianity are the messianic collections (4 *QFlor.* and 4 *QTest.*) and the songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice from Cave 4. Texts are referred to by a number, which identifies the cave in which the scroll was found, and an abbreviation denoting the character of the document concerned.

(b) Josephus² and Philo³

Flavius Josephus is the best known of all the Jewish historical writers, but it should be recognized that there was a considerable tradition of historiography before him.⁴ Best known, because of their place in the Apocrypha, are the books of the Maccabees, which speak in various ways about the Maccabean crisis in the middle of the second century BCE. Of greatest

importance from the point of view of authenticity is 1 Maccabees. The rest are of less value as works of history, and indeed 4 Maccabees takes the form of a martyrology, with a long eulogy in the form of a history of the martyr's fate.

Josephus' most extended works are the *Antiquities of the Jews* and the *Jewish War*. The former is an attempt to tell the story of Judaism from the Creation down to the Jewish Revolt. From his introduction to the *Antiquities* Josephus' purpose is mainly apologetic. In the wake of the violent war waged by the Romans against the Jews in Palestine, there was obviously a need to clear the air somewhat and remove misapprehensions, by showing the greatness of the Jewish religious past. In addition, there is, according to Josephus, a religious reason for writing, for he wants to show that 'the main lesson to be learned from this history by anyone who comes to peruse it, is that men, who conform to the will of God and do not venture to transgress the laws that have been laid down, prosper in all things beyond belief; and for their reward, are offered by God felicity' (*Ant.* 1.14).

In his retelling of the scriptural stories, Josephus frequently amplifies the original and thereby betrays evidence of his knowledge of current interpretations. A good example is his rendering of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22; cf. *Ant.* 1.224ff.). Josephus identifies the mountain with the Temple Mount (226f.) and also has much to say about the glad acceptance by Isaac of his fate, a feature of the story which was to gain importance in later Jewish tradition.⁵ This long work (it runs to 20 books) is a mine of information to the student of the character of early Jewish exegesis, as well as to the historian.

Historically speaking, the *Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum*, frequently abbreviated as *JW* or *War*) is of greater value, as it describes (sometimes in considerable detail) the events which led up to the outbreak of the war of the Jews against Rome, in which Josephus himself was deeply involved, as well as the course of the war itself. There is some overlap between the *Antiquities* and the *War*, particularly over matters like the Jewish sects (*War* 2.119ff.), and Josephus himself is apt to offer cross-references to his other work. Josephus provides an account of the events leading up to the war, partly to correct any misapprehensions. Indeed, it is worth reflecting that he was completing the *Antiquities* at the time that Domitian was intensifying the prosecution of the Jewish tax,⁶ which was probably having severe repercussions on those with Jewish connections. Josephus' pro-Roman sympathies and his disdain for the fanatics are evident: 'the tyrants and band of marauders' (*War* 1.11), who brought Judaea and Jerusalem to destruction. What is more, his admiration for his masters, the Flavian dynasty, which had given him such a warm reception, is evident: particularly in his prophecy that Vespasian would be Emperor (*War* 3.398); he is in no doubt that the divine will was manifested in the Jewish defeat (*War* 3.293f.). Josephus makes no scyphantic attempt to place all the blame on the Jews, for he insists that

appalling behaviour by a succession of Roman procurators must also be partly to blame. Josephus was writing for a world which was unfamiliar with Judaism, was suspicious of many of its customs and habits and was particularly hostile to the Jews after the war. His presentation is therefore an attempt to rehabilitate the Jews and their traditions and to make this strange group more comprehensible (for an example of misinformation about the Jews see Tacitus, *Histories* 5). Often we find him translating the details of Jewish belief into a Hellenistic garb, in order to enable his readers to comprehend what the Jews believed (e.g., *War* 2.162f., where Josephus speaks of the pharisaic belief in the resurrection from the dead, which he calls 'the immortality of the soul'). Mention may also be made of Josephus' apologetic account of his life, in which he defends his conduct during the Jewish war, and also of the *Against Apion*, essentially an apology for Judaism, which reflects some of the common anti-Jewish prejudices of the period but is also a witness to the apologetic mode of a skilled broker who sought to mediate, explain and defend his ancestral religion.

Like Josephus, Philo was in part attempting to make sense of Judaism for a sophisticated audience, but this time one which had been schooled in the philosophical climate of Alexandria. His method differs markedly from that of Josephus in the *Antiquities*. Whereas the latter was content merely to retell the story of the Pentateuch and later Jewish traditions, Philo uses a method which moves beyond the letter of the text in order to draw out meaning. His commentaries on the Pentateuch, which are usually referred to by their Latin titles (e.g., *Creation*, *Allegory of the Laws*, etc.), by no means represent the whole of Philo's literary production. In addition to his commentaries in Greek, we have further works, now extant only in an Armenian version, *The Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus*, as well as fragments of an apology for Judaism. Philo's polemical tracts, *Embassy to Gaius* and *Against Flaccus*, both focus on the potentially explosive issue of Jewish rights and the relationship of Jews with their pagan neighbours.⁷ The former is an invective against the Emperor Gaius and his proposal to erect a statue of himself in the Temple in Jerusalem, whereas *Against Flaccus* is a polemic against Flaccus, the Roman prefect in Egypt (c. CE 32), who indulged in cruel actions against the Jews.⁸

(c) The Apocrypha/Pseudepigrapha/Non-Rabbinic Writings⁹

This heading covers a large number of works, some of which are falsely attributed to writers of Israelite antiquity (e.g., the book of Daniel in the Old Testament), others not so. For convenience this group has been divided into sections as follows:

- 1 Apocalypses;
- 2 Non-apocalyptic testaments;
- 3 Miscellaneous works.

Mention cannot be made here of all the works which might conceivably fall under the category of pseudepigrapha. A complete list may be found in J. H. Charlesworth's survey of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. W. Haase. One of the most important things to remember is that many of those works owe their preservation to Christian scribes and are as much 'Christian' texts as the writings of the New Testament, functioning as they probably did as a kind of 'preparation for the gospel'. That caveat is necessary should we be tempted to place too much reliance on them for pre-Christian ideas.

(i) Apocalypses

This is a fairly distinctive literary genre, in which a writer purports to give revelations or disclosures from God or his angel. All claim to offer information about a wide range of subjects, including eschatology, the reason for human suffering, cosmology (earthly and heavenly), and astronomy. Their common feature is that they claim to reveal things which are normally hidden from human perception, to give encouragement and warning to the recipients. Characteristic of all these Jewish texts is pseudonymity, namely the attribution of the revelations to a great figure of Israel's past history, like Abraham, Daniel, Isaiah or Ezra. This was a means of gaining authority and respectability for these disclosures.

The form of the various apocalypses differs enormously. In some (e.g., the Enochic literature), the seer is said to have ascended to heaven to be shown the secrets, whereas in others, the seer communicates with an angel who appears to him (4 Ezra, Syr. Baruch). A popular setting for such disclosures is before the death of a righteous man, when he is allowed to glimpse into heaven and communicate what he sees to his children (Test. Levi, Test. Abraham, Slav. Enoch).

There has been much dispute over which works should or should not be categorized as apocalyptic. Most would include: 1 Enoch (fragments of which have been found in Cave 4 at Qumran), Daniel, Revelation, Slav. Enoch, *Jubilees*, Syr. Baruch, Greek Baruch, 4 Ezra, Apoc. Abraham, Test. Abraham, Test. Levi and Naphtali (from Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs), Ascension of Isaiah, Shepherd of Hermas and the apocalypses from the later Jewish mystical tradition, like Hebrew Enoch (3 Enoch).

(ii) Non-apocalyptic testaments

Into the second category fall those testaments attributed to biblical figures like Moses and Job, which diverge from the apocalyptic type by virtue of the

fact that they do not purport to offer visions of divine secrets, but merely the pronouncements of a dying patriarch, without any claim that they derive directly from God. Among such works we should include the Assumption of Moses, the bulk of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Testament of Job.

Whether there is any justification for separating this small category from the variety of works which we have included below under the category 'Miscellaneous' is difficult to assess. This group contains such a diversity of works that it is very difficult to divide them up with any precision. It does seem possible, however, to distinguish these testaments from the related apocalyptic testaments noted above, which are much more explicitly revelatory in content.

(iii) Miscellaneous works

Apocrypha: This group of writings must be mentioned, as it formed part of the canon of the Christian Church for centuries, as a result of its inclusion in the Vulgate by Jerome. This is: 1 and 2 Maccabees, 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (or the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach), Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

The Odes and Psalms of Solomon: there has been considerable debate whether in fact the former should be classed with the Jewish pseudepigrapha. In their present form the Odes are probably Jewish-Christian but are the end-product of a literary tradition, which includes Qoheleth and the Wisdom of Solomon. The Psalms, which are almost certainly pre-Christian in origin, have many resemblances to the biblical psalms and are particularly important for their messianic beliefs found in Psalms 17 and 18.

Sibylline Oracles: these are a series of prophetic oracles ascribed to a Sibyl, a pagan prophetess. In their present form this collection is Jewish and, in part, Christian in its inspiration. Whilst the predictions are put into the mouth of the Sibyl, this is merely a device to show that even pagan divines had to acknowledge the supremacy of Judaism and the ultimate vindication of her hopes.

Joseph and Asenath: this is a remarkable work. Essentially it is a form of story, which describes the courtship and marriage of an Egyptian princess to Joseph. There is an apologetic motive in it; namely, the conversion of the pagan Asenath from idolatry. Opinion has been divided over the extent of Christian influence in this work, particularly in those sections which seem to reflect early Christian sacramentalism.

The Letter of Aristeas: this work purports to show the circumstances in which the LXX version was written in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (285–47 BCE).

The Life of Adam and Eve: this work is a strange mixture of legend, exhortation and vision. It tells of the circumstances of the Fall and its aftermath and includes advice to Seth, Adam's son.

(d) Rabbinic Literature

(i) Character and categorization of material¹⁰

By far the most extensive collection of material relating to Jewish life and thought in the period covering the emergence of the Christian Church are the various collections of sayings and pronouncements of rabbis from Palestine and Babylon, the corpus of rabbinic literature. The volume of this literature, its complexity of thought and argument, as well as the linguistic barrier, make it a formidable proposition for most Christian scholars. Nevertheless, thanks to the labours of Jewish scholars, it is becoming much more accessible to non-specialists, and the great value of it for our understanding of the origin of Christianity cannot be overestimated.

With the gradual emergence of a canon of Scripture, finally ratified by the rabbinic group at Jamnia after CE 70, there arose the need to codify the conventions and habits of Judaism built up over centuries, as well as interpret the sacred writings for subsequent generations, to ascertain how these offered advice concerning the conduct of life of the individual, the cult and the state, either from the exposition of the various parts of the sacred writings themselves or by means of new rules specifically formulated for the occasion. It is this last kind of procedure which is the basis of much of the rabbinic tradition: the ongoing interpretation of Scripture and the later reinterpretations of those earlier attempts by later teachers for subsequent generations. The rabbinic corpus contains material of great antiquity, among a much greater amount of more recent commentary. In referring to the date of the rabbis who are mentioned in the rabbinic literature, their place within two groups is normally used. The earliest group of all – the one which specifically relates to the earliest Christian communities – is referred to as the *tannaim*; the second group (from the third century CE onwards) are *amoraim*. The material which we find in the two Talmuds is tannaitic and amoraic. The earliest collections of rabbinic tradition were handed on by word of mouth and were designated the Oral Torah. Some of the various types of material in the rabbinic literature may be categorized as follows.

Halakab is the normative doctrinal statement transmitted by word of mouth and often without any obvious relationship with Scripture. It is the pronouncement of an authorized teacher on some matter concerned with Jewish praxis. The Mishnah is full of *halakoth*.

Haggadah is the term used to denote all non-halakic elements in rabbinic literature, whether it is non-legalistic exegesis, parable or stories concerning the various teachers.

Midrash is the exposition of a text of Scripture. This is done for a variety of purposes: (i) the attempt to explain what the text means; (ii) to use the text as a means of extracting information concerning the nature of the divine demand upon God's people. A halakic midrash, therefore, is the use of Scripture to offer some kind of insight on a matter relating to conduct.

Gemara is the word used to describe the mass of additional material which is to be found in the Talmuds and which has been added as a way of interpreting the earlier pronouncements contained in the Mishnah and other collections.

(ii) Types of literature

Mishnah

At the heart of the rabbinic corpus stands the Mishnah, a collective term for the corpus of halakic statements codified by R. Judah ha-Nasi (c. CE 200), but can be used as another way of speaking of *halakab*. A glance at the table of contents in Danby's translation will show that it is divided into six orders corresponding to the main categories of Jewish religious practice (seeds, set feasts, women, damages, hallowed things, and cleannesses). In its present form, it is the result of the redaction of R. Judah ha-Nasi in c. CE 200, but attempts at codification had been made much earlier than this. Most of the material is tannaitic, though the proportion of it stemming from teachers who flourished before the fall of Jerusalem is quite small. It is a witness, therefore, in the main to the debates in the second-century academies concerning the nature of religious practice. While some of the material in this collection probably reflects real problems facing Jews in deciding how to practise their religion, it cannot be doubted that some of the issues were merely hypothetical situations for debate and discussion within the *scholarly circles*. In addition to the halakic material, the Mishnah contains two tractsates, which stand apart from the rest: *Pirke Aboth* and *Middoth*. The former is a collection of aphorisms of Sages from the tannaitic period, with little or no halakic content, and the latter is a description of the measurements (*middoth*) of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The means of referring to the Mishnah is through the designation

m(ishnah), followed by the tractate (e.g., *mBerakoth*), the chapter and the section.

Parallel with the collection of halakoth in the Mishnah is the additional collection in the Tosefta. In many places it parallels what is contained in the Mishnah, but includes other material, some of which is non-halakic. Reference is as for the Mishnah, *tBerakoth*, followed by the chapter number and section.

The Talmudim

These are to be found in two recensions, the longer one stemming from Babylon (Babli) and the shorter from Palestine (Yerushalmi). The writing down of the Talmudim marks a later stage in the process of the interpretation and understanding of the received tradition than was reached in the Mishnah and Tosefta. The form of the Talmudim shows that clearly, for, with one or two exceptions, the order of the Mishnah is followed, the *halakah* is quoted, and the additional material, which follows, serves as a commentary on it. While much of this material comes from later commentators, we find that extraneous tannaitic material has been included, some of which has been paralleled in other collections. As we might expect, the different provenances of the two Talmuds help to explain the concentration of Babylonian scholars and Palestinian scholars in Babli and Yerushalmi respectively. The process of commenting on the tradition has not stopped with the Talmuds, and some examples of the continuation of this process can be seen in the exegetical notes which surround the Talmudic text and were written by great medieval commentators like Rashi.

Reference to the Talmudim is usually quite straightforward. A passage in the Babylonian Talmud is designated by b, followed by the name of the tractate and the folio number. One figure is used to designate one folio, with front and back being designated by the letters a and b respectively. Thus the front of folio 57 in tractate Berakoth would be *bBerakoth* 57a. As far as the Jerusalem Talmud is concerned, there is less standardization. References are sometimes given to the Mishnah and at others, as with the Babylonian Talmud, to the page and column number, for example, *jHagigah* 2.1 and 77b (the columns are numbered a–d).

One of the greatest problems in using the rabbinic material concerns the date of particular traditions. In addition to the fact that many of the traditions in the rabbinic corpus come from a date after the writing of the New Testament documents and cannot therefore be used with certainty to illustrate first-century material, we now have to face the fact that tradition-historical criticism has been used with great effect by Jacob Neusner and his pupils on the rabbinic traditions. It is no longer possible simply to look at the attribution of a particular saying or tradition and assume that it necessarily stems from the rabbi whose name is attached to the tradition. In this respect,

contemporary rabbinic scholarship has derived many insights from the way in which the traditio-historical method has been employed on the Gospels in the New Testament.

*Tannaitic Midraschim*¹¹

As the name implies, these are collections of scriptural exposition, stemming from the tannaitic period and consist of verse-by-verse commentaries on Exodus (*Mekilta*), Leviticus (*Sifra*) and Numbers and Deuteronomy (*Sifre*). As a rule, the material contained in these commentaries is halakic and shows how doctrinal formulations were linked with the text of Scripture.

Midrash Rabbah

This important collection consists of verse-by-verse commentaries on the Torah and Megilloth (Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Qoheleth and Lamentations). There is much illustrative and, particularly, parabolic material. References to these works usually take the form of the English or Hebrew title to the book, followed by a capital R(abbah), with a reference to the chapter, within the commentary itself rather than the chapter of the biblical book.

Aboth de Rabbi Nathan (ARN)

Mention has already been made of the collection *Pirke Aboth* now contained within the Mishnah. A later collection, mainly of material purportedly relating to tannaitic teachers, is the *Aboth* according to Rabbi Nathan. In addition to a greater number of sayings of the tannaim than had been included in *Pirke Aboth*, there are other stories, some of a legendary character, which shed light on the rabbis of the time of composition.

Pirke de R. Eliezer

This is a very late collection, but is of great interest in that it sheds light on the speculative and esoteric interest in scriptural interpretation within the rabbinic tradition. It differs quite markedly from those that we have just mentioned and has the appearance of an anthology. It follows the order of various events in the early part of the book of Genesis, special attention being paid to the process of creation. It unlocks various doors on subjects of interest to Jewish mystics, such as the creation of the world, cosmology and the throne of God. It forms a link with the more extreme speculation which confronts us in the pages of the Kabbalah, as well as reaching back to the beginnings of the earliest rabbinic mysticism. There is a translation of the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* by G. Friedlander.

*The Targumim*¹²

Other important repositories of Jewish ideas which have been given considerable prominence as a significant source for the character of early Jewish interpretation of Scripture are the Aramaic targumim. When Hebrew ceased to be the dominant spoken language of Palestine, there was the need for some kind of translation within the liturgy, so that people could understand the Hebrew Scriptures. This process was the beginning of the targumic interpretation, in which a verse-by-verse translation into Aramaic was given by a member of the synagogue (*metburgeman*), after the reading from the Hebrew Scriptures. As with any translation, of course, the problems of expressing the ideas inevitably led to changes and amplifications to the original. But in the targumim we are faced with much more than this, namely the inclusion of a vast amount of material expanding the details of stories, having little or no warrant in the original and also giving expository interpretations of obscure passages.

There are targumim on most parts of the Hebrew Bible, but of most importance are those on the Torah, for these contain some of the oldest elements. These targumim have come down to us in various versions. The official version which, on the whole, keeps closest to the Hebrew text (even though it occasionally reflects the expansions to be found in other versions), is called Onkelos. By far the longest of the targumim on the Pentateuch is Pseudo-Jonathan. This has extensive additions and rewritings of biblical stories, with material from a great range of dates, right down to the time of the rise of Islam (Targum Ps. Jon. on Gen. 15.14). Despite the late date of its final form, it may contain many interpretations, which have been either suppressed or forgotten in other areas of Jewish tradition, and is therefore a repository of great value for the kind of Jewish interpretation current at the beginning of the Christian era. A variety of other versions are loosely referred to as the Fragment Targum, because we possess only fragments of it from a variety of sources; this targum is not continuous over the course of the whole Pentateuch. Finally, mention should be made of the so-called Targum Neophyti 1 discovered in Codex Neophyti in the Vatican Library by A. Diez Macho. The bulk of the Pentateuch of this targum has now been published. Ps. Jonathan (or TJ1), the Fragment Targum (TJ2) and Neophyti 1 are all believed to preserve the Palestinian targumim in various recensions and can all be used as a repository of the way in which various passages were read and understood at the beginning of the Christian era. Nevertheless, as far as the use of targumic material for the interpretation of the New Testament is concerned, there has been much discussion about the problems facing the dating of various traditions stemming from different ages and the difficulty in isolating early material. In short, all that can be safely said on the matter is that each tradition needs to be treated in isolation, and a conclusion with regard to one piece of tradition cannot necessarily apply to another section.

Early Christian Literature

Unlike the Jewish literature of the period, the early Christian literature is well known and studied in great detail, though it is a measure of the influence of the canon that concentration on the New Testament texts has eclipsed the importance of other literature, which was written during the first two centuries CE. Use of modern translations or even critical editions of the Greek New Testament can easily beguile the reader into thinking that these translations and editions represent a text from antiquity. In fact, most are modern reconstructions of the likely original text. Fundamental to the interpretation of the New Testament is recognition of the complexity of its textual history.¹ Our earliest manuscripts (the papyri) are from the end of the second century or beginning of the third century CE. They were already probably subject to a degree of homogenization. Before that date, the form of text to which second-century writers bear witness was not always similar. The influence of oral tradition on the form of text was probably quite considerable well into the second century. The variant in detail and more substantially (the Acts of the Apostles, for example is, in effect, available in a very different version in the Codex Bezae) is a reason for caution in various areas of New Testament interpretation. One should not be too confident that one has access to anything like the original, and building too much on minute differences (as is often the case in modern redaction criticism) is not always warranted because of the fluidity of the textual tradition. Study of the text does not receive the attention that it deserves.

Much modern biblical scholarship has worked on the assumption that ancient writers had views of authorship similar to our own, in which clear aims were set and kept to in written texts. The evidence, even in the New Testament, indicates a variety of inconsistencies in individual texts. Our earliest testimony to the origins of the Gospels (Papias quoted in *EH* 3.39.14–16) suggests that the evangelists were mainly collectors rather than authors. The same may be true also of the Pauline letters. The versions of Paul's letters in our possession may be collections of discrete elements on related topics, or have been subject to subsequent addition after they left the Apostle's control. In the light of the vicissitudes of textual transmission, inconsistencies between various letters and within a single letter may be best explained as evidence of the works of glossators. This is an alternative approach with little support in the modern scholarly world, but it is a thesis not without some cogency and deserves more consideration than it is given.

The documents which do not form part of the canon² have suffered less

well. It is true that the collection of writers referred to loosely as the Apostolic Fathers (all derive from the sub-apostolic age or soon after), namely, 1 Clement, 2 Clement, the Letters of Ignatius, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Letter of Diognetus, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache, is well known.³ We are only beginning to cover the vast penumbra of early Christian literature outside the New Testament, which is all too little known and even less well researched by students of early Christianity. Much of the important literature is described and some of it is translated either in whole or in part in the edition of the New Testament apocrypha of Hennecke-Schneemelcher and most recently in J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*.

Particular mention should be made of the extra-canonical sayings of Jesus, which are to be found in the patristic literature, Islamic texts and among the Nag Hammadi texts and other papyri finds.⁴ Even if some of the material may not have any great value for a reconstruction of the teaching of Jesus, it certainly allows us to glimpse the ideas of the various communities that produced it. Similarly, the Jewish-Christian Gospels, like the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Ebionites and the Gospel of the Nazarenes, which are quoted by later Christian writers, cast light on the beliefs and practices of those who maintained the centrality of Jesus, but whose christological doctrine fell short of the norms which were gradually being accepted within the Church.

As far as the earliest phase of Christian thought and history is concerned, we are inevitably thrown back on the New Testament.⁵ Here the problem is not so much knowledge and lack of critical texts as evaluation and the problems of use. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the case of gospel study over the last hundred years or so. As the result of the traditio-historical method, we can see that they are made up of isolated units of tradition (stories, sayings, etc.), which have been put together in their present form probably by the transmitters of the tradition. In addition, there has been a succession of attempts to get behind our Greek texts to the possible Aramaic sources which underlie them, a very necessary component in historical Jesus research.⁶ There is continuing interest in source-critical evaluation. The close relationship between the first three Gospels (hence their title 'Synoptic Gospels', because they can be placed together in a synopsis) has persuaded many that there is some form of literary relationship between them. For many years scholars were persuaded of the substantial accuracy of the Two-Document theory, which maintains that Matthew and Luke were dependent in the writing of their Gospels on Mark and another source common to them both, designated *Q*.⁷ This theory is the basis of much of the work done on the Gospels since the Second World War.

In all these discussions of the relationship between the Synoptic Gospels, little mention has been made of the Gospel of John. In its present form and

style the Gospel of John stands apart from the others. It has been dubbed the 'spiritual Gospel', and many have been convinced that we have in this text a sophisticated theological exposition of the significance of Jesus of Nazareth, in which the reporting of the incidents of Jesus' life takes second place to theological exposition. For a long time it was considered that the lack of concern for historical reporting in the Gospel meant that the Evangelist had simply taken over incidents and sayings from one or more of the other Gospels and used them in his presentation of the impact of Jesus. While no one will doubt the sophistication of Johannine theology, it represents a strange reversal of fortunes that the 'spiritual Gospel' has been rehabilitated as a document of some worth for the historian, whereas its companion Gospels have suffered the fate of having doubts cast upon their historical reliability. Nearly 50 years ago, Percy Gardner-Smith challenged the assumption of many of his contemporaries that the Gospel of John was dependent on the Synoptic Gospels. While there are still some who maintain that it is dependent on one or more of the other Gospels, the studies of C. H. Dodd have indicated that the basis for such a belief does not exist. Consequently, we find that today most commentators believe that the Gospel depends for its sources on material which is independent of the Synoptic Gospels, even if it may ultimately link with it further back in the period of oral tradition.⁸

The other New Testament documents present their own problems. With the exception of the Acts of the Apostles, which alone purports to give a history of the expansion of Christianity, all the other New Testament documents are documents whose main purpose is the doctrinal and ethical instruction of the recipients. As such, any information that they may give us about the history and chronology of early Christianity or, for that matter, the particular doctrinal standpoint of the community addressed, is only incidental. Thus the problem of reconstructing, say, the outline of Paul's apostolic ministry is a task of great difficulty, should we depend on the letters of Paul alone. Certainly, passages like Galatians 1-2 give us a certain amount of information about Paul's activities, but such items of information are infrequent. As a result, resort is usually made to the Acts of the Apostles, where some account of Christian history is attempted. The value of this text for the reconstruction of early Christian history has been hotly disputed, and there are some who prefer to ignore Acts entirely as a source of early Christian history, believing that its perspective is so conditioned by the concerns of the writer that the amount of accurate historical information is extremely limited. There are problems with Acts, as a comparison of the accounts of Paul's visits to Jerusalem (Acts 9.11, 15; Gal. 1-2) will reveal.⁹

The major problem confronting us with the other documents is their authorship and date and the situation which provoked the writers to respond in the way that they did. Dispute over the authorship of the Pauline letters is

by no means resolved. It can probably be said that there are four documents which many would consider to be inauthentic, namely Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, and two others, about which doubt is often expressed, Colossians and 2 Thessalonians (Hebrews is always assumed to be non-Pauline).

NOTES

Preface

- 1 J. Robinson and H. Koester, *Trajectories*.

PART I

Introduction

1 *The Rock Whence Ye Were Hewn*

- 1 On Jesus in Jewish tradition, see Herford, *Christianity*; Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth*; M. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism*.
- 2 See 'Nostra Aetate' in *Documents of Vatican II*, 743ff.; U. Simon, *A Theology of Auschwitz*.
- 3 On Jewish background of the Christian liturgy, see Levertoff in *Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Lowther Clarke; Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*; Oesterley, *The Jewish Background*; Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue*; Wainwright and Jones, *The Study of Liturgy*; Le Déaut, *Message*.
- 4 On the kingdom of God, see Perrin, *The Kingdom of God*, and below, 133ff.
- 5 Concisely stated in English by Brandon, *Fall*.
- 6 On the Tübingen school, see Harris, *The Tübingen School*, and for its continued influence, see Brandon, *Fall*; Munck, *Paul*; Goulder, *Two Missions*.
- 7 See Brandon, *Fall*, 54ff. and *Religion in Ancient History*, 310; cf. H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, 64.
- 8 de Lange, *Origen*; Kelly, *Jerome*. On Justin, see Osborne, *Justin*; Barnard, *Justin*; Harnack, *Judentum und Judenchristentum*; Boyarin, *Dying for God*.
- 9 For a survey of this polemic, see Maier, *Auseinandersetzung*, and also A. L. Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*; Parkes, *Conflict*; Taylor, *Anti-Judaism*.
- 10 See E. P. Sanders, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (3 vols); Wilken, *Judaism*. Additional bibliography: Chilton, and Neusner, *Jewish and Christian Debates and Jewish and Christian Doctrines*; Sanders, J. T., *Schismatics*; Segal, *Rebecca's Children*.
- 11 Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*.
- 12 On the canon, see von Campenhausen, *Formation*; Moule, *Birth*. Note also the salutary remarks of Stone, *Scriptures*, 53.
- 13 See Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*.
- 14 See Stone, *Scriptures*.
- 15 de Ste Croix, 'Why were the early Christians persecuted?'; Frend, *Martyrdom*; Boyarin, *Dying for God*.
- 16 On the variety of early Christian belief, see Bauer, *Orthodoxy*; Dunn, *Unity*.
- 17 Moore, *Judaism*; Urbach, *Sages*; Neusner, 'Formation'.
- 18 Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*; Stern, *Greek and Latin Writers*; Smallwood, *Jews*.

- 19 On Celsus, see Beaker in ANRW 2.23.2, 1055ff. Celsus criticized the Christians for undermining the strength of the state and its powers of resistance (*Contra Celsum*. 8.66).
- 2 *An Approach to Ancient Judaism***
- 1 Moore, *Judaism*; Urbach, *Sages*; but note the comments of Neusner, 'Formation'. On ordinary Judaism, see Sanders, *Judaism*.
 - 2 Classically in Bousset, *Religion*. See Moore, *Judaism* 1, 128ff.
 - 3 Neusner, 'Formation' cf. Rivkin, *Hidden Revolution*.
 - 4 Bousset, *Religion*.
 - 5 Knibb in Knibb, Coggins and Philips, *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*; Knibb, 'Apocalyptic'.
 - 6 See Rowland in Carson ed., *From Sabbath to Sunday*.
 - 7 See *SVM History* 2, 237ff.
 - 8 *SVM History* 2, 260ff., 292ff.
 - 9 See below, 40ff. and also Moore, *Judaism* 2, 40ff.
 - 10 On the Temple and the cult at Leontopolis, see Hayward, *Temple*. On the Samaritans see Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews*.
 - 11 Moore, *Judaism* 2, 3ff.; Freyne, *Galilee*, 259ff.
 - 12 See below, 86ff. and *SVM History* 2, 488ff.; Moore, *Judaism* 2, 323ff.; Urbach, *Sages* 1, 649ff.
 - 13 Cf. Dunn, *Parting*.
- 3 *The Jews After the Exile***
- 1 For the history see *SVM History*, Hayes and Miller, *Israelite and Judean History*; later history in Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People*; Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution*; Baron, *Social and Religious History*; Smallwood, *Jews*; Aberbach, *War*; Koester, *Introduction*. See also Sandmel, *The First Christian Century* and id. *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*.
 - 2 Note the way in which Nehemiah, Ezra and Daniel speak of Jews holding positions of authority in pagan courts (Neh. 2; Ezra 7; Dan. 1ff.).
 - 3 See the Letter of Aristeas. On Egyptian Judaism, see Collins, *Athens*; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilisation*.
 - 4 Tcherikover, op. cit. On Antiochus, see Morkholm, *Antiochus IV*.
 - 5 In addition to Tcherikover, see Hengel, *Judaism and Jews*; Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*.
 - 6 Bickerman, *God of the Maccabees*; Farmer, *Maccabees*; Hengel, *Zeloten*; Rhoads, *Israel*.
 - 7 Freyne, *Galilee*, 68ff.; Hoehner, *Herod*; *SVM History* 1, 330ff.; A. H. M. Jones, *Herods*.
 - 8 *SVM History* 1, 386f.

- 9 On this turbulent period, see K. Wellesley, *The Longest Year*.
- 10 Yadin, *Bar Kochba*; Bowersock, 'A Roman Perspective'; Schäfer, 'Akiba'; *Aufstand*.
- 11 Hengel, *Judaism and Jews*.
- 12 See below, 79ff.
- 13 Mantel, *Sanhedrin*; *SVM History* 2, 199ff.
- 14 The Temple inscription reads as follows: 'No man of another nation is to enter within the fence and enclosure round the Temple. And whosoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues.' See Barrett, *NT Background*, 50; *SVM History* 2, 284.
- 15 *SVM History* 2, 312.
- 16 Neusner, *Traditions about the Pharisees; Politics*, cf. Rivkin, *Hidden Revolution*. See further, *SVM History* 2, 314ff., 381ff.
- 17 *SVM History* 1, 379; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.95; 15.403ff.
- 18 On Galilee, see Freyne, *Galilee*, 55ff. Rhoads, *Israel*; Vermes, *Jesus*, 42ff.; Meyers, 'Cultural Setting'; Klausner, *Jesus*, 175ff. For an attempt to ascertain the views of the Jewish rebels via numismatic study, see L. Kadman, *Coins*.
- 19 Kautsky, *Foundations*; Kreissig, *Sozialen Zusammenhänge*; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*; Aberbach, *War*; Riches, *Jesus*; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*. On the wider issues, Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*; Macmullen, *Roman Social Relations*; de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*.
- 20 See Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System' who suggests that 'Religion is both the model for social order, at once reflecting the existing order and shaping it to the really real world, to which its own symbolic system refers.'
- 21 Freyne, *Galilee*, 228.
- 22 Caution is required in linking the apocalypses too closely only with eschatologically oriented groups. It is apparent that they also exhibit another strand, which sought answers to life's perplexities.
- 23 See Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 637.
- 24 *Ibid.*; Freyne, *Galilee*, 194ff.
- 25 In Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 657. On seizure of property and the impoverishment of the people, see Josephus, *Ant.* 15.6; 121; 299ff.; *War* 1.370.
- 26 Kreissig, *Zusammenhänge*, 36ff.; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 662; Riches, *Jesus*, 77ff.; Rhoads, *Israel*.
- 27 *War* 1.401f.; 2.404; 407; *Ant.* 16.136ff.; 149ff.; 17.302ff.; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 330ff., 661ff.; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.42.
- 28 On the debt records, see Kreissig, *op. cit.*, 127ff., especially 132. For other evidence of attempts at social justice, see Josephus, *War* 7.261; 4.507ff.; 5.439ff.; also the maltreatment of the aristocracy: Josephus, *War* 4.138ff.; 354ff.; 2.425ff. See also Goodman, 'First Jewish Revolt' and Rajak, *Josephus*.
- 29 Note the reference to Simeon b. Giora in *War* 2.652; Rhoads, *Israel*, 80.

- 30 On the industry connected with the Temple, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem*.
- 31 On *Fiscus Judaicus*, see also *Ant.* 18.313; *War* 5.187; 7.218; Dio Cassius 66.7; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.76ff.; also Smallwood, *Jews*, 345ff.; Falk, *Introduction* 1, 67ff. and Goodman, 'Nerva, the *Fiscus Judaicus* and Jewish Identity'.
- 32 Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People*, 1, 691f.
- 33 Cf. Kreissig, *Sozialen Zusammenhänge*, 92.
- 34 On Galilee, see Freyne, *Galilee*.
- 35 Neusner, *Jews in Babylon*; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilisation*; Leon, *Jews*; Magie, *Roman Rule*; Kraabel, *Judaism in Asia Minor*.
- 36 On the proscription of cults, see Smallwood, *op. cit.*, 133ff.
- 37 Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 2, 701ff.; 1, 117f; 420ff. See also Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*; Smallwood, *Jews*; Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*.
- 38 On citizenship, see Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 440ff.
- 39 Archaeological evidence, see Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 2, 908ff.; Gutmann, *Ancient Synagogues*.
- 40 On God-fearers, see Moore, *Judaism* 1, 325f., 340; TDNT 9, 207f.; 8, 615, 618; and Siegert, 'Gottesfürchtige'.
- 41 Strack-Billerbeck, 2, 715ff.
- 42 On problems posed by circumcision, see TDNT 6, 72ff.; Martial, *Epigr.* 7, and 11.
- 43 Theissen, *Social Setting*; *First Followers*.
- 44 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*; Deissmann, *Light*; and particularly Meeks, *Urban Christians*. See also earlier S. J. Case, *Social Origins*.
- 45 Additional bibliography: Avi-Yonah, *Jews in Palestine*; Barclay, *Jews*; Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome*; Bickerman, *God of the Maccabees*; Boccacini, *Middle Judaism*; Cohen, *Maccabees*; Dunn, *Parting*; Feldman and Reinhold, *Jewish Life and Thought*; Garnsey and Humfress, *Evolution*; Goodman, *Ruling Class*; Goodman, *Roman World*; Grabbe, *Judaism*; Grabbe, *Introduction*; Horbury, *History of Judaism*; Jagersma, *History*; Levine, *Synagogue*; Lieu, *Jews*; McClaren, *Turbulent Times?*; Millar, *Roman Near East*; Otzen, *Judaism*; Schiffman, *Text to Tradition*; Sanders, *Judaism*; Segal, *Rebecca's Children*; Soggin, *History*; Theissen, *Theory*; Wengst, *Pax Romana*; Wilson, *Related Strangers*.

PART II

Jewish Life and Thought at the Beginning of the Common Era from the Perspective of the Study of Christian Origins

1 *God's Covenant with the Jews*

- 1 Sanders, *Paul*, exposes some of the caricatures of Judaism by Christian writers.

- 2 Le Déaut, *La Nuit*.
- 3 Sanders, *Paul*, 1ff. and 33ff.
- 4 Sanders, op. cit., 233ff.
- 5 On the covenant, see Eichrodt, *Theology*; Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*; Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant*; McCarthy, *Old Testament Covenant*; Buchanan, *Consequences*; TDNT 2, 106ff. On continuing importance in the NT, see Mark 14.24 and par.; 2 Cor. 3; Gal. 4; M. D. Hooker in ed. Hooker, *Paul and Paulinism*, 47ff.
- 6 On this see Nicholson, 'Interpretation'.
- 7 Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 67ff.; Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*.
- 8 On attitudes to circumcision, see McKelvey, 'Conversion' and Nolland, 'Uncircumcised Proselytes?'
- 9 See below, 86ff.
- 10 On *halakah* in the Bible, see Weingreen, *From Bible to Mishnah*.
- 11 On the land, see Davies, *Gospel and Land*.
- 12 On this subject, see Clements, *God and Temple; Abraham and David*; Sawyer, *Moses*.
- 13 Additional bibliography: Bartlett, *1 Maccabees*; Murray, *Cosmic Covenant*; Wright, *Climax*.

2 *The God of the Covenant*

- 1 Urbach, *Sages* 1, 525ff.; Moore, *Judaism* 1, 537; 2, 16ff.; von Rad, *OT Theology* 1, 12, 308.
- 2 Note the development of theological reflection in Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah; see Scholem, 'Kabbalah'.
- 3 On this passage see von Rad, *OT Theology* 1, 122f.; id., *Problem of the Hexateuch*.
- 4 On the wisdom tradition, see von Rad, *Wisdom*. Note how Exodus and the wisdom tradition converge in Wisd. II, 16f.
- 5 On the Deuteronomistic history, see Ackroyd, *Exile*, 62ff.
- 6 But note the strains on this view in 4 Ezra. See Sanders, *Paul*, 409f.; A. L. Thompson, *Problem of Evil*.
- 7 Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*, 60f.
- 8 Cross, *Canaanite Myth*.
- 9 Cross, 'Council of Yahweh'.
- 10 Urbach, *Sages* 1, 138ff.; Carr, *Angels*, 30ff.
- 11 Brown, *World*, 45ff.; Dodds, *Pagan*; Nock, *Conversion*.
- 12 Eliade, *Shamanism*; Bloch, *Principle*; Mandel, *Utopian Thought*.
- 13 Clements, *Prophecy*.
- 14 Lindblom, *Prophecy*; Blenkinsopp, *History of Prophecy*.

- 15 Cf. the comments of Bowker, *Religious Imagination*, on the problem of theology in the ancient world.
- 16 Goldberg, *Schekkinab*; Urbach, *Sages* 1, 37ff.; Moore, *Judaism* 1, 414ff.
- 17 Mack, *Logos*; Ringgren, *Word*; Wolfson, *Philo*; Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*, 203ff.; Strack-Billerbeck 2, 303ff., but note the cautionary remarks of Moore, 'Intermediaries'; 'Christian Writers'.
- 18 Schäfer, *Heilige Geist*; TDNT 6, 332ff.
- 19 Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind*; Sanders, *Paul*, 217ff.
- 20 See Rowland, 'Visions'; Chernus, 'Visions of God'.
- 21 Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*.
- 22 Scholem, *Major Trends*.
- 23 On Jewish cosmology, see Bietenhard, *Himmliche Welt*; Séd, *La mystique cosmologique juive*.
- 24 Additional bibliography: Barker, *Older Testament*; Beard, North and Price, *Religion*; Day, *Yahweh and the gods and goddesses of Canaan*; Halperin, *Faces*; Hurtado, *One God*; Stone, *4 Ezra*; Wink, *Powers*.

3 *The Heavenly Host*

- 1 Urbach, *Sages* 1, 135ff.; Moore, *Judaism* 1, 401ff.
- 2 Cross, *Canaanite Myth*; Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon*.
- 3 Schäfer, *Rivalität*; Carr, *Angels*.
- 4 Eichrodt, *Theology* 2, 23f. and Stier, *Gott und sein Engel*.
- 5 On Gnosticism, see Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*; Grant, *Gnosticism*; Wilson, *Gnosis*; Foerster, *Gnosis* and below, 303ff.
- 6 See TDNT 7, 151ff.
- 7 See Smith, *Jesus*; Guthrie, *Greeks*, 270ff.
- 8 On the significance of this tradition as a reflection of an alternative theological stream in Judaism, see Barker, *Older Testament*.
- 9 Greene, *Moirra*; Brown, *World*.
- 10 Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*.
- 11 Additional bibliography: Mach, *Entwicklungsstudien*; Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*; Wink, *Powers*.

4 *Angelic Mediators*

- 1 Summary in Dunn, *Christology*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus and Christ*.
- 2 Mack, *Logos*.
- 3 Dunn, *Christology*.
- 4 Casey, *Son of Man*.
- 5 Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*.

- 6 Theisohn, *Der auserwählte Richter*; Collins in *Ideal Figures*, ed. Nickelsburg.
- 7 Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 94ff.; Segal, *Two Powers*; Kim, *Origin*.
- 8 Rowland, 'Vision of the Risen Christ'.
- 9 Dunn, *Christology*.
- 10 Bietenhard, *Himmlische Welt*, 255f.; Segal, op. cit. But note the comments of Moore in 'Intermediaries' and 'Christian Writers'.
- 11 Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 261 and Kuhn, *Enderwartung*.
- 12 Dunn, *Christology*, 19ff.
- 13 On Enoch, see TDNT 2, 556ff.
- 14 Van der Woude and de Jonge, 'Melchizedek and the NT', but note Dunn's cautionary remarks, *Christology*, 152f. and see now Kobelski, *Melchizedek*.
- 15 On Abel in Test. Abr., see Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 107; Kim, *Origin*, 211.
- 16 On the Prayer of Joseph, see J. Z. Smith in *Religions in Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner; Dunn, *Christology*, 153ff. and Hengel, *Son of God*, 47.
- 17 On Moses, see TDNT 4, 848f.; Goodenough, *By Light*; Meeks, *Prophet King*, in *Religions in Antiquity*, ed. Neusner; Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 309ff.; Gager, *Moses*.
- 18 On this see Meeks, *Prophet King*, and now van der Horst, 'Moses' Throne Vision' and Jacobson, *Exagoge*.
- 19 Segal, *Two Powers*. Additional bibliography: A. Y. Collins, *Cosmology*; Davila, *Jewish Roots*, Hengel, *Son of God*; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*; Jacobson, *Ezekiel*; Rowland, 'Enoch'.

5 *The Temple*

- 1 *SVM History* 2, 237ff.; *Enc. Jud.* 15, col. 955–84; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 2, 561ff.; 865ff.; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 21; 147ff.; Falk, *Introduction* 1, 63ff.; Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith*, 51ff.
- 2 On the relationship of the tractate Middoth in the Mishnah to Josephus' description of the Temple (*War*, 5.184ff.), see O. Holtzmann, *Middoth*, and the plan of the Temple in *JE* 12, 94f.
- 3 Benediction 14: 'And to Jerusalem thy city, return with mercy and dwell in its midst as thou hast spoken; and build it soon in our days to be an everlasting building'.
- 4 Clements, *God and Temple*.
- 5 Plöger, *Theocracy*; Hanson, *Dawn*.
- 6 On Leontopolis, see Baron, *Social and Religious History* 1, 394; Hirsch in *Jews College Jubilee Volume*, 39ff.; F. Petrie, *Hyksos*; Hayward 'The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis', and Delcor in *Études Bibliques*; on Elephantine, see Porten, *Archives*.
- 7 See below, 40ff.
- 8 On Temple-tax, see *SVM History* 2, 273.
- 9 On Fiscus Judaicus, see Smallwood, *Jews*.

- 10 See Horbury in *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. Bammel.
- 11 On priestly dues, see *SVM History* 2, 257ff.; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*.
- 12 On the people of the land ('*am ha-aretz*'), see Oppenheimer, *Am Ha-Aretz*; Urbach, *Sages* 1, 584ff.; 632ff.
- 13 See Freyne, *Galilee*, 259ff.
- 14 See the Temple Scroll (Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 190ff.) and on the cultic language in the Scrolls, see Gärtner, *Temple*.
- 15 McKelvey, *New Temple*.
- 16 Additional bibliography: A. Y. Collins, *Jerusalem and the Temple*; Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 129ff.; Hayward, *Jerusalem Temple*; Levine, *Jerusalem*; Sanders, *Judaism*, especially Part II.

6 *Festivals*

- 1 Moore, *Judaism* 2, 40ff.; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People*, 2, 561ff., 793ff. and Elbogen, *Gottesdienst*.
- 2 On the origins, see de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*.
- 3 On Passover, see J. B. Segal, *Passover*; Le Déaut, *La Nuit Pascale*; TDNT 5, 896ff.
- 4 See Le Déaut, op. cit., and the Passover Haggadah ed. Roth.
- 5 See TDNT 6, 44ff.; *EJ*, vol. 14, col. 1319f.; *JE*, vol. 9, 592.
- 6 See Halperin, *Merkabah*, 55ff.; Strack-Billerbeck 2, 597ff.; 603ff.
- 7 TDNT 7, 390.
- 8 Guilding, *Fourth Gospel*; Strack-Billerbeck 2, 490.
- 9 Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 343ff.; Draper in Horbury and Rowland, *Essays*.
- 10 Moore, *Judaism* 2, 55.
- 11 Additional bibliography: Sanders, *Judaism*, 119ff.

7 *The Synagogue*

- 1 *SVM History* 2, 423ff.; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 2, 908ff.; *Ancient Synagogues*, ed. Gutmann; Kraabel, 'Diaspora Synagogue'; Hengel, 'Proseuche'; TDNT 7, 798ff.
- 2 On the subject of origins, see Gutmann, op. cit.
- 3 Dugmore, *Influence* but note Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*. A convenient collection of Jewish synagogue prayers may be found in *Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Singer.
- 4 On Dura, see Kraeling, *The Synagogue*; Smallwood, *Jews*, 507ff.; Goode-nough, *Jewish Symbols*; J. Gutmann (ed.), *The Dura-Europos Synagogue*.
- 5 See Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*.
- 6 See *SVM History* 1, 508ff.; 2, 454 and Heinemann and Petuchowski, *Literature of the Synagogue*.

- 7 Mann, *Bible as Read and Preached*.
- 8 Guilding, *Fourth Gospel*; Goulder, *Midrash; Evangelists' Calendar*; Bowker, 'Proem'.
- 9 Sevenster, *Do you know Greek?*
- 10 For an introduction to the Aramaic *targumim*, see Bowker, *Targums*; Vermes, *Scripture*; Vermes in *Cambridge History*, vol. 1, ed. Ackroyd and Evans; on links with NT, Le Déaut, *Message of NT*; Chilton, *Glory of Israel*; bibliography by Grossfeld.
- 11 Alexander, 'Rabbinic Lists'.
- 12 Collins, *Sibylline Oracles; Athens*; Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*; Hahn, *Mission*; Harnack, *Mission and Expansion*.
- 13 Additional bibliography: Barclay, *Jews*; Brooten, *Women Leaders*; Fine, *This Holy Place*; Goodman, *Mission*; Hachlili, 'Origin'; Kee, 'Defining'; Levine, *Synagogue*; Sanders, *Judaism*, 195ff.

8 *The Torah*

- 1 *SVM History* 2, 314ff.; Falk, *Introduction*; Urbach, *Sages* 1, 286ff.; Neusner, *Foundations*.
- 2 *Cambridge History*, ed. Ackroyd and Evans 1, 113ff.; Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy*; Leiman, *Canonisation*; Sundberg, *Old Testament*; Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*.
- 3 On Sadducean scribal tradition, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 147ff. and 222ff.
- 4 Freyne, *Galilee*, 322.
- 5 Ackroyd, *Exile*.
- 6 Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon*. id. *History of Prophecy*.
- 7 Hanson, *Dawn* and Plöger, *Theocracy*.
- 8 Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 233ff.
- 9 Weingreen, *From Bible to Mishna*.
- 10 Evidence set out in Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 71ff.
- 11 On the Sanhedrin and its competence, see Mantel, *Sanhedrin*; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1; 377ff.; *SVM History* 2, 199ff.; Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*.
- 12 Additional bibliography: Barton, *Spirit and Letter*; Cook, *Prophecy*; Goodman, 'Texts'; Hezser, *Social Structure*; Kalmin, *Sage*; Mulder, *Mikra*; Safrai, *Literature*; Saldarini, *Pharisees*; Sanders, *Judaism Part II*.

9 *The Interpretation of Scripture*

- 1 *SVM History* 2, 314ff.; Vermes, *Scripture*; Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*; Bowker, *Targums*; Gerhardsson, *Memory*; Urbach, *Sages* 1, 286ff.; Porton, 'Midrash'; Neusner, *Foundations*; Patte, *Hermeneutic*; Horgan, *Pesharim*.
- 2 See the conflict over the altar of incense in *tYoma* 1.8 (quoted in Bowker, *Jesus*, 36).

- 3 On the influence of custom and society on *halakab*, see Finkelstein, *Pharisees*, also on the *erub*, *mErub* 6.2; CD 11.7–9..
 - 4 See Neusner, *Traditions*.
 - 5 See Bowker, *Targums*, 41 and Appendix II.
 - 6 For biblical interpretation at Qumran, see Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis*; Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 67ff., 429ff.; O. Betz, *Offenbarung*; Horgan, *Pesharim*.
 - 7 On this passage, see Gruenwald in *ANRW* 2.19.1; ‘Knowledge and Vision.
 - 8 See Talmon in *Script. Hieros.* 4.
 - 9 See Stendahl, *School*, particularly the second edition.
 - 10 On the use of Scripture in the NT, see Lindars, *NT Apologetic*; Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*; Gundry, *Use*; Reim, *Studien*; E. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of OT*; Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*; Hays, *Echoes*.
 - 11 On collections of Scriptural citations, see Rendel Harris, *Testimonia*.
 - 12 A vast array of this interpretative material is collected in Ginzberg, *Legends*.
 - 13 For a brief introduction to the *targumim*, see Bowker, *Targums*. On their relationship with the NT, see McNamara, *New Testament and Palestinian Targums*, but note the cautionary remarks of Sanders, *Paul*, 25ff.
 - 14 e.g. Targum, Ps. Jon. on Gen. 15.14 mentions Muhammad’s wives.
 - 15 On the targum of Job, see van der Ploeg and van der Woude, *Le Targum de Job*.
 - 16 One example is the Akedah, the account of Abraham’s journey to sacrifice Isaac in Gen. 22.
 - 17 There has been considerable dispute over the relevance of the *targumim* on this passage for the interpretation of NT passages dealing with the death of Christ; see Schoeps, *Paul*; Vermes, *Scripture*; Hayward, ‘Sacrifice’; Swetnam, *Jesus*. For the targum of Isaiah, see Chilton, *Glory of Israel*.
 - 18 See e.g., Wilcox, ‘Peter and the Rock’.
 - 19 Additional bibliography: Chilton, *Glory*; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*; Hays, *Echoes*; Maccoby, *Early Rabbinic Writings*; Mulder, *Mikra*.
- 10 *Apocalyptic Approaches to Scripture: the Disclosure of Heavenly Knowledge***
- 1 See the discussions in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *NT Apocrypha* 2, 608ff.; further, D. Hellholm, *Apocalypticism*; Hanson, *Visionaries*.
 - 2 ‘Apocalypticism’ in *IDB Supplement*.
 - 3 See further, Plöger, *Theocracy*; Hanson, *Dawn*.
 - 4 So also Stone, ‘Lists’.
 - 5 See Stone, ‘Lists’, 451, 78n.
 - 6 See further, Rowland, *The Open Heaven*.
 - 7 Stone, ‘Lists’ and *Scriptures*.
 - 8 See Milik, *Books of Enoch*; Greenfield and Stone, ‘Books of Enoch’.

- 9 On 4 Ezra, see Thompson, *Evil*; Stone, *4 Ezra*.
- 10 On this theme, see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*.
- 11 So Stone, 'Lists', 443.
- 12 On pseudepigraphy, see the essays by Hengel and Smith in von Fritz, *Pseudepigrapha*.
- 13 Stone, 'Paradise'.
- 14 See Hengel, *Judaism* 1, 210ff.; Dodds, *Greeks*; Segal, 'Heavenly Ascents'.
- 15 Russell, *Method*, 166; see further, Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 214ff.
- 16 e.g., Rössler, *Gesetz*; cf. W. D. Davies, 'Apocalyptic and Pharisaism'.
- 17 Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 233ff.
- 18 On the origins of Jewish mysticism, see Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*; Scholem, *Major Trends; Jewish Gnosticism*; Urbach, in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion for G. Scholem*; Wewers, *Geheimnis*; Halperin, *Merkabah*; Chernus, 'Visions of God' and *Mysticism*.
- 19 See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 213ff.
- 20 This matter is explored in Rowland, *The Open Heaven*; 'Visions of God', but cf. Halperin, *Merkabah*.
- 21 On 4Q405, see now Schiffman, 'Merkavah Speculation'.
- 22 See further, Hartmann, *Prophecy Interpreted* and Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 3ff.
- 23 For a discussion of these passages, see Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 99ff.; Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 228ff.
- 24 See further, C. Jeremias, *Nachtgesichte*.
- 25 In addition to the works of Stone and Gruenwald already cited, see von Rad, *OT Theology* 2, 301f., but note the points made by von der Osten-Sacken, *Apokalyptik*.
- 26 See Müller, 'Mantische Weisheit'.
- 27 See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 4f.; Stone, 'Lists', 421; Knibb, 'Apocalyptic'.
- 28 See Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 358ff.
- 29 Additional bibliography: Barton, *Oracles*; J. J. Collins, *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*; Halperin, *Faces*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Newsom, *Songs*; Rowland, 'Enoch'; Rowland, in *Cambridge History of Judaism*; Stone, *4 Ezra*; Stone, *Jewish Writings*.

11 *Schools of Thought: An Introduction to Sectarianism in the Second Temple Period*

- 1 This is set out most conveniently in Wilson's essay, 'A Typology of Sects' in Boccock and Thompson, *Religion and Ideology*. See also Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 144f.; surveys in Giddens, *Capitalism*; Hill, *Sociology*. See also Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*; Wilson, *Religion; Sects; Magic*; also Hall, 'Religious ideologies and social movements in Jamaica'; Stark, *Rise of Christianity*.
- 2 See Sanders, *Paul*, 152ff. On Jewish sects generally see Smith, *Palestinian*

- Parties*; 'Palestinian Judaism'; Vermes, *Jesus*; Simon, *Jewish Sects*; Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*, 11ff.
- 3 This may have taken place in the post-Exilic community; see Hanson, *Dawn*.
 - 4 Sanders, *Paul*, 424.
 - 5 See Barth in Bornkamm *et al.*, *Tradition*, 38ff. and further, on the early Church, Gager, *Kingdom*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*.
 - 6 On the concerns of the rabbis at Yavneh, see Neusner, 'Formation'; Davies, *Setting*; Neusner, *Eliezer; Development; A Life*; and Guttmann, *Judaism*.
 - 7 Note the different exegetical approaches of Akiba and Ishmael. See Marmorstein, *Old Rabbinic Doctrine* 2, 29ff.
 - 8 Neusner, *Traditions about the Pharisees*.
 - 9 On the importance of Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, see Neusner, 'Formation'.
 - 10 See McKelney, 'Orthodoxy'; Aune, 'Orthodoxy'; Sanders, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 2.
 - 11 On the importance of geographical considerations, see Freyne, *Galilee*; Vermes, *Jesus*; de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 427ff.
 - 12 On social stratification, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem*; Kreissig, *Sozialen Zusammenhänge*.
 - 13 On the Samaritans, see Coggins, *Samaritans*; Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*; Macdonald, *Theology*; Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*, 13f.
 - 14 On the attitude to the Temple in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 180f.
 - 15 See *SVM History* 2, 199ff.; Mantel, *Studies*.
 - 16 See further, Falk, *Introduction*.
 - 17 On the influence of social customs on the *halakah*, see Finkelstein, *Pharisees*.
- 12 *Schools of Thought: An Outline of Jewish Groups in the First Century CE***
- 1 TDNT 7, 35ff.; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 147ff. and 222ff., and Le Moyne, *Les Sadducéens*.
 - 2 See Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilisation* and Hengel, *Judaism*.
 - 3 Note Freyne's judgement about Galilee in *Galilee*, 293ff.
 - 4 Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 233ff.; Neusner, 'Formation', and Strack-Billerbeck 4.334ff.
 - 5 See Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*.
 - 6 On the Pharisees, see Neusner, *Traditions; Politics to Piety; Making*; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, cf. Rivkin, *Hidden Revolution*.
 - 7 The rabbinic evidence is considered in Bowker, *Jesus*; Rivkin, *Hidden Revolution*; and 'Pharisees' in *IDB Supplement*.
 - 8 Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 257.
 - 9 See Finkel, *Pharisees*, for an attempt to relate Jesus to a particular pharisaic outlook.

- 10 See Freyne, *Galilee*, 306ff.
- 11 See Neusner, *The Idea of Purity*.
- 12 On sectarian boundaries, see Forkman, *Limits*.
- 13 On the oral tradition, see Gerhardsson, *Memory*.
- 14 For the sources, see below, 317ff.
- 15 See Goldberg, *Schekhinah*.
- 16 On Yohanan's escape, see Saldarini, 'Johanan ben Zakkai's Escape'; Schäfer, 'Flucht'.
- 17 Neusner, 'Formation'; Davies, *Setting* and Schäfer, 'Synode'; 'Flucht'.
- 18 On the birkath ha-minim, see Justin, *Dial.* 16; 47; 93; 95f.; 108; 117; 133 and 137; Horbury, 'Benediction'; *SVM History* 2, 462 and Kimelman 'Birkat' in Sanders, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 2 and below, 296.
- 19 Additional bibliography: Goodman, 'Sadducees and Essenes after 70', Neusner, *Judaism*; Sanders, *Judaism*, 380–451. On Jewish sectarianism: Avi-Yonah, *Jews*; Baumgarten, *Flourishing*; Cohen, *Maccabees*; Cohen, A., *Symbolic Construction*; Grabbe, *Introduction*; Muller, *Mikra*; Otzen, *Judaism*; Safrai, *Literature*; Saldarini, *Pharisees*.
- 20 Yadin, *Masada*; on the Zealots, see Farmer, *Maccabees*; Hengel, *Zealots; Victory over Violence; Was Jesus a Revolutionist?*; Freyne, *Galilee*; Brandon, *Jesus the Zealot*; Eisler, *Messiah Jesus*; Bammel and Moule (ed.), *Jesus*; Hayward in *SVM History* 2, 595ff.; Rhoads, *Israel*; Aberbach, *Roman Jewish War*.
- 21 On Judas, see Freyne, *Galilee*, 216ff.; Rhoads, *Israel*, 47ff.
- 22 See Rhoads, *Israel*.
- 23 On the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls; Dead Sea Scrolls*; Milik, *Ten Years*; Cross, *Ancient Library*; Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*; Driver, *Judaean Scrolls* and Davies, *Qumran*; Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*.
- 24 Evidence in Vermes and Goodman, *Essenes according to Classical Sources*.
- 25 On different suggestions with regard to background see Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1–96.
- 26 On possible links with the New Testament, see e.g. Stendahl, *Scrolls*; Braun, *Qumran*; Black, *Scrolls; Paul and Qumran*, ed. Murphy-O'Connor; and *John and Qumran*, ed. Charlesworth.
- 27 On this dimension, see Kuhn, *Enderwartung*; Aune, *Cultic Aspect*.
- 28 On the links with Paul, see Hodayoth, e.g., 1QH 4 (Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 164); ed. Murphy O'Connor, op. cit.
- 29 On the calendar, see Jaubert, *Date*; Goudoever, *Calendars*; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 2, 834ff.
- 30 On the spiritualizing of the cult at Qumran, see Gärtner, *Temple*; McKelvey, *New Temple*; Klinzing, *Umdeutung*.

- 31 On the War Scroll, see Davies, *IQM*; Yadin, *War*.
- 32 Additional bibliography: summary to 1997 in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 631–3 and ‘Qumran Research’; also Campbell, *Deciphering*; J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism*; Garcia Martinez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*; Vanderkam, *Dead Sea Scrolls*.
- 33 On Jewish and Christian self-definition, see the publications of the McMaster project, ed. E. P. Sanders. On early Christian sectarianism, see Scroggs, ‘Earliest Christian Communities’; Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 73ff.
- 34 On the lack of evidence for a ‘New Israel’ doctrine in earliest Christianity, see P. Richardson, *Israel*.
- 35 Examples of gnostic treatment of Paul may be found in Pagels, *Gnostic Paul and Adam, Eve and the Serpent*; Harnack, *Marcion*.
- 36 On Paul’s espousal of a different type of Judaism from that commonly found in Palestine, see Sandmel, *Genius*; Schoeps, *Paul*; Boyarin, *Radical Jew*. See also D. Hagner on the treatment of Paul in Jewish scholarship.
- 37 See McKelency, ‘Orthodoxy’; Aune, ‘Orthodoxy’; and on this issue see also Sanders, *Paul and Paul the Law*.
- 38 On Jewish sectarian boundaries, see Forkman, *Limits*; Derrett, ‘Cursing Jesus’. According to Acts 26.11, Paul seems to have applied a test to Christians, when he persecuted the Church.
- 39 On pagan attitudes, see Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*.
- 40 See the discussions in *Sabbath to Sunday*, ed. Carson.
- 41 See Finkelstein, *Akiba*; Schäfer, *Aufstand*.
- 42 See Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*; Davies, ‘From Schweitzer to Scholem’; Idel, *Messianic Mystics*.
- 43 On the importance of this chapter for Judaism and early Christianity, see Horbury, ‘1 Thess.’.
- 44 Additional bibliography: Boyarin, *Radical Jew*; Radford Ruether, *Faith, Anti-Judaism*; Segal, *Paul the Convert*.

13 *Diaspora Judaism*

- 1 On Jews in Babylonia, see Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*. Note the fascinating incident concerning the conversion to Judaism of Izates, king of Adiabene, in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.34.
- 2 See Stone, *Scriptures*, 78; Cowley, *Papyri*; Porten, *Archives*.
- 3 On Hellenism, see Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, especially 181ff.; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilisation*; Cumont, *Oriental Religions*; Festugière, *Personal Religion*; Guthrie, *Greeks*; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*; Nock, *Conversion*; Dodds, *Greeks*.
- 4 Jones, *Greek City*. On Alexandria, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*.
- 5 See Jaeger, *Paideia*.
- 6 Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 77.

- 7 On Onias' Temple, see Hayward, 'Jewish Temple'.
- 8 See Tarn, *op. cit.*, 129, 191; and Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 440ff.
- 9 See Kraabel, *Judaism in Asia Minor*; Johnson, 'Early Christianity and Asia Minor'; Magie, *Roman Rule*; cf. Yamauchi, *Archaeology*.
- 10 See Smallwood, *Jews*, especially 378ff.
- 11 Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 443.
- 12 See Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*.
- 13 Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 460.
- 14 On Sardis, see Kraabel, *op. cit.*; Johnson, 'Asia Minor'; Trebilco, *Jewish Communities* and Yamauchi, *Archaeology*.
- 15 Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 449.
- 16 Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 452. On anti-Jewish feeling, see Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*; Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice*; Musurillo, *Acts*.
- 17 See Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*.
- 18 On the LXX, see Dodd, *Bible*; Jellicoe, *Septuagint*; 'Septuagint' in *IDB Supp., Studies*, ed. Jellicoe; Gooding, 'Aristeas'; Walters, *Text*.
- 19 On Gen. 1.1 of LXX, see Schmidt in *ZAW86*: Dodd, *Bible*, 111f.
- 20 On the order of the books, see Sawyer, *Moses*, 2ff. and further, Childs, *Introduction*.
- 21 For example, Codex Vaticanus (B) and Origen's *Hexapla*; see Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 109ff.
- 22 See Gooding, *Tabernacle*.
- 23 Williamson, *Israel*.
- 24 On the use of the LXX in the NT, see the survey in *Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, ed. Ackroyd and Evans, 377.
- 25 On Colossian teaching, see Meeks and Francis, *Conflict*, and see 341, 9n.
- 26 On *Wisd.*, see Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*; Winston, *Wisd. Sol*; the extensive survey by Larcher in *Études*.
- 27 On the Sibylline oracles, see Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*.
- 28 See Sängner, *Antikes Judentum*; Burchard, *Untersuchungen*.
- 29 Collins, *Athens*.
- 30 On Philo, see Goodenough, *Introduction*; *By Light*; *Politics of Philo*; Sandmel, *Philo*; Wolfson, *Philo*. See the article 'Philo', in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek Philosophy*.
- 31 On Philo and Gnosticism, see Wilson, *Gnostic Problem*.
- 32 On Stoicism, see Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*; Macmullen, *Enemies*, ch. 2.
- 33 On Philo's doctrine, see Wolfson, *Philo*. On the possible influence of this passage on Pauline Christology, see Cullmann, *Christology*.
- 34 On the mysticism of Philo, see Winston, 'Was Philo a Mystic?' in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*.
- 35 See Smallwood, *Legatio*.

- 36 On Clement, see Osborne, *Clement*; Bigg, *Platonists*; H. Chadwick, *Early Christianity*.
- 37 On Alexandrian Christianity in the earliest period, see the suggestions by Bauer, *Orthodoxy*.
- 38 Wilson, *Gnostic Problem*.
- 39 Additional bibliography: J. Barclay, *Jews*; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*; Gafni, *Land, Center, and Diaspora*; Hayward, 'Temple'; Kasher, *The Jews*; Lieu, North and Rajak, *Jews among Pagans*; Sanders, *Jewish Law*; Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers*; Stone, *Jewish Writings*; Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*.

14 *The Expression of Hope*

- 1 Summary of material in *SVM History* 2, 488ff.; Charles, *Eschatology*; Klausner, *Messianic Idea*; Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*; Volz, *Eschatologie*; Bousset, *Religion*; Fischer, *Eschatologie*; Cavallin, *Life after Death*; Neusner, *Foundations*; Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*.
- 2 On messianic woes, see *SVM History* 2, 514ff.
- 3 On the Apocalypse of Weeks, see Dexinger, *Zebrwochenapokalypse*.
- 4 See the discussion in Harnisch, *Verhängnis*.
- 5 Schlatter, *Theologie*; de Jonge in *Josephus Studien*, ed. Betz *et al.*
- 6 W. D. Davies, *Gospel and the Land*.
- 7 See further, W. D. Davies, *Torah*; Schäfer, 'Torah'.
- 8 On the origins of the resurrection belief, see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*; Martin-Achard, *Death*; Cavallin, *Life after Death*.
- 9 See Sawyer, 'Hebrew Words'.
- 10 On resurrection in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 88–9; Laurin, 'Question of Immortality'.
- 11 See Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*; Cavallin, *Life After Death*; Cullmann, *Resurrection*. On life after death in Greek religion, see the studies of Charles, Cavallin and Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*. On Paul, see M. Harris, *Raised Immortal*.
- 12 Hengel, *Judaism*.
- 13 Summary in Vermes, *Jesus*; also *SVM History* 2, 517ff.; TDNT 9, 493ff.; Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*; on the Dead Sea Scrolls, see van der Woude, *Vorstellungen*.
- 14 On the background of Christology, see e.g., Cullmann, *Christology*; Dunn, *Christology*.
- 15 On Son of David, see Hahn, *Titles*; TDNT 9, 478ff.
- 16 Urbach, *Sages* 1, 672ff.
- 17 The literature on this subject is vast. Mention may be made of the following: Casey, *Son of Man*; Cullmann, *Christology*; Tödt, *Son of Man*; Dunn, *Christology*; Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*; Colpe, TDNT 8; Theisohn, *Der auserwählte Richter*, Lindars, *Jesus the Son of Man*.

- 18 See Casey, *op. cit.*
- 19 See e.g., Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*; also in *Ideal Figures*, ed. Nickelsburg; also Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*, 177f.
- 20 See Stone in *Religions in Antiquity*, ed. Neusner and *Fourth Ezra*.
- 21 Theisohn, *Der auserwählte Richter*.
- 22 For example, Leivestad, 'Exit'; Milik, *Books of Enoch*.
- 23 See Horton, *Melchizedek*; Kobelski, *Melchizedek*.
- 24 G. Jeremias, *Lehrer*, 284ff.
- 25 See Teeple, *Eschatological Prophet*; Meeks, *Prophet-King*; Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 300ff.
- 26 See TDNT 2, 928ff.; 6, 781ff. Also Urbach, *Sages* 1, 661; *SVM History* 2, 515ff.
- 27 For Moses in Samaritan material, see Meeks, *The Prophet-King*; Macdonald, *Theology*.

15 *Pragmatism and Hope in Second Temple Judaism*

- 1 See Farmer, *Maccabees*, 177f.
- 2 On the ban, see Deut. 20.16f.; Josh. 6–8; 1 Sam. 15; Num. 31.14f.; von Rad, *Studies*, 45f.
- 3 See Hanson, *Dawn*; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*; Miller, *Divine Warrior*.
- 4 On this, see Childs, *Isaiab*.
- 5 See Farmer, *Maccabees*.
- 6 *SVM History* 1, 330ff.
- 7 See Hayward in *SVM History* 2, 598ff.; Freyne, *Galilee*, 208ff.; Rhoads, *Israel*.
- 8 *SVM History* 2, 603.
- 9 Urbach, *Sages* 1, 668f.
- 10 On this, see Saldarini, 'Escape'.
- 11 On the links of Simeon ben Gamaliel with John of Gischala, a leading figure in the Revolt, see Josephus, *Life*, 190ff., and further, Rhoads, *Israel*, 150ff.
- 12 See e.g., Rössler, *Gesetz*; Herford, *Talmud*.
- 13 So Hanson, *Dawn*; Plöger, *Theocracy*.
- 14 Neusner, *Politics*; Rivkin, 'Pharisaism and Crisis'.
- 15 See Philo, *Embassy* (see Smallwood, *Legatio*).
- 16 On relations of Jews with Romans, see Smallwood, *Jews*.
- 17 Aune, *Cultic Aspect* drawing on Kuhn, *Enderwartung*.
- 18 Hengel, *Zeloten; Was Jesus a Revolutionist?*; W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*.
- 19 On the infiltration of eschatological beliefs into the scribal schools, see Urbach, *Sages* 1, 651.

- 20 On Bar Kochba, see Yadin, *Bar Kochba; SVM History* 2, 534ff.; Schäfer, *Aufstand*.
- 21 Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 269ff.
- 22 See the comments of Neusner in *Life*, 140f.
- 23 On *shekinah*, see Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*.
- 24 See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 113ff.
- 25 See Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls; Qumran in Perspective*, 174f.
- 26 On this material, see Aune, *Cultic Aspect*.
- 27 Grant, *Gnosticism*.
- 28 Additional bibliography: Charlesworth, *Messiah*; J. J. Collins, *Scepter and the Star*; A. Y. Collins, *Essays in Cosmology*; Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*; Frankfurter, in Vanderkam, *Enoch*; Joynes, *The Return of Elijah*; Neusner, Green and Frerichs, *Judaisms and their Messiahs*; Nickelsburg, *Ideal Figures*; Oegema, *The Anointed and his People*; Oehler, *Eliä*; Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*; Stone, *4 Ezra*; Wright, *Jesus*.

PART III

The Emergence of a Messianic Sect

Section 1 Introduction

1 *Early Christianity: What Kind of Religious Movement?*

- 1 On the study of the social world of the early Christians, see Ashton, *Religion*; Gager, *Kingdom*; Isenberg, 'Millenarianism'; Kee, *Christian Origins*; Kyratatas, *Social Structures*; Malina, *New Testament World*; Theissen, *First Followers*; *Social Setting*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*; Sanders, J. T., *Schismatics*; Schottroff and Stegemann, *God of the Lowly*; Taubes, 'Price of Messianism'; Thomas and Humphrey, *Shamanism*; Thrupp, *Millenial Dreams*.
- 2 Meeks, *Urban Christians* and Judge, *Social Pattern*.
- 3 On Jesus and his disciples, see Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*.
- 4 See Gager, *Kingdom*; Cohn, *Pursuit*; Wilson, *Magic*.
- 5 On early Christian asceticism, see Strathmann, *Geschichte*; TDNT 1, 492f.; Brown, *Body and Society*.
- 6 See Theissen, *Social Setting*.
- 7 See Dodds, *Pagan*, 112ff.
- 8 On this, see Jones, *Constantine*; A. Kee, *Constantine*.
- 9 On this and the problem of cognitive dissonance, see Gager, *Kingdom*; cf. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*.
- 10 Additional bibliography: Brown, P., *Body*; Brown, S., *The Origins of Christianity*; Capper, 'Oldest Monks'; Garnsey and Humfress, *Evolution*; Kreider,

Origins of Christendom; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Stark, *Rise*; Theissen, *Theory*.

2 *The Centrality of Eschatology in Primitive Christian Belief*

- 1 See Schweitzer, *Quest; Mysticism*; Beker, *Paul the Apostle; Apocalyptic Gospel*.
- 2 See, e.g., Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*; Pannenberg, *Jesus*; Bloch, *Atheism*; and on the influence of Ernst Bloch, Hudson, *Marxist Philosophy*.
- 3 For alternative approaches to the subject of eschatology, see Caird, *Language and Imagery*; Glasson, *Jesus*; Dodd, *Parables*.
- 4 See e.g. Webster, *Karl Barth* and McCormack, *Dialectical Theology*.
- 5 On the evolution of eschatology, Werner, *Formation*, and on early Christian eschatology, Daley, *Hope*.
- 6 See, e.g., Cullmann, *Salvation in History*.
- 7 On the meaning of resurrection, see Selby, *Look for the Living* and Avis, *Resurrection*.
- 8 See the works of Cullmann, e.g., *Christ and Time*; *Salvation in History* and on patterns in Second Temple Jewish eschatology, above 86ff.
- 9 Dunn, *Jesus*.
- 10 See further, TDNT 6, 332ff.
- 11 See Schäfer, *Heilige Geist*.
- 12 See further, Jeremias, *NTT* 76ff.
- 13 On the doctrine of the incarnation see Dunn, *Christology* and Hengel, *Son of God*.
- 14 On messianic expectation see above, 91ff. and *SVM History* 2, 517ff.
- 15 See Hengel in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. Hooker and Wilson.
- 16 See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 423ff. and *Revelation*.
- 17 Additional biography: Allison, *Millenarian Prophet*; Bradstock and Rowland *Reader*; Collins, J. J., McGinn, and Stein, *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, especially vol. I, Part 3, on early Christianity; Idel, *Messianic Mystics*; O'Neill, *Did Jesus?*; Neusner, *Judaisms*; Charlesworth, *Messiah*; Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*; Rowland, *Radical Christianity and Revelation*; Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*.

3 *The World of Jesus and the First Christians*

- 1 Freyne, *Galilee*. See also Meyers, 'Cultural Setting'; Theissen, *First Followers*, 31ff.
- 2 On this, see de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 9ff., 427.
- 3 Freyne, op. cit., 91.
- 4 Freyne, op. cit., 194ff.
- 5 Freyne, op. cit., 221ff.; Green, 'Palestinian Holy Men'; Vermes, *Jesus*.
- 6 See Theissen, *First Followers*, 17ff., and Freyne, *Galilee*, 356ff.

- 7 For the socio-economic explanation, see Kautsky, *Foundations*; Kreissig, *Sozialen Zusammenhänge*.
- 8 On the change of environment, see Theissen, *First Followers*; *Social Setting*; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*; de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*.
- 9 For example, Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*.
- 10 Theissen, *Social Setting*.
- 11 So also Judge, *Social Pattern*; cf. Deissmann, *Light*. See Meeks, *Urban Christians* and on social relations see Macmullen, *Roman Social Relations*.
- 12 Additional bibliography: Meggitt, *Paul*; Theissen, *Theory*.

Section 2 Jesus

1a *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*

- 1 Surveys and literature in Schweitzer, *Quest*; Anderson, *Jesus*; Käsemann, 'Blind Alleys', in *NT Questions*; J. M. Robinson, *A New Quest*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*; Dodd, *Founder*; Sanders and Davis, *Studying*. Cautionary comments in Kähler, *So-called* and L. Johnson, *Real Jesus*. For a wider contextualization of modern biblical study, see O'Neill, *The Bible's Authority*.
- 2 Schweitzer, *Quest*; Borg, *Jesus*; Strauss, *Life*, 88.
- 3 On the Marcan hypothesis, see Streeter, *Four Gospels*; Farmer, *Synoptic Problem*; Tuckett, *Revival*; Stoldt, *Marcan Hypothesis*.
- 4 See Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, 36.
- 5 From *Christianity at the Crossroads*, 49.
- 6 Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation*.
- 7 From *Quest*, 397.
- 8 For an introduction to Barth's theology, see Webster, *Karl Barth*, and on its historical context, Goringe, *Karl Barth*.
- 9 See Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*; Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*.
- 10 Bultmann, *Theology* 1, 3: 'the message of Jesus is a presupposition for the theology of the New Testament rather than a part of that theology itself.'
- 11 Jeremias, *Problem*.
- 12 See Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*.
- 13 For example, Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*; *Parables*; Stauffer, *Jesus and his Story*.
- 14 See Käsemann, 'Problem' in *Essays*; 'Blind Alleys' in *NT Questions*, 23ff.
- 15 Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*.
- 16 On eye-witness tradition, see Taylor, *Formation*, 41ff.; Dodd, 'Framework'; Nineham, 'Eye-Witness Testimony'.
- 17 Cf. Cadbury, *Perils*.

1b *Differing approaches to the Jesus of history*

- 1 Additional bibliography: on the political Jesus, Horsley, *Jesus and the spiral of violence*; on the eschatological Jesus, E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* and Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*; Ehrman, *Jesus*; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*; on Jesus the sage and the importance of Q, Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*; Funk and Hoover, *Five Gospels*; Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*; Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity*; on Jesus' prophetic contemporaries, Gray, *Prophetic Figures*. Surveys on the historical Jesus, Chilton and Evans, *Studying the Historical Jesus*; Witherington, *Jesus Quest* and Meier, *Marginal Jew* and generally, Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*; Wright, *Jesus*.
- 2 *Using the Gospels to Establish the Character of Jesus' Life and Message*
 - 1 For a necessary reminder of the importance of the epistemological issues, see Meyer, *Aims*; Downing, *Church*.
 - 2 See Sanders and Davis, *Studying*; Catchpole in *NT Interpretation*, ed. Marshall; Barbour, *Traditio-Historical Criticism*; Perrin, *Rediscovering*; Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*.
 - 3 For example, Dodd, *Historical Tradition*; Robinson, *Priority*.
 - 4 See Ashton, *Understanding*.
 - 5 For an introduction to this method, see Sanders and Davis, *Studying*; Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?*; Rohde, *Rediscovering*; Marshall, *Luke*; Martin, *Mark*; Nineham, *St Mark*; Hooker, *Message*. For a very different approach to Mark, see Myers, *Binding*.
 - 6 Survey in Cadbury, *Making*, 299ff.; further, Maddox, *Purpose*.
 - 7 See Nineham in *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. Nineham.
 - 8 See Barbour, *Traditio-Historical Criticism*; Jeremias, *Parables*, Part 2.
 - 9 On form criticism, see Sanders and Davis, *Studying* and Bultmann and Kundsinn, *Form Criticism*.
 - 10 See Sanders and Davis, *Studying* and Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* and Rohde, *Rediscovering*.
 - 11 Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 39; Conzelman, quoted in Perrin, op. cit., 42: 'we may accept as authentic material which fits in with neither Jewish thinking nor the conception of the primitive community'. On the application of this method, see Downing, *Church and Jesus*; Hooker, 'On the Wrong Use of a Tool'; Barbour, *Traditio-Historical Criticism*.
 - 12 On the parable of the wedding feast, see Jeremias, *Parables*, 176ff.
 - 13 On the possibility of the Matthaean conclusion being a separate parable added to the originally different parable of the wedding feast, see Jeremias, *Parables*, 87ff.
 - 14 See Bultmann, *History*, 11ff.; Taylor, *Formation*, 63ff.
 - 15 For example, on the use of the oral tradition from Second Temple Judaism

- as a means of illustrating the transmission of tradition in early Christianity, see Gerhardsson, *Memory; Tradition and Transmission; Gospel Tradition*; Sanders, *Tendencies*. Further, on the relationship between the gospel tradition and early Christian preaching, Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*; Macdonald, *Kerygma*; Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*; Dungan, *Sayings of Jesus*.
- 16 See the form-critical method (better described as traditio-historical method) applied to rabbinic material by Jacob Neusner, e.g., in *Development of a Legend* and his extensive study of the mishnaic laws of purity.
- 17 On the possibility of sayings of the risen Lord through the mouths of Christian prophets being included in the gospel tradition, see Dunn, 'Prophetic "I" Sayings'; Boring, *Sayings*.
- 18 See Coady, *Testimony*; Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*.
- 19 Additional bibliography: Crossan, *Historical Jesus*; Lane Fox, *Unauthorised Version*; Mack, *Myth of Innocence*.

3 *John the Baptist*

- 1 On John the Baptist, see Scobie, *John*; Wink, *John*; Kraeling, *John*; Hollenbach, 'Social Aspects'; O'Neill, *Messiah*.
- 2 Vermes, *Jesus*, 197.
- 3 See the survey in Scobie, *John*.
- 4 Vermes, *Jesus*, 75.
- 5 See Barrett, *NT Background*, 196; Freyne, *Galilee*, 216ff.
- 6 On this material, see Wink, op. cit., and on Elijah, see TDNT 2, 928ff.
- 7 Summary in Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 115ff.
- 8 On this, see Käsemann, in *Essays*.
- 9 See Brown, *John*, 1, LXVII.
- 10 On this saying, see Suggs, *Wisdom*; Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence*.
- 11 Additional bibliography: Oehler, *Elia*; Joynes, *Return*.

4 *The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*

- 1 Literature on this subject is extensive. Mention may be made of the following: Dalman, *Words*; Evans, 'Daniel in the New Testament', which has a useful collection of possible Jewish parallels to the phrase the Kingdom of God; Kümmel, *Promise; Theology*, 27ff.; TDNT 1, 579ff.; Perrin, *Kingdom of God; Rediscovering, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*; Minear, *And Great Shall Be Your Reward*; Harvey, *Jesus*; Schnackenburg, *God's Rule*; Glasson, *Jesus*; Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*; Riches, *Jesus*; Chilton, *God in Strength*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 140ff.; Jeremias, *NTT*; Schweitzer, *Quest*; Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation*; Manson, *Sayings; Teaching*; Meyer, *Aims*; O'Neill, *Messiah*; and Pixley, *God's Kingdom*. Summary in Chilton, *The Kingdom of God*.
- 2 See Perrin, *Kingdom of God*.
- 3 See Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 144f.

- 4 See 86ff.
- 5 Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation*, 129f.
- 6 On realized eschatology, see Dodd, *Parables*; Robinson, *Jesus and his Coming*; Glasson, *Second Advent*; Jesus cf. Kümmel, *Promise*.
- 7 Manson, *Teaching*, 120ff. and Vermes, *Gospel*.
- 8 On the future dimension, see Hiers, *Kingdom of God*; O'Neill, *Messiah*; Fuller, *Mission*.
- 9 For a description of the character of inaugurated eschatology, see Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 193ff.; Jeremias, *Parables*, 230; Kümmel, *Promise*.
- 10 But note the interpretation of Luke 11.20 and 17.21b offered by O'Neill in *Messiah*.
- 11 See Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation*, 129.

5 *The Parables*

- 1 See Jeremias, *Parables*; Perrin, *Rediscovering*; Linnemann, *Parables*; Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*; and Lambrecht, *Once More*.
- 2 On allegorization, see Jeremias, *Parables*, 66ff. Note the importance of the gnostic Gospel of Thomas for study of the parables. See Turner and Montefiore, *Thomas and the Evangelists*; Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the New Testament*.
- 3 Jeremias, *NTT 29: Parables*, 113f.; Perrin, *Rediscovering* but cf. Moule, *Birth*, 115ff.; and *Essays*.
- 4 See further, Derrett, *Jesus' Audience*.
- 5 Jeremias, *Parables*, 56.
- 6 Jeremias, *Parables*, 150.
- 7 See Urbach, *Sages* 1, 668f.
- 8 Sanders, *Judaism*, 289 ff. and *Jesus and Judaism*. The similarity between Jesus and Paul in this regard should not be ignored: Jesus calls Jewish sinners; Paul calls Gentiles.
- 9 Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, and 'Jesus, Sinners and the Am Ha-Aretz' in (ed.) Horbury and Rowland, *Essays*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 206f.
- 10 On covenantal nomism, see Sanders, *Paul*, 44ff.

6 *Other Teaching*

- 1 On the life-style of Jesus, see Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*; Mealand, *Poverty*; Theissen, *First Followers*; Freyne, *Galilee*.
- 2 On the issue of property and early Christian attitudes to it, see de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*; Grant, *Early Christianity and Society*; Hengel, *Property and Riches*.
- 3 On the importance of this passage, see Yoder, *Politics*.
- 4 On this parable, see Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 122ff.; on the love command, see Furnish, *Love Command*; Piper, *Love Your Enemies*.

- 5 On Samaritans, see Coggins, *Samaritans*.
- 6 On the meaning of brethren in the Johannine corpus, see Montefiore, *Jesus*.
- 7 On the vexed issue of the eschatological Torah in Judaism, see Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age*; Schäfer, 'Torah'.
- 8 On Jesus and the law see below, 154ff., and O'Neill, *Messiah*.
- 9 Harvey, *Jesus*, 64 and *Strenuous Commands*.
- 10 Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*.
- 11 Cullmann, *State*, 51. See also Brandon, *Jesus*, 87.
- 12 Cullmann, *State*, 50.
- 13 See Jeremias, *NTT*, 294; Mealand, *Poverty*, 69.
- 14 See Mealand, op. cit., 70. On the changing social circumstances of the early Christian movement, see Theissen, *First Followers*; de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 427f.
- 15 So Brandon, *Jesus*.
- 16 Cf. Schweitzer, *Quest*; Barrett, *Jesus*.
- 17 Additional bibliography: Avila, *Ownership*; H. D. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*; Gray, *The Least of My Brothers*; Harvey, *Strenuous Commands*; Prior, *Jesus as Liberator*; Watson, 'Liberating the Reader'; Wengst, *Pax Romana*.

7 *The Signs of the Coming Kingdom*

- 1 See Harvey, *Jesus*; McCasland, *By the Finger of God*; Jeremias, *NTT*, 85ff.; Vermes, *Jesus*, 58ff.; Dunn, *Jesus*, 69ff.; Fuller, *Interpreting*; Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*; van der Loos, *Miracles*; M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician*; W. S. Green, 'Palestinian Holy Men'; Theissen, *Miracle Stories* (which has a full bibliography); Kee, *Miracle*; Wright, *Jesus*.
- 2 On the infancy narratives, see Brown, *Birth*.
- 3 On Jewish parallels, see Vermes, *Jesus*, 58ff.; Freyne, *Galilee*, 329ff.; Green, 'Palestinian Holy Men'.
- 4 For a concise introduction, see Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 179ff. and Meyer, *Aims*.
- 5 Cf. Petzke, *Apollonius*. On the concept of the *theios aner* or 'divine man' in antiquity, see the critical survey by Holladay, *Theios Aner*.
- 6 See Smith, *Jesus the Magician*.
- 7 But see Harvey, *Jesus*.
- 8 See further, Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*.
- 9 On Matt. 17, see Horbury in *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. Bammel.
- 10 See the apocryphal gospels in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *NT Apocrypha*, for examples of the growth of miraculous legends about Jesus' life.
- 11 P. Brown, *World*, 51ff.
- 12 See Jeremias, *NTT*, 85ff.
- 13 See e.g., O'Neill, *Messiah*, 14ff.

- 14 On Balaam, see Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*.
- 15 On false prophecy, see Horbury, '1 Thess. 2.3'; Bauckham, *Jude*, 236f.
- 16 Additional bibliography: Brown, *Miracles*; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*; Wengst, *Pax Romana*.

8 *Jesus and the Future*

- 1 On this, see Kümmel, *Promise*; 'Eschatological Expectation'; Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 154ff.; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future*; Robinson, *Jesus and his Coming*; Harvey, *Jesus*; Meyer, *Aims*; Jeremias, *NTT*, 138ff.
- 2 Kümmel, *Promise*, 149; Jeremias, *NTT*, 139.
- 3 Dodd, *Parables*; see also Chilton, *God in Strength* on Mark 9.1; cf. Kümmel, *Promise*, 25ff.
- 4 Bultmann, *History*, 151f.; Riches, *Jesus*, 176.
- 5 For example, Hooker, *Son of Man*; Robinson, *Jesus and his Coming*; Glasson, *Second Advent*.
- 6 See 178ff.
- 7 On the Beatitudes, see Dupont, *Beatitudes*; Wrege, *Überlieferung*; Schnackenburg, *Moral Teaching*; Jeremias, *NTT*, 203ff.; Schweizer in *NTS* 19, 121ff.; Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*.
- 8 See Wainwright, *Eucharist*.
- 9 On the Lord's Prayer, see Carmignac, *Recherches*; Petuchowski, *Lord's Prayer*; Lohmeyer, *Vater-Unser*; Evans, *The Lord's Prayer*; Wainwright, *Eucharist*; Jeremias, *NTT*, 248.
- 10 On Jesus and the Gentile mission, see Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*; see further, Hahn, *Mission*; Harnack, *Mission and Expansion*.
- 11 Theissen, *Gospels in Context*.
- 12 See Caird, *Jesus and the Jewish Nation*.
- 13 Bousset, *Religion*, 233f.
- 14 Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*.
- 15 See Riches, *Jesus*, 176ff.
- 16 Flew, *Jesus and his Church*; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 1ff.; Schweizer, *Church Order*, 20ff.; Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*.
- 17 Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, 166; cf. Bultmann 'the proclaimer became the proclaimed, *Theology*, 1, 33.
- 18 For a recent restatement of a Schweitzerian position, see Barrett, *Jesus*, 48 and summary in Allison, in J. J. Collins, *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol 1, 267ff. but note the comments of Glasson in *Jesus*.
- 19 Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 237ff.
- 20 On Holy Spirit in Gospels, see Barrett, *Holy Spirit*; Dunn, *Jesus*.
- 21 Theissen, *First Followers*.
- 22 Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*. On evidence of Jesus teaching his disciples, see

Gerhardsson, *Memory*; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, also Daube, 'Responsibilities'; Derrett, *Jesus' Audience*, 101ff.

- 23 On sending formula, see Borgen, 'God's Agent'.
- 24 See Kümmel, *Promise*, 147.
- 25 See TDNT 3, 520; Emerton, 'Binding and Loosing'; Wilcox, 'Peter and the Rock'; Meyer, *Aims*, 185ff. and O'Neill, *Messiah*, 90ff.
- 26 See O'Neill, *Messiah*, 92f.
- 27 On 'edab and related terms in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see *SVM History* 2, 575ff.; TDNT 3, 524; Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*.
- 28 On Peter, see Cullmann, *Peter*; Brown and Donfried, *Peter*.

9 *Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*

- 1 An enormous amount of literature has grown up around this theme. Mention may be made of Vermes, *Jesus*; Finkel, *Pharisees*; Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*; Flusser, *Jesus*; Harvey, *Jesus*; Riches, *Jesus*; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority*.
- 2 For later Jewish polemic, see Herford, *Christianity*; Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*; Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth*; Bammel, 'Christian Origins'.
- 3 See Neusner, *Politics*, though note the remarks of Freyne, *Galilee*, 305ff.
- 4 Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority*; Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*.
- 5 On 'I' Sayings, see Jeremias, *NTT*, 250 and Arens, *ELTHON Sayings*.
- 6 On Jesus' baptism, see Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 358ff.; Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu*; further, Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*.
- 7 Goldberg, *Schekhinah*, 109ff.
- 8 Bowker, *Religious Imagination*, 121ff.
- 9 Additional bibliography: Ashton, *Religion*; Barker, *The Risen Lord*, 24–55; Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*; Fossum, *Image*; Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, especially 58–100; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 358ff.; Schweitzer, *Mystery*; Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*; Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*; Witherington, *Jesus the Seer*.
- 10 On Jesus and the Torah, see Banks, *Jesus and the Law*; Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*; Harvey, *Jesus*, ch. 3; Derrett, *Law*; Freyne, *Galilee*, 309ff.; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 229ff.
- 11 Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 245ff.
- 12 See Rowland in *Sabbath to Sunday*, ed. Carson.
- 13 See Finkel, *Pharisees* and Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*.
- 14 See Daube, 'Responsibilities'; Derrett, *Jesus' Audience*, 142ff.
- 15 Cf. M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 254ff.
- 16 See *Sabbath to Sunday*, ed. Carson, 84.
- 17 There may be a reflection of Jesus' attitude to Sabbath-breaking in the saying preserved in Codex Bezae (D) at Luke 6.4. See Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 49: 'On the same day Jesus saw someone working on the sabbath

and said to him, man if you know what you are doing you are blessed; if you do not, you are cursed and a transgressor of the law.'

- 18 Bousset, *Religion*, 283ff.
- 19 Cf. Jeremias, *NTT*, 205ff.
- 20 On authenticity, cf. Jeremias, *NTT*, 210.
- 21 On Jesus' attitude to the dietary laws, see Vermes, *Jesus*, 80; Westerholm, *Jesus*, 90.
- 22 Vermes, *Jesus*, 28.
- 23 Harvey, *Jesus*, 50.
- 24 Surveys in Vermes, *Jesus*; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*; *SVM History* 2, 404ff.; Lauterbach, *Rabbinic Essays* 2, 3ff.; TDNT 7, 35ff.; Lescynsky, *Sadduzäer and le Moyne, Sadducéens*; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*.
- 25 See Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 233ff.; *SVM History* 2, 381ff.; TDNT 9, 11ff.; Bowker, *Jesus*; Jeremias, *NTT*, 142ff.
- 26 On the 'fight for freedom' see G. L. Edwards, *Jesus and the Politics of Violence*; Yoder, *Politics*; Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?*; *Victory*; Riches, *Jesus*; Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*.
- 27 See further Belo, *Materialist Reading* and Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*.
- 28 See Derrett, *Jesus' Audience*, 187.
- 29 For example, Brandon, *Jesus; Trial*; Eisler, *Messiah Jesus*.
- 30 On this see Hengel, *The Zealots*.
- 31 See TDNT 7, 51.
- 32 See Freyne, *Galilee*, 259ff.
- 33 See Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 148; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.90ff.; 20.6ff.; Rhoads, *Israel*, 41.
- 34 See above, 90.
- 35 On the cleansing in the Fourth Gospel, see Brown, *John* 1, 115ff.; Schnackenburg, *John* 1, 356; McKelvey, *New Temple*, 75ff.; Ashton, *Understanding*.
- 36 On the 'cleansing', see Harvey, *Jesus*, 129ff.; Meyer, *Aims*, 197ff.; on Mark, see Telford, *Barren Fig-Tree*. Further, on the Temple, see Gaston, *No Stone*; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*.
- 37 Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 145.
- 38 See Black, *Scrolls*; Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*; Chilton, *Temple*.
- 39 See McKelvey, *New Temple*, 58ff.; Gaston, *No Stone*.
- 40 On John 2.19, see Schnackenburg, *John* 1, 349.
- 41 Additional bibliography: Chilton, *Temple*; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; Horsley, *Jesus*.

10 *The Death of Jesus*

- 1 Literature: Blinzler, *Trial*; Winter, *On the Trial*; Brandon, *Trial; Jesus*; Harvey, *Jesus*, ch. 2; *Trial*, ed. Bammel; *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*;

- Hoehner, *Herod*; Carmichael, *Death of Jesus*; Catchpole, *Trial*; Mantel, *Sanhedrin*; Sanders, *Judaism*, especially 472ff.; and *Jesus and Judaism*; Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*.
- 2 On earlier investigations of Jesus' activity, see Stauffer, *Jesus and his Story*; Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*; Bammel in *Trial*, ed. Bammel.
 - 3 On the Pharisees and Jesus' death, see Winter, *Trial*; Finkel, *Pharisees*.
 - 4 On the Lucan Passion Narrative, see Catchpole, *Trial*; Taylor, *Passion Narrative*; Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*.
 - 5 See Dodd, *Historical Tradition*.
 - 6 On 23.2, see *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. Bammel, 403ff.
 - 7 On the date of the Last Supper, see Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*; Jaubert, *Date*.
 - 8 On Jesus' reply to the High Priest, see Catchpole, 'Answer'.
 - 9 See Catchpole, *Trial*.
 - 10 On John 18.31, see *SVM History* 2, 221f. Further, on the rights of Jewish authorities, see Mantel, *Sanhedrin*; Catchpole, *Trial*; Winter, *On the Trial*.
 - 11 *SVM History* 2, 220.
 - 12 See Blinzler, *Trial*.
 - 13 On the Roman execution, see Brandon, *Trial* and the review by de Ste Croix in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* 86 (1971), 149f.
 - 14 See Marshall, *Luke*, 158.
 - 15 On mishnaic regulations and their history, see Mantel, *Sanhedrin*; Catchpole, *Trial*.
 - 16 Of course, it could be argued that Mishnah Sanhedrin represents the views of the Sages, not the Pharisees. On the relationship see Neusner, 'Formation'.
 - 17 Vermes, *Jesus*, 234, 159n.
 - 18 See Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story*.
 - 19 See Segal, *Two Powers*; Catchpole, *Trial*, 141, but note the critical comment of Vermes, *Jesus*, 258, 34n. It is not easy to decide whether Jesus' sayings against the Temple could be construed as blasphemy (cf. Josephus, *War*, 6.301); it may well be that in Jesus' day blasphemy covered a variety of offences (see Mark 2.7).
 - 20 Bowker, *Jesus*, 45.
 - 21 On the silence of Jesus, cf. O'Neill, *Messiah*, cf. Flusser, *Jesus*.
 - 22 On Megillat Ta'anith, see Dalman, *Dialektproben*; TDNT 7, 41ff.; Jeremias in *ZNW* 43, 145ff.
 - 23 On date of the execution of the High Priest's daughter, see Catchpole, 'Historicity'.
 - 24 See Harvey, *Jesus*, 17ff., 30f.
 - 25 Though it should be noted that such actions may have increased as the political situation deteriorated (Rhoads, *Israel*, 77). See further now, *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. Bammel, 427.

- 26 Bowker, *Jesus*, 49; *Trial*, ed. Bammel, 21ff.; Harvey, *Jesus*, 17ff.
 27 Rhoads, *Israel*, 62, 68f.
 28 See Cullmann, *State*, 8ff.; Yoder, *Politics*; but cf. ed. Bammel, *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*. Additional bibliography: Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, vol. 3; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*; Millar in Davies, and White, *Tribute to Geza Vermes*, 355–81.

11 *Jesus' Personal Claim*

- 1 There is a vast amount of literature relating to this theme. Books which refer to a wide amount of secondary material as well as offering detailed discussion of the sources include: Cullmann, *Christology*; Dunn, *Jesus; Christology*; Hahn, *Titles*; Fuller, *Mission*; Harvey, *Jesus*; Lampe, *God as Spirit*; Moule, *Origin*; Tuckett, *Christology*.
 2 Conzelmann, *Outline*, 140.
 3 Borgen, 'God's Agent'; Bühner, *Gesandte*.
 4 See Harvey, *Jesus*, 57ff.; TDNT 6, 781ff.; Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 63ff.; Yoder, *Politics*; Prior, *Jesus as Liberator*; Wright, *Jesus*, especially 147–97.
 5 Bowker, *Jesus*, 42–52.
 6 Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 358ff.
 7 Barrett, *Holy Spirit*.
 8 See Dunn, *Jesus; Jeremias*, *NTT*, 61ff.
 9 See Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 67ff.
 10 On the testing of the prophet's vocation, see Bultmann, *History*, 253f.; on the anthropological background, Ashton, *Religion*; on Luke 4.16, see Yoder, *Politics* and Prior, *Jesus*.
 11 Bowker, *Jesus*, 50.
 12 On the importance of the geographical setting of Jesus' ministry, see de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 427ff.; Freyne, *Galilee*, 221, 332; Theissen, *First Followers*.
 13 Cf. Casey, *Son of Man* and Lindars, *Jesus the Son of Man*.
 14 On the origins of the eucharist, see Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*; O'Neill, *Messiah*; Lietzmann, *Mass*.
 15 On Isa. 53 in the gospel tradition, see Cullmann, *Christology*; Jeremias, *NTT*, 276ff.; cf. Hooker, *Jesus*.
 16 On Jewish martyrology, see Frend, *Martyrdom*; Lohse, *Märtyrer*; Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 93f.
 17 On the suffering Messiah, see Zimmerli and Jeremias, *The Servant of God*; Hegermann, *Jesaja*, 53.
 18 Kümmel, *Theology*, 94.
 19 See Borgen, 'God's Agent'; Bühner, *Gesandte* on the agency motif.
 20 On false prophecy, see TDNT 6, 807f.; Horbury, '1 Thess. 2.3'; Wright, *Jesus*.

- 21 On Son of God, see Dunn, *Jesus; Christology*; van Iersel, *Sohn*; Vermes, *Jesus*, 192; Jeremias, *Prayers*; Harvey, *Jesus*.
- 22 Jeremias, *NTT*, 61ff.
- 23 Cf. Vermes, *Gospel*, also *Jesus and the World of Judaism*; Barr, 'Abba isn't Daddy'.
- 24 Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 192ff.
- 25 Used by Jesus: Matt. 11.27 (par. Luke 10.22); Mark 13.32; John 3.35; 5.19f.; 8.35f. Used of Jesus: Matt. 2.15; 4.3f.; 8.29; 17.5 and par.; Mark 1.11. Pre-supposed: Mark 12.6; 14.36; Luke 11.2, par.; Matt. 6.9f.
- 26 Jeremias, *Prayers*, 51; on Matt. 11.25ff., see Arvedson, *Mysterium*; Dalman, *Words*, 268ff.
- 27 See TDNT 8, 373.
- 28 Dalman, *Words*, 282f.; Tuckett, *Christology*, 220.
- 29 On the background, see Bockmuehl, *Revelation*.
- 30 On the Messiah, see Cullmann, *Christology*, 111ff.; Harvey, *Jesus*, ch. 6; Vermes, *Jesus*, 129ff.; TDNT 9, 493ff.
- 31 See above, 86ff.
- 32 For variant messianic expectations, see e.g., Meeks, *Prophet King*.
- 33 It seems to be the case in Mark 14.62 (and par.; see Catchpole, 'Answer'). It is discussed at Mark 9.41 and 12.35 and attributed to Jesus by others at Matt. 16.16; cf. Mark 8.27; 15.32, Matt. 27.17; Luke 23.2; John 4.25f.; 7.41; 10.28; 11.27.
- 34 On Peter's confession, see Cullmann, *Peter; Christology*; O'Neill, *Messiah*, 92f.; Meyer, *Aims*, 185ff.
- 35 For a suggestion with regard to the composition of this section, see Haenchen, *Weg Jesu*, 292ff.
- 36 On the Triumphal Entry, see Harvey, *Jesus*, 120ff.
- 37 See Catchpole, *Trial*.
- 38 Harvey, *Jesus*, 140ff.
- 39 On the Son of Man, see e.g., TDNT 8, 400ff.; Tödt, *Son of Man*; Hooker, *Son of Man*; Leivestad, 'Exit'; Casey, *Son of Man*; Moule, 'Neglected Features' in *Essays*; Lindars, *Jesus the Son of Man*; Dalman, *Words*, 234ff.; Vermes, *Jesus*, 160ff.
- 40 See Moule, 'Neglected Features'.
- 41 Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 247, and on the Johannine Son of Man note Moloney, *Johannine Son of Man*.
- 42 On the Greek of the Son of Man sayings, see the comments by Moule and Casey, op. cit., and O'Neill, *Messiah*, 107f.
- 43 Survey of biblical material in Dalman, *Words*, 234f.
- 44 Vermes, *Jesus*, 160ff.; cf. Fitzmyer in *Wandering Aramean*; Black, *Aramaic Approach*, 310ff. Note the amplification of this position by Bowker, 'Son of Man'.

- 45 On 'one like a son of man' in Dan. 7.13 as a heavenly being, see Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*; Colpe in TDNT 8, 420ff.; cf. Casey, *Son of Man*, 7ff.
- 46 See e.g., Bultmann, *History*, e.g., 121f.; Riches, *Jesus*, 161ff.
- 47 See Jeremias, *NTT*, 257ff.; Fuller, *Mission*, 95ff.
- 48 Vermes, *Jesus*, 163ff.; cf. Casey, *Son of Man*, 224ff.
- 49 The criticisms of the Vermes theory by Jeremias may be found in *NTT*, 261; cf. O'Neill, *Messiah*.
- 50 Note the comments of Casey on Vermes' position in *Son of Man*, 224 and also O'Neill, *Messiah*, 103ff. and Lindars, *Jesus the Son of Man*.
- 51 Vermes, *Jesus*, 183; Casey, *Son of Man*, 165ff.; Lindars, *Jesus the Son of Man* and Vermes, *Jesus and the Jewish World*.
- 52 Cf. Glasson, *Second Advent*; Robinson, *Jesus and his Coming*; Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 154ff.
- 53 See Casey, *Son of Man*.
- 54 See Moule, 'Neglected Features'; Hooker, *Son of Man*.
- 55 For example, J. J. Collins in *Apocalyptic Vision* and in *Ideal Figures*, ed. Nickelsburg, 111ff.; A. Y. Collins, in *Cosmology*.
- 56 Fuller, *Mission*, 107f.
- 57 Cf. Casey's conclusion on New Testament scholarship's preoccupation with discussion of the Son of Man, *op. cit.*, 239.
- 58 See Jeremias, *NTT*, 276. Additional bibliography: Charlesworth, *Messiah*; Day, *King and Messiah*; Fredriksen, *Jesus*; Neusner, *Judaism*; Tuckett, *Christology*; Wright, *Jesus*.

12 *The Resurrection Narratives*

- 1 Literature: *Significance*, ed. Moule; Moule, *Phenomenon*; Fuller, *Formation*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 381ff.; Selby, *Look for the Living*; Pannenberg, *Jesus*; Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*; Williams, *Resurrection*; Alsup, *Post-Resurrection Appearances*; Evans, *Resurrection*; Marxsen, *Resurrection*; Dunn, *Jesus*, 95ff.
- 2 On the importance of the resurrection for christological reflection, see Pannenberg, *Jesus*.
- 3 Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*; Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life*; and above, 90f.
- 4 See Selby, *Look for the Living*.
- 5 See Fuller, *Formation*; Alsup, *Post-Resurrection Appearances*; Dunn, *Jesus*, 95ff.
- 6 On the empty tomb, see Wilckens in *Significance*, ed. Moule, 51ff.
- 7 O'Neill in Sykes and Clayton, *Christian History*.
- 8 See Berger, *Auferstehung*, on the theme of exaltation. For Moses, see Josephus, *Ant.* 4.326.
- 9 See Marxsen, in *Significance*, ed. Moule, 30ff.
- 10 Dunn, *Jesus*, 101f.

- 11 On the material, see Fuller and Alsup, *op. cit.*; Perrin, *Resurrection Narratives*.
- 12 See Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 374f.
- 13 On transfiguration, see Alsup, *Post Resurrection Appearances*, 141ff.; Chilton, 'Transfiguration'; Ashton, *Religion*.
- 14 On the form and character of the resurrection appearances, see Dodd in *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. Nineham (also in his *More New Testament Studies*).
- 15 For the materialist eschatological beliefs attributed to Cerinthus, see Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*.
- 16 So also Dunn, *Jesus*, 122.
- 17 See R. D. Williams, *Resurrection*, 106f.
- 18 Vermes, *Jesus*, 41. Additional bibliography: Avis, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; S. C. Barton and Stanton, *Resurrection*; Carnley, *Structure of Resurrection Belief*; Catchpole, *Resurrection People*; Coady, *Testimony*; S. Davis, *The Resurrection*; Davis in Stump and Hint, *Hermes and Athena*; Lash, 'Easter Meaning'; Lüdemann, *Resurrection of Jesus*; Perkins, *Resurrection*; Schaberg, *Resurrection*; Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification and Revelation*; Wedderburn, *Beyond Resurrection*; Theissen and Merz, *Jesus*, 474–511; Wiebe, *Visions of Jesus*.

Section 3 Paul

1 Introduction

- 1 See Stendahl, *Paul*. Further on Paul, see Sanders, *Paul*; Davies, *Paul* and Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*. On the social setting of Pauline Christianity, see particularly Meeks, *Urban Christians*; Theissen, *Social Setting*.
- 2 See Dunn, *Unity*; Bauer, *Orthodoxy*; cf. Turner, *Pattern*.
- 3 See Harris, *Tübingen School*, and for restatements of that position Brandon, *Fall* and Goulder, *Two Missions*.
- 4 See e.g., Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors*; Dungan, *Sayings*.
- 5 On justification, see Käsemann, 'Righteousness' in Käsemann, *Essays; Romans*. Also Sanders, *Paul*, 523ff.
- 6 See Kim, *Origin*.
- 7 See Betz, *Galatians*, 64: 'Strictly speaking we cannot speak at all of a conversion of Paul . . . he changed parties within Judaism from Pharisaism to Jewish Christianity.'
- 8 Cf. Josephus' account of sectarian transfer in *Life* 9–11 and further Ashton, *Religion* and Munck, *Paul*.
- 9 On the importance of his 'conversion-experience' for his theology see Kim, *Origin* and Ashton, *Religion*. On the centrality of eschatology, Beker, *Paul the Apostle*; de Boer, 'Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology'.
- 10 Cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law*, who would not want to attach such significance to these words (e.g. 25f.).

- 11 Segal, *Paul the Convert*.
- 12 Views are divided on the continued messianic significance of this title; see Krämer, *Christ*, 203ff. and Hengel in *Between Jesus and Paul*.
- 13 On Paul's use of Scripture, see Ellis, *Paul's Use*; Sanders, *Paul the Law*; Hübner, *Law*; Hays, *Echoes*.
- 14 See Davies, *Paul*.
- 15 Some have recognized the importance of the continued debt to Jewish thought in Paul's writing as a Christian, but think that it derives largely from the Hellenistic Jewish world. See Sandmel, *Genius*; Schoeps, *Paul*; Boyarin, *Radical Jew*.
- 16 Sanders has indicated the continuing influence of the Law in the Pauline communities, *Paul the Law*, 93ff.
- 17 See Davies, *Paul*, 147ff.; Wright, *Climax*.
- 18 Davies rightly recognized the importance of this issue for the study of early Christianity, *Torah in the Messianic Age*, but note also the comments of Schäfer, 'Torah'.
- 19 Theissen, *Theory*, 81–118.
- 20 Additional bibliography: Ashton, *Religion*; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8–9*; Boyarin, *Radical Jew*; Barclay, *Obedying*; Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law*; Campbell, *Paul's Gospel*; Dunn, *Theology*; Elliott, *Liberating Paul*; Gager, Georgi, *Collection*; Hengel, *Paul*; *Pre-Christian Paul*; Keck, *Paul and his Letters*; Theissen, *Theory*; Horrell, *Social Ethos*; Meggitt, *Paul*; Roetzel, *Paul*; Segal, *Paul the Convert*; Watson, *Paul*; Wright, *Climax*.

2 *Christianity Before and Apart from Paul*

- 1 On Rome, see Leon, *Jews*; Cullmann, *Peter*; and on Antioch, Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul* and Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians*.
- 2 For a variety of approaches to Acts, see Haenchen, *Acts*; Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*; Keck and Martyn, *Studies*; Gasque, *History*; Hemer, *Book of Acts*; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*; Alexander, in Edwards, Goodman, and Price, *Apologetics*.
- 3 On the speeches, see, e.g., Cadbury, *Making*; Wilckens, *Missionsrede*; Moule in Keck and Martyn, *Studies*.
- 4 On the subject of the atonement, see Hengel, *Atonement*; Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event*.
- 5 On the early Jewish Christology, see Longenecker, *Christology*.
- 6 For a hypothesis along these lines, see W. Marxsen, *The Evangelist Mark*; and see also Freyne, *Galilee*.
- 7 See further, Scobie, 'Samaritan Christianity'; Freyne, *Galilee*; Goulder in Hick, *Myth*; Macdonald, *Theology*.
- 8 On the Council, see Catchpole, 'Apostolic Council'.
- 9 On Jewish Christianity, see Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*; Schoeps, *Theologie*; Cullmann, *Roman Pseudo-Clémentin*; Strecker's appendix to Bauer, *Ortho-*

- doxy*; Kraft, 'Search'; 'Heritage'; Daniélou, *Theology*; Longenecker, *Christology*; Dunn, *Unity*, 235ff.; Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence* for a collection of source material.
- 10 On James, see the most recent commentary by Laws and the English translation of Dibelius' commentary.
 - 11 There is a full consideration of recent scholarship on Jude and 2 Peter in the commentary by Bauckham.
 - 12 See, e.g., Reicke, *Disobedient Spirits*; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*. For further recent work on 1 Peter, see Elliott, *Elect*; id., *Home*.
 - 13 The Jewish character of Hebrews is well brought out in Hofius' monographs, *Katapausis* and *Vorhang*.
 - 14 See Kilpatrick, *Origin*; Davies, *Setting* and a summary of recent scholarship in Stanton, *Interpretation* and *Gospel for a New People*.
 - 15 For the Jewish material see Krauss, *Leben*; Herford, *Christianity*. On the infancy narratives, see Brown, *Birth*.
 - 16 See Horbury in Bammel, *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*.
 - 17 For example, Martyn, *History* and especially Ashton, *Understanding*.
 - 18 For example, Marxsen, *The Evangelist Mark*. For other work on Mark, see Telford, *Mark*; Hooker, *Message*; Kee, *Community*; Tuckett, *Messianic Secret*, and Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*.
 - 19 Generally on redaction criticism, see Rohde, *Rediscovering*; Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?*
 - 20 On the setting of the Q source, see Tödt, *Son of Man*; Edwards, *The Sign of Jonah*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 403ff.; Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence*; Suggs, *Wisdom*; Stanton in Lindars and Smalley, *Christ and Spirit*.
 - 21 See Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict*; Martin, *Mark*; Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels', in *Trajectories*, and Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 424ff.
 - 22 On 2 Cor. and Paul's opponents, see Georgi, *Gegner*; Barrett, *Essays on Paul*.
 - 23 Generally on the possible Jewish background of Paul's opponents, see Gunther, *Opponents*.
 - 24 For example, Howard, *Crisis*; on Colossians, see Francis and Meeks, *Conflict* and Rowland in Horbury and Rowland, *Essays*.
 - 25 For a survey of the material on the Johannine false teaching, see the commentaries of Brown and Marshall, and O'Neill, *Puzzle*.
 - 26 See Simon, *St Stephen*; Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle* and Scroggs; 'The Earliest Christian Communities'. On Stephen, see Scharlemann, *Stephen*; Bihler, *Stephanusgeschichte*; Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*; and Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 369f.
 - 27 On the speeches in Acts, see 3n and also the comments of Stanton in *Jesus of Nazareth*, 19ff.
 - 28 On Paul's relation to earlier Christian traditions, see the admirable summary in Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors* and Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*.
 - 29 On Antioch, see Marshall, 'Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity'; Meeks

and Wilken, *Jews and Christians*; Dunn, in JSNT 18, 3ff.

- 30 For a discussion of this incident, see Schmithals, *Paul and James*.
- 31 See the books mentioned in 14n.
- 32 On Ignatius, see Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*.
- 33 Rowland, *Revelation*; Goulder, *Two Missions*.
- 34 Additional bibliography: Ashton, *Understanding*; Barrett, *Acts*; Bauckham, *Acts*; Gospel; James; Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law*; J. J. Collins, *Jerusalem and Temple*; Hurst, *Hebrews*; Kloppenborg, *Q*; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*; Heretics; Rowland, *Revelation*; Stanton, *Gospel*; Tuckett, *Q*.

3 *Situation and System in Paul's Letters*

- 1 But note the important statement of the contrary position by O'Neill (e.g., *Romans*, *Galatians*), and 'Glosses'; also Munro, *Authority*.
- 2 Kümmel, *Introduction*, 268ff., considers that Colossians and 2 Thessalonians are authentic; Ephesians and the Pastorals are not.
- 3 See Dunn, *Christology*, who treats it as authentic. For the opposite point of view, see Lohse, *Colossians*.
- 4 On this theme, see Tannehill, *Dying*. On the Letter to Rheginos, see Peel, *Rheginos*.
- 5 See Francis and Meeks, *Conflict*.
- 6 There is an exhaustive survey in van Rooon, *Authenticity*. See also *Studies*, ed. F. L. Cross.
- 7 For a way of explaining the differences between the Pastorals and the authentic letters see Moule in *Essays*; cf. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastorals*.
- 8 See Guthrie, *Introduction*, 584ff. (on pseudepigraphy, 671ff.); cf. Robinson, *Redating*, 67ff.
- 9 See Robinson, *Redating*; Reicke, *Luke*; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 122ff.
- 10 See Dodd, 'Mind of Paul' in *New Testament Studies*.
- 11 See further, Schweitzer, *Mysticism*; Sanders, *Paul*; Stendahl, *Paul*; and Davies, *Paul*.
- 12 On the critical problems, see Kümmel, *Introduction*, 287; Barrett, *2 Corinthians* and Gnilya in *Paul and Qumran*, ed. Murphy-O'Connor, 48f.
- 13 See Theissen, *Social Setting* and Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*.
- 14 See Moule, 'Circumstances', in *Essays*; Minear, *Obedience*; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*; Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 15 See Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 23ff.
- 16 See Moule, 'Paul and Dualism', in *Essays*; Lincoln, *Paradise*, 55ff.; Harris, *Raised Immortal*.
- 17 See Dodd, 'Mind of Paul'; Lowe, 'Examination'; Moule, 'Influence' in *Essays*.
- 18 Additional bibliography: Duff, *Pseudepigraphy*; Furnish, *2 Corinthians*; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*; Macdonald, *Pauline Churches*; Muddiman, *Ephesians*.

4 *Major Themes of Paul's Letters*

- 1 Sanders, *Paul*, 523ff. On the centrality of eschatology, see Beker, *Paul the Apostle* and *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*; Munck, *Paul*; Baumgarten, *Paulus*; Ziesler, *Meaning*.
- 2 See Käsemann, 'Righteousness' in *Essays*; and Beker, *Paul the Apostle*.
- 3 See Kim, *Origin*, 330.
- 4 See Cullmann, *Salvation*, 166ff.
- 5 On the contrast between the two ages, see Davies, *Torah*.
- 6 On proselytes, see *Beginnings* 5, ed. Jackson and Lake, 74ff.; TDNT 6, 727; Bamberger, *Proselytism*; Braude, *Jewish Proselytizing*.
- 7 Concise survey in Bornkamm, *Paul*; Bruce, *Paul*. On the powers, see Caird, *Principalities*.
- 8 On the idea of tribulation, see TDNT 3, 139ff.
- 9 See Moule, *Colossians*, 76; Lohse, *Colossians*, 70f.
- 10 On the sacrificial terminology and its application to the death of Christ in Paul's writings, see Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*; Cross; Hill, *Greek Words*; Whiteley, *Theology*; Hengel, *Atonement*; S. Williams, *Jesus' Death*; Anderson Scott, *Christianity*.
- 11 On the possibility of relics of a pre-Pauline formula in the Pauline corpus, see Bultmann, *Theology* 1, 46; Käsemann, *Romans*, 92; Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors*.
- 12 On sacrificial understanding of the death of Christ in NT generally, see Morris, *Cross*.
- 13 On Hebrews, see Nairne, *Epistle of Priesthood*; Young, *Sacrifice*; Hurst, *Hebrews*.
- 14 Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 191.
- 15 See TDNT 7, 1024; Best, *One Body*; Gundry, *Sōma*.
- 16 See Wainwright, *Eucharist*.
- 17 See Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*.
- 18 McKelvey, *New Temple*.
- 19 See Theissen, *Social Setting*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*.
- 20 Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 323f.
- 21 On the possibility of 1 Cor. 14.34 being a later gloss, see Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 330f.
- 22 See Dodds, *Pagan*; Theissen, *Social Setting*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*. Additional bibliography: Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*; Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*; Boyarin, *Radical Jew*; Dunn, *Theology*; Elliott, *Liberating Paul*; Wink, *Powers*.

5 *Apostle to the Gentiles*

- 1 Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*; *SVM History* 2, 533.
- 2 Munck, *Paul*; Hahn, *Mission*; Zeller, *Juden*.

- 3 On the place of religious experience in dealing with halakic matters, see Falk, *Introduction* 1, 13; Davies, *Setting*, 284.
- 4 Repudiation of idolatry was part of the Jewish propaganda; see Wisd. 13ff.; *Sibylline Oracles*. On Jewish apologetic literature, see, e.g., Collins, *Athens to Jerusalem; Sibylline Oracles*.
- 5 Knox, *Chapter*; Haenchen, *Acts*. O'Neill, *Theology*, thinks that Acts is a second-century work, but uses earlier material.
- 6 See Hengel, *Acts*. History of scholarship in Gasque, *History*; Hemer, *Book of Acts*.
- 7 Cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 8 On God-fearers, see TDNT 6, 727ff. and Gager, *Kingdom*, 128, 138; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 25, 207, 175ff.
- 9 Cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 10 Note Gager's comments on circumcision in *Kingdom*, 135f. On pagan attitudes, see Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People*, 2, 1101f.
- 11 See McKelenev, 'Conversion', but cf. Nolland, 'Uncircumcised Proselytes'.
- 12 On 2 Cor. 10.14, see Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 266f.
- 13 See Munck, *Paul* and Sanders, *Paul the Law*; Watson, *Paul*.
- 14 On judaizing, see Munck, *Paul*; on Galatians, see Howard, *Crisis*. The letter to the Hebrews is also an example of the pervasive Jewish influence.
- 15 On Gal. 5.2ff., see Betz, *Galatians*, 258f.
- 16 See below, 218ff.
- 17 See Kraabel, *Judaism in Asia Minor*. On attitudes to the Law in the Diaspora, see the suggestions of Schoeps, *Paul*.
- 18 See Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age*; cf. Schäfer, 'Torah'.
- 19 On Isa. 56.3ff. see Westermann, *Isaiah*, 40–66, 312: '... obviously a designation for a proselyte current at the time'.
- 20 In his discussion of circumcision Paul does not choose to base his arguments on Isa., but on the figure of Abraham (Gal. 3; Rom. 4). That covenant-ideas may undergird his position is pointed out by Hooker in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. Hooker and Wilson. See further Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*; Wright, *Climax*.
- 21 For the Temple Scroll, see Maier, *Temple Scroll*.
- 22 On the collection, see Nickle, *Collection*; Georgi, *Collection*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, e.g., 65f.
- 23 Additional bibliography: Gager, *Paul*; Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*; Kreider, *Worship and Evangelism*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Le Grys, *Mission*; Segal, *Paul the Convert*.

6 *Paul's Method as an Apostle*

- 1 For suggestive comments on the problems posed by Paul's message and its reception, see Robinson in Koester and Robinson, *Trajectories*, 20ff.

- 2 See Chadwick, 'All Things'.
- 3 Cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 4 Gal. 5.3 refers to the one who undertakes the rite as a *necessary* part of the process of salvation and does not, therefore, refer to an acceptance of circumcision as a rite which might be expedient in certain circumstances, e.g., Gal. 6.15.
- 5 See further Betz, *Galatians* on the syntactical and textual problems of this passage.
- 6 Hurd, *Origin of 1 Corinthians*, but note the comments of Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 7f.
- 7 See the interesting discussion in Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*.
- 8 On the relationship between Acts 15 and 21.23, see *Beginnings*, ed. Jackson and Lake 5, 195ff. On Paul and Council, see also Hurd, *Origin*.
- 9 See Catchpole, 'Apostolic Council'; *Beginnings*, 5, 195ff.
- 10 See Hock, *Social Context*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 27ff.
- 11 Further, Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors*; Gerhardsson, *Memory*.
- 12 See Dodd, *Gospel and Law*; Sanders, *Paul the Law*. On the basis of Paul's ethic, see Furnish, *Theology and Ethics*.

7 *Paul and the Torah*

- 1 See Cranfield, *Romans*, vol. 2, 515ff., Käsemann, *Romans*, 281f.; Campbell, 'Christ the End of the Law'.
- 2 On Paul and Law, see Sanders, *Paul the Law*; Hübner, *Law*.
- 3 On the starting point of Paul's theological reflection, see Sanders, *Paul*, 442f.; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 238f.
- 4 Cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 5 On the household regulations (*Haustafeln*), see Crouch, *Colossian Haustafeln*; Munro, *Authority*; on the continued influence of the Law of Moses, see Sanders, *Paul the Law*.

8 *Membership of the People of God*

- 1 Note the interesting parallels in the career of Sabbatai Sevi (see Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*).
- 2 See Munck, *Paul*.
- 3 See Nolland, 'Uncircumcised Proselytes'.
- 4 Forkman, *Limits*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 75ff.
- 5 See Sanders, *Paul the Law*, 93ff.
- 6 On perfectionism, see Bogart, *Orthodoxy* and Peterson, *Hebrews*.
- 7 See Forkman, *Limits*.
- 8 Additional bibliography: Gager, *Paul*; Wilson, in Bockock and Thompson, *Religion and Ideology*; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*.

9 *Paul and Israel*

- 1 See Munck, *Paul*; Zeller, *Juden*; Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*; Käsemann, *Romans*, 313f.; ed. de Lorenzi, *Die Israelfrage*; Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 2 See Bowker, 'Origin'.
- 3 A later date is given for Galatians in Kümmel, *Introduction*, 304; see the discussions in Guthrie, *Introduction*, 457 but note Robinson, *Redating*, 55ff.
- 4 See Richardson, *Israel*, but cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 5 See, e.g., Best, *1 Thessalonians*, 119f.
- 6 Best, *1 Thessalonians*, 122.
- 7 On these chapters, see Munck, *Paul*; Käsemann, *Romans*, 313ff.; Hanson, *Pioneer Ministry*.
- 8 See Munck, *Paul*, 47f.
- 9 For a different approach, see Hahn in Hooker and Wilson, *Paul and Paulinism*.
- 10 Additional bibliography: Boyarin, *Radical Jew*; Wright, *Climax*.

10 *The Problem of Authority*

- 1 See von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*; Schütz, *Anatomy*; Holmberg, *Power*; Dunn, *Jesus*, 271ff.; Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*; Shaw, *Authority*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 111ff., 171ff.
- 2 There are hints also in 1 Thessalonians 2.4ff., on which see Best, *1 Thessalonians*, 93ff. On the issue of false prophecy, see Horbury '1 Thessalonians 2.3'.
- 3 On the problems in Galatia, see Howard, *Crisis*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 95f.
- 4 See *SVM History* 2, 240 on the priestly genealogies and note Josephus, *Life*, 1, 4f.
- 5 On rabbinic authority, see Urbach, *Sages* 1, 593ff.
- 6 See Büchler, *Types*; Vermes, *Jesus*; Freyne, *Galilee*, 330ff.; Green, 'Palestinian Holy Men'.
- 7 On this passage, see Davies, *Setting*, 284; Falk, *Introduction* 1, 13; 2, 161.
- 8 Cf. Neusner, *Eliezer*, 2, 410ff., who does not regard it as one of the most reliable historical reminiscences of Eliezer.
- 9 On Gal. 1.12ff., see Betz, *Galatians*, 62ff.; Kertelge, 'Apokalypsis'; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 376f.; Kim, *Origin*, 67ff.; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 171ff.
- 10 Paul's visits to Jerusalem have occasioned much scholarly debate. See Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings*, 2, 271ff.; Knox, *Chapters*; Jewett, *Dating*; Robinson, *Redating*; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 252ff.
- 11 On Gal. 1.18, see Kilpatrick in *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. Nineham.
- 12 Acts 15.2 in D has a different version, where reference is made to compulsion (see *Beginnings*, 3, ed. Jackson and Lake, 139).
- 13 On the text of Gal. 2.5, see Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 121.
- 14 Burkitt, quoted in Bruce, *Paul*, 158.

- 15 On the authority of the Teacher of Righteousness, see Jeremias, *Lebrer*.
- 16 See Theissen, *Social Setting*; Hock, *Social Context*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*.
- 17 See Dungan, *Sayings*.
- 18 On the Corinthian opponents, see Schmithals, *Gnosticism*; Hurd, *Origin*; Munck, *Paul*; Georgi, *Gegner*; Barrett, *Essays on Paul*.
- 19 See the surveys in Barrett, *Essays on Paul*.
- 20 On differing views of the apostolic ministry, see the outline by Koester in Koester and Robinson, *Trajectories*, 187ff.; Barrett, *Signs*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 131ff.
- 21 On this sudden change of mood, see Kümmel, *Introduction*, 332.
- 22 On the Pastorals, see the commentaries of Kelly and Dibelius and also Harrison, *Problems* and Wilson, *Luke and the Pastorals* and below, 265ff.
- 23 On ordination, see von Campenhausen, *Authority*, 115, 157ff.; Lohse, *Ordination*.
- 24 Additional bibliography: Alexander, 'A Sixtieth Part of Prophecy'; Martyn, *Galatians*; Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*.

Section 4

From Messianism to Christian Religion

1 *Early Christian Initiation and Worship*

- 1 On the views contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 82–3.
- 2 Translation from Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 109.
- 3 Translation from Vermes, *op. cit.*, 110.
- 4 For the use of the Temple imagery, see McKelvey, *New Temple*; Gärtner, *Temple*.
- 5 On baptism in the New Testament, see Cullman, *Baptism*; Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*; Wagner, *Pauline Baptism*; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, and on its social setting, Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 150ff.
- 6 See Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 90ff.
- 7 On the catechumenate, see Dujarier, *Parrainage*.
- 8 On proselyte baptism, see TDNT 6, 738f.
- 9 On John the Baptist, see above, 130.
- 10 On the hostile powers in the ancient world-view, see Brown, *World*, 53ff.; Making, 10; Aulen, *Christus Victor*; Caird, *Principalities*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 155f.; Wink, *Powers*.
- 11 On Col. 2.14f., see Anderson Scott, *Christianity*, 34f.
- 12 On the Eucharist and its origins, see Lietzmann, *Mass* (together with a new essay by Richardson); Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*; Cullmann, *Worship*;

- Moule, *Worship*; Delling, *Worship*; Higgins, *Lord's Supper* and more generally in Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 140ff.
- 13 Detailed discussion in Lietzmann and Richardson, *Mass*.
 - 14 See *Sabbath to Sunday*, ed. Carson.
 - 15 On the difficulties of a proper assessment, see Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*.
 - 16 See Bowker, 'Proem and Yelammedenu Forms'.
 - 17 See also *Apostolic Tradition*, 26.5.
 - 18 See Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*.
 - 19 On the significance of the meal at Qumran, see Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 83.
 - 20 On this, see Lietzmann, *Mass*.
 - 21 On this phrase, see Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 237ff.
 - 22 For the Passover *Haggadah*, see e.g., *Haggadah for Passover*, ed. Roth.
 - 23 See Wainwright, *Eucharist*.
 - 24 Further, Le Déaut, *La Nuit*.
 - 25 On the background of this imagery, see Hill, *Greek Words*, 49ff.
 - 26 On the Didache, see Audet, *Didache*; Vokes, *Riddle of the Didache* and now Draper, *Didache*.
 - 27 On Cor. 16.22, see Robinson in *Twelve NT Studies*; Moule, *Worship*, 43.
 - 28 On Maranatha, see Moule, *Worship*, 70f.; Bornkamm in *Early Christian Experience*, 123ff.; 161ff.; TDNT 4, 466f.
 - 29 See Lietzmann, *Mass*, 204.
 - 30 On John 6, see Cullmann, *Worship*; Brown, *John* 1, 272ff.; Schnackenburg, *John* 2, 56ff.; cf. Bultmann, *John*.
 - 31 On Ignatius' eucharistic thought, see Lietzmann, *Mass*, 210, 242, 421, 684 and further Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*.
 - 32 See Wainwright, *Eucharist*.
 - 33 On the link between the cult and realized eschatology, see Aune, *Cultic Aspect*.
 - 34 On Montanism, see Labriolle, *Crise*; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 178f. and especially Trevett, *Montanism*. For an important contribution to the history of the role of women in primitive Christianity see Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* and Radford Ruether, *Women of Spirit*.
 - 35 On Ignatius, see Schweizer, *Church Order*, 150ff.; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 97ff.; Corwin, *St Ignatius*; Barnard, *Studies*; Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*.
 - 36 Additional bibliography: Kreider, *Change of Conversion*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*.
 - 37 Stacey, 'Paradigmatic Use of Scripture'. I am grateful to Morna Hooker for pointing me to this important article.
 - 38 Additional bibliography: Hays, *Echoes*; Sanders, *Paul, the Law*; Boyarin,

Radical Jew; Carleton Paget, *Barnabas*; Stacey, 'Paradigmatic Use of Scripture'; Young, *Biblical Exegesis*.

2 *The Emergence of Beliefs about Jesus*

- 1 Literature may be found in Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*; Dunn, *Christology*; Cullmann, *Christology*; Moule, *Origin*; Hahn, *Titles*; Fuller, *Foundations*; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*; *Christ*.
- 2 On christological titles in the Gospels, see above, 171ff.
- 3 On the Christology of Acts, see Moule in *Studies*, ed. Keck and Martyn; Robinson, 'Most Primitive Christology' in his *Twelve NT Studies*; Longenecker, *Christology*.
- 4 On Christ as a messianic title in Paul, see Hengel in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. Hooker and Wilson (in English in *Between Jesus and Paul*).
- 5 See Vermes, *Jesus*; Cullmann, *Christology*; Fitzmyer in *Wandering Aramean*.
- 6 See Moule in Keck and Martyn, *Studies*.
- 7 On the use of Ps. 110, see Hay, *Glory*.
- 8 On Kyrios in Paul, see Krämer, *Christ*, 151ff.
- 9 On Johannine Christology, see Dunn, *Christology*, 213ff. and on the christological heresy in 1 John see Wengst, *Häresie*.
- 10 See Martyn, *History*; Ashton, *Understanding*.
- 11 See Brown, *John 2*, 1060; Barrett, *John and Judaism*, 17; *Gospel of John*, 134ff.; 575.
- 12 For example, Wiles, *Spiritual Gospel*.
- 13 See Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*; Ashton, *Understanding*.
- 14 See Hanson, *New Testament Interpretation*.
- 15 See Bultmann, *John*, 83, 145.
- 16 On subordination in John, see Barrett in his *Essays on John*.
- 17 On the Jewish background, see Dahl, 'Johannine Church'; Bühner, *Gesandte*; Segal, *Two Powers*; Odeberg, *Fourth Gospel*; Ashton, *Understanding*.
- 18 See Borgen, 'God's Agent' in Ashton, *Interpretation*.
- 19 On this verse, see Rowland, 'John 1.51'.
- 20 On John and the Samaritans, see Freyne, *Galilee*, 367ff.; Meeks, *Prophet-King*; Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*; Scobie, 'Samaritan Christianity' and Goulder in *Myth*, ed. Hick.
- 21 On John and the Jewish festivals, see, e.g., Guilding, *Fourth Gospel*.
- 22 On John 6, see Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*.
- 23 For a consideration of the Law in the Fourth Gospel, see Pancaro, *Law*.
- 24 See Segal, *Two Powers*.
- 25 For a discussion of the Spirit-Paraclete passages, see Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*; Betz, *Der Paraklet*; TDNT 5, 800ff.
- 26 On the phrase 'eternal life', see Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 144f.; Hill, *Greek*

- Words*, 175ff; also TDNT 2, 832ff.
- 27 See, e.g., Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*; Grillmeier, *Christ*.
- 28 See Meeks, *Urban Christians*, for a preliminary attempt to carry out this task.
- 29 Schweitzer, *Quest; Mysticism*.
- 30 See Werner, *Formation* (abridged version of *Entstehung*).
- 31 On the influence of the Delay of the Parousia, see below, 287ff.
- 32 On the Arian controversy, see Grillmeier, *Christ*, 1, 219ff.; Lorenz, *Arius Ioudaizans*; Williams, *Arius*.
- 33 de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 452.
- 34 See TDNT 9, 493ff.
- 35 On Christ in Paul, see Preiss, *Life*; Bouttier, *Christianity*; Krämer, *Christ*; Hengel, *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. Hooker and Wilson (in English in *Between Jesus and Paul*).
- 36 See Dunn, *Christology*, 163ff. Also on John, Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 303ff.
- 37 On angelomorphic Christology, see Hengel, *Son of God*; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 98ff.; Bühner, *Gesandte; Auferstehung*; Segal, *Two Powers*; cf. Dunn, *Christology*.
- 38 See Suggs, *Wisdom*; Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence*.
- 39 On these passages, see Sanders, *NT Christological Hymns*; Dunn, *Christology*.
- 40 On the theophanic material in the Hebrew Bible, see Jeremias, *Theophanie* and further Bultmann, *John*.
- 41 On the individualism of the Fourth Gospel, see Moule, *Essays*.
- 42 See below, 292.
- 43 See Schnackenburg, *John* 1, 543ff.; Talbert, *What is a Gospel?*, 53ff.
- 44 See Meeks, 'Man from Heaven'; Segal, 'Heavenly Ascents'.
- 45 Talbert, loc. cit., and the works cited above 37n.
- 46 See Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 144ff.
- 47 On the Christology of Rev., see Holtz, *Christologie*.
- 48 On Johannine dualism, see Charlesworth in *John and Qumran*, ed. Charlesworth, 76ff.; also Böcher, *Johanneische Dualismus*; Schottroff, *Welt*.
- 49 Dunn, *Christology*; Hengel, *Son of God*.
- 50 See Brown, *Making*; Williams, 'The Prophetic and the Mystical'. Additional bibliography: Ashton, *Understanding*; Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*; Casey, *Galilean Prophet*; Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*; Gieschen, *Angelmorphic Christology*; Hannah, *Michael and Christ*; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*; Rowland, *Revelation*; Tüchett, *Christology*, which offers an excellent short introduction to the themes of this section.

3 Differing Models of Ministry

- 1 On trends in Judaism, see 64ff.

- 2 See above, 72ff., and Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 76–7.
- 3 See Bowker, *Religious Imagination*, 121ff.; Williams, *Eucharistic Sacrifice*, 17; Brown, *Making*, 56ff.
- 4 Jeremias, *Prayers*; Dunn, *Jesus*, 21ff., cf. Vermes, *Gospel*.
- 5 See above, 149ff., and the summary on Jesus in von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 1ff.
- 6 On Pauline ecclesiology, see Schweizer, *Church Order*; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 111ff.; Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*; Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*.
- 7 On the use of cultic language, see McKelvey, *New Temple*; Gärtner, *Temple*.
- 8 On apostleship, see TDNT 1, 398ff.; Barrett, *Signs*.
- 9 On 2 Cor. 3 and 4, see Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 111ff.; McNamara, *NT and Palestinian Targums*; Kim, *Origin*.
- 10 On Paul's example, see von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 30ff.
- 11 On the motif of the *Imitatio Christi*, see Tinsley, *Imitation*, and on Phil. 2.6ff., see Martin, *Carmen Christi*.
- 12 Hanson, *Pioneer Ministry*, 62, 82. See also Hooker, 'Interchange'.
- 13 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 83.
- 14 See Williams, 'The Prophetic and the Mystical'; *The Wound of Knowledge*.
- 15 On *en Christo*, see Deissmann, *Formel*; Neugebauer, *En Christus*; Moule *Origin*.
- 16 Cf. Brown, *Making*, also Rivkin, 'Pharisaism'.
- 17 On Johannine literature, see Schweizer, *Church Order*, 117f.; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 138ff.; Brown, *Community*; *Johannine Epistles*; *Aspect*; Woll, *Johannine Christianity*.
- 18 See von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 141f.
- 19 On this, see Bauer, *Orthodoxy* and Lieu, *Theology*.
- 20 See von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 141.
- 21 For an attempt to describe the history of the Johannine community, see Brown, *Community*; Woll, *Johannine Christianity*.
- 22 On the ideological world of the Johannine community, see Meeks, 'Man from Heaven' and Ashton, *Understanding*.
- 23 On perfectionism, see Bogart, *Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism*; Peterson, *Hebrews*. On links of 1 John with Judaism, see O'Neill, *Puzzle*. Note the earlier typology, according to which the Johannine communities, like the Qumran community, would qualify as an 'introversionist' sect.
- 24 See Martyn, *History*; Brown, *Community*.
- 25 See Meeks, 'Man from Heaven'; Talbert, *What is a Gospel?*; Segal, 'Heavenly Ascents', for the pattern of descent and ascent.
- 26 Cf. Lincoln, *Paradise*; Aune, *Cultic Aspect*.
- 27 On church order in Revelation, see Satake, *Gemeindeordnung*.
- 28 See further Satake, *op. cit.*; Trites, *Witness*; O' Donovan, *Desire*, 62ff.

- 29 See Dunn, *Unity*; Werner, *Formation*, 269ff.
- 30 See von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 181ff.; Trevett, *Montanism*.
- 31 On Asia Minor, see Calder, 'Philadelphia'; Ramsay, *Letters, Cities and Bishoprics*; Johnson, 'Asia Minor and Early Christianity'; Müller, *Theologiegeschichte*; and on the Jewish setting, Trebilco, *Judaism*.
- 32 On the primitive Church, see Goguel, *The Primitive Church*; Brandon, *Fall*; Fitzmyer, *Wandering Aramean*, 271ff.; *Scrolls and New Testament*, ed. Stendahl.
- 33 On sources and redaction, see Haenchen, *Acts*; cf. Hengel, *Acts and Between Paul and Jesus*.
- 34 See Schmithals, *Paul and James*.
- 35 On the Council, see above, 196.
- 36 On James, see Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 252ff., 292ff.
- 37 On this tradition, see the summary in Dunn, *Jesus*, 97ff. On the resurrection appearance to James, see Gospel of Hebrews (Hennecke, *NT Apocrypha*, 165).
- 38 On dynastic succession, see Stauffer, 'Kalifat'; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 241ff.
- 39 On the apostles as doctrinal authorities, see the suggestion of Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 220ff.
- 40 On authorship, see Kümmel, *Introduction*. On the church order, see Schweizer, *Church Order*, 105ff., 77ff.
- 41 On ordination, see Lohse, *Ordination*, and on the importance of tradition in the early Church, see Hanson, *Tradition*.
- 42 For a concise summary of the spirituality of Ignatius, see Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*; also Richardson, *Christology of Ignatius*; Barnard, *Studies*; Paulsen, *Studien*; and on Antioch, see Meeks, *Jews and Christians*.
- 43 On Barnabas, see Barnard, op. cit.; Carleton-Paget, *Barnabas* and Wengst, *Tradition*.
- 44 On the transference of cultic language to Christian ministers, see Schweizer, *Church Order*, 172ff.
- 45 On the apostolic tradition, see Dix, *Apostolic Tradition*.
- 46 Note the way in which menstruation affects religious attitudes in apostolic tradition (see Dix, *Apostolic Tradition*, 32).
- 47 Quoted above, 229.
- 48 See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 368ff.; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 171ff.
- 49 On the accounts of Paul's 'conversion', see Kim, *Origin*; Munck, *Paul*; Burchard, *Dreizehnte Zeuge*. For attempts to separate the Damascus experience from other visions in Paul's career, see Dunn, *Jesus*, 97ff.
- 50 See Holmberg, *Power*; Schültz, *Anatomy*; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 40ff.
- 51 Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 39.
- 52 On the issue of Paul's journey to Jerusalem, see above, 200; 219.
- 53 On circumcision, see TDNT 6, 72ff.; Borgen in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. Hooker and Wilson.

- 54 von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*.
- 55 On Paul and tradition, see Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors*.
- 56 See Hurd, *Origin*; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 368ff.
- 57 On the importance of the prophetic ministry, see Satake, *Gemeindeordnung* and Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*.
- 58 See Bauer, *Orthodoxy*.
- 59 Doubts about the canonicity of the book of Revelation were often expressed; see von Campenhausen, *Formation*, 215ff., 235ff.
- 60 On Montanism, see Labriolle, *Crise*; Daniélou, *Origin of Latin Christianity*, on Tertullian; also Knox, *Enthusiasm*; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 181ff.; Trevett, *Montanism*.
- 61 On Elchesai, see Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *NT Apoc* 2, 745ff. and also Henrichs and Koenen in *ZPE* 5. On Cerinthus, see Bardy, 'Cerinthe'. For the sources, see Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*.
- 62 See now *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. Robinson.
- 63 See Gruenwald, 'Knowledge and Vision' and his essay in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, ed. Dan and Talmage.
- 64 See Knox, *Enthusiasm*; von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 189.
- 65 See the survey of this material and relevant literature in Bauckham, *Jude and 2 Peter*, e.g., 236ff.
- 66 On the growing importance of tradition, see Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics*; Hanson, *Tradition*; von Campenhausen, *Tradition and Life*; *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 149ff.; Turner, *Pattern*; Cullmann, *Early Church*.
- 67 Note the parallels with the Jewish messiah Sabbatai Sevi; see Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*.
- 68 See the commentaries by Brown and Marshall.
- 69 On the Didache, see Audet, *La Didache* and Draper, *Didache*.
- 70 Note Lucian of Samosata, *De Morte Peregr.* 13; Grant, *Early Christianity and Society*.
- 71 See the Cologne Mani texts, ed. by Henrichs and Koenen, in *ZPE* 5.
- 72 On Marcion, see Harnack, *Marcion*; Blackman, *Marcion*.
- 73 Additional bibliography: Bauckham, *Book of Acts*; Boyarin, *Dying for God*; Carleton-Paget, *Epistle of Barnabas*; Chilton, *James the Just*; Dronke, *Women*; Dulles, *Models*; Gamble, *Books and Readers*; Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity and Heretics*; Musurillo, *Acts*; Pagels, *Adam, Eve*; Rowland, *Radical Christianity*; Sanders, J. T., *Deviants*; Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*; Trevett, *Montanism*; Young, *Biblical Exegesis*.

4 *Coming to Terms with the Old Age*

- 1 On this, see von Campenhausen, *Tradition*, 90ff., 141ff.; de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*; Grant, *Early Christianity and Society*, 96ff.; Miranda, *Communism in the Bible*.
- 2 See further Haenchen, *Acts*, 230ff.; Hengel, *Property and Riches*.
- 3 Theissen, *First Followers*; Mealand, *Poverty*.
- 4 See Capper in *JSNT* 19 and 'Oldest Monks'.
- 5 See *Beginnings*, ed. Jackson and Lake, 5, 140ff.; Dunn, *Jesus*, 182ff.; Cadbury, *Making*, 251, 261.
- 6 de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 419ff.
- 7 But note the possibility that some kind of monastic life lies behind 1 Cor. 7. On this, see Barrett, *I Corinthians*, 153ff.; Hurd, *Origin*, 154ff.
- 8 See Crouch, *Origin*; Munro, *Authority*.
- 9 See de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 419ff.
- 10 See Theissen, *Social Setting*, 69ff.; *First Followers*.
- 11 Cf. the attitude in the Pastorals and see Dibelius, *Pastorals*, 39f. and further, von Campenhausen, *Tradition*, 155.
- 12 But note de Ste Croix's questioning of the value of this comment from Tertullian in *Class Struggle*, 433 (on Tertullian *Apol.* 39.11; Justin, *Apol.* 14.2). On monasticism, see Capper, 'Oldest Monks' and Brown, *Body and Society*.
- 13 See Capper, in *JSNT* 19.
- 14 See Grant, *Early Christianity*, 96ff.; 124f.; cf. de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 436f.; Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*.
- 15 On monasticism, see Knowles, *Pachomius to Ignatius*; Chitty, *Desert*; Voöbus, *History of Asceticism*; Brown, *Making*. On Syriac-speaking Christianity, see Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*.
- 16 Additional bibliography: Emmerson and McGinn, *Apocalypse*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Garnsey and Humphreys, *Evolution*.
- 17 On Ethics in the NT, see especially Hays, *Moral Vision*; Sanders, *Ethics*; Houlden, *Ethics*; Schnackenburg, *Moral Teaching*; Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*; Grant, *Early Christianity*; and generally Meeks, *Urban Christians*; Gager, *Kingdom*; on the ethical teaching of the early Fathers, see Osborne, *Ethical Patterns*.
- 18 For hints of libertine ideas, see 1 Cor. 5.1ff.; Rom. 3.8; Basilides Fragment 4; Irenaeus, *AH* 1.6.4; Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta Theod.*, 52; Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.8.33, 9ff.; and further, Smith, *Clement*, 254ff.
- 19 See, e.g., Bettenson, *Documents*, 193, 197 and Williams, *Radical Reformation*.
- 20 On Christians and military service, see Hornus, *It Is Not Lawful*, von Campenhausen, *Tradition*, 160ff.; Harnack, *Militia Christi*; Cunningham, *Early Church*; Jones, 'Christianity and the Roman Imperial Cult'.
- 21 On Muentzer, see Bradstock, *Faith and the Revolution*; Williams, *Radical Reformation*; Gritsch, *Reformer*.
- 22 Some discussion of this theme in de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 116; Clark,

- Man and Woman*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 88, 155; and note Pixley, *God's Kingdom*, 92f. and Garnsey and Humfress, *Evolution*.
- 23 See above, 158.
- 24 See Theissen, *Social Setting* and above, 139ff.
- 25 See Montefiore in *Jesus Across the Centuries* and 'Revolt'; but cf. *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*, ed. Bammel and Moule.
- 26 On Acts 17.6, see Haenchen, *Acts*, 510.
- 27 On the 'political' purpose of Acts as an apology for the political innocence of the early Christian movement, see Cadbury, *Making*, 308ff.; Haenchen, *Acts*, 106ff.; Walaskay, *And So We Came to Rome*; Maddox, *Purpose*, 91ff.; Alexander, in Edwards, Goodman, and Price, *Apologetics*.
- 28 For a textual history of church–state relations, see Coleman-Norton, *Roman State*; also Cunningham, *Early Church*.
- 29 See Beker, *Paul*; Baumgarten, *Paulus*.
- 30 On Col. 3.10, etc., see Bouttier, 'Complexio Oppositorum' and note 22, above.
- 31 See Schnuthals, *Gnosticism*.
- 32 See Hurd, *Origin* and the survey in Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*.
- 33 On the character of early Christian existence, see Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 336ff.
- 34 But cf. Rev. 13. On the state in the NT, see Cullmann, *State*; Morrison, *The Powers that Be*; Käsemann in *NT Questions*; Carr, *Angels*; Borg, 'New Context'; Osborne, *Ethical Patterns*.
- 35 See Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*.
- 36 On wealth and property, see de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 425ff.
- 37 On threats to the Roman order, see Macmullen, *Enemies*.
- 38 Note the perceptive comment of Grant, *Early Christianity and Society*, 20–21: 'what took the place of the primitive Christian concern for the kingdom of God was a double concern for the Christian church and for the state as the sphere of the church's life.'
- 39 On the conversion of Cornelius, see Haenchen, *Acts*, 360 and further, on the political theme of Acts, Walaskay, *And So We Came to Rome*. But note the important comments of Esler, *Community and Gospel*.
- 40 See Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*; Trevett, *Montanism*; Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*.
- 41 See Theissen, *Theory*, 80–120.
- 42 On antinomianism see above, note 18, and note Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 6, 24ff.
- 43 On the theological basis of Pauline ethics, see Furnish, *Theology and Ethics* and Hays, *Moral Vision*.
- 44 See Sanders, *Paul the Law*.
- 45 On this verse, see Käsemann, *Romans*, 215 and Cranfield, *Law*, 166f.
- 46 Cf. Ellul, *The Presence of the Kingdom*, 39–44.

- 47 See above, 373n.8.
- 48 Cf. Knox, *Ethic of Jesus*.
- 49 See Moule in *Christian History*, ed. Farmer, Moule and Niebuhr; Dodd, *Gospel and Law* and Hays, *Moral Vision*.
- 50 On early Christian ethical teaching, see Osborne, *Ethical Patterns*.
- 51 For an attempt, see Cullmann, *State*. For more radical treatment, which considers the section to be a later interpolation, see O'Neill, *Romans*, 220; Kallas in *NTS* 11.
- 52 On early Christian attitudes to the state, see Osborne, *Ethical Patterns*; Grant, *Early Christianity and Society*; Cunningham, *The Early Church*.
- 53 See Borg, 'New Context'; Bammel, 'Beitrag' and Horsley, *Paul and Empire*.
- 54 On the influence of circumstances on early Christian doctrinal formulations, see Moule in his *Essays*.
- 55 On Gal. 3.28, see Beker, *Paul*, 318f., 323; Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 205ff.; and Boyarin, *Radical Jew*.
- 56 See Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 173–5. Further discussion of ideology in Eagleton, *Ideology*; Ricoeur, 'Ideology'; Lash, *Matter of Hope*.
- 57 On slavery, see de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, especially 419ff.; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 318ff. and Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*.
- 58 See 1 Cor. 4.8; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 108; Hurd, *Origin*, 111; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 177f.
- 59 See Beker, *Paul*, 318ff. and note the attitude to Rome found in the writings of Josephus.
- 60 See Geertz, in *Religion as a Cultural System*, ed. Banton.
- 61 See the discussion by Theissen, *Social Setting*; Dodds, *Pagan*; Brown, *Making*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 164ff.
- 62 Additional bibliography: Bradstock and Rowland, *Radical Reader*; Garnsey and Humfress, *Evolution*; Horsley, *Paul and Empire*; Kreider, *Change of Conversion and Origins*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*; Wengst, *Pax Romana*; Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*.
- 63 On this, see Werner, *Formation and Entstehung*; Grässer, *Parusieverzögerung*; Stroebel, *Untersuchungen*; Schweitzer, *Mysticism*; Moore, *Parousia*; Hiers, 'Delay'; Bauckham, 'Delay'; Gager, *Kingdom*. Interesting comments on a parallel Hebrew Bible theme may be found in Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*.
- 64 For example, Conzelmann on Luke; Dodd, 'Mind of Paul'; Brown, *John*, 1. LXV.
- 65 On early Christianity as a quasi-millenarian movement, see Gager, *Kingdom*; Bloch, *Atheism*; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*; cf. Festinger, *When Prophecy Fails*; Cohn, *Pursuit*; TDNT 9, 466; Collins, J. J., *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, Vol. 1, part 3.
- 66 See Werner, *Formation*, 31ff.
- 67 On differing types of eschatology, see Caird, *Language*, 243ff.

- 68 On 2 Peter, see Käsemann in his *Essays*; Fornberg, *An Early Church*; Bauckham's commentary.
- 69 On the background to Revelation, see Ramsay, *Letters*; Hemer, *Letters*; Sweet, *Revelation*.
- 70 See Bornkamm in *Tradition*, ed. Bornkamm et al.
- 71 On this see Cavallin, *Life*; Charles, *Eschatology*; and above, 86ff.; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*.
- 72 See Marxsen, *Mark*; Rohde, *Rediscovering*; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*.
- 73 Conzelmann, *Theology*; Rohde, *Rediscovering*; Barrett, *Luke*; and summary in Dunn, *Unity*, 344ff.
- 74 Note the doubts expressed by Robinson, *Redating*, 27ff. about the suggested Lucan rewriting of Mark 13.
- 75 Walaskay, *And So We Came to Rome*; Wengst, *Pax Romana*.
- 76 On the individualism of the Fourth Gospel, see Moule in his *Essays*.
- 77 But note Dunn, *Unity*, 346 on the relics of future hope in Ephesians.
- 78 On this see Lincoln, *Paradise*; Hofius, *Katapausis; Vorhang*; Hurst, *Hebrews*; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*.
- 79 On primitive catholicism, see Dunn, *Jesus*, 345ff.; *Unity*, 341ff.; Hengel, *Acts*; Bauckham, *Jude*, 8.
- 80 Bauckham, 'Delay', has argued that Jewish apocalyptic literature had already paved the way for a change in perspective. See further his commentary on 2 Peter and Jude.
- 81 See Cullmann, *Salvation; Christ and Time*.
- 82 See Dodd in *More NT Studies*; Robinson, *Redating*, 13ff. on Luke .
- 83 See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 113ff.
- 84 See Lincoln, *Paradise*.
- 85 See Cullmann, *Salvation*, 166ff.
- 86 On 2 Cor. 5, see Lincoln, *Paradise*, 55ff.; and see further, Harris, *Raised Immortal*; Hill, *Regnum Coelorum*.
- 87 On 1 Peter, see now Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*.
- 88 On the contrast between Rev. 4 and 5, see Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 425f. and *Revelation*.
- 89 Additional bibliography: Gerdman, *Rethinking*; Lincoln, *Ephesians*; Luz, *Theology of Matthew*; Rowland, *Revelation*; Stanton, *Gospel for a New People*.
- 90 On Jamnia, see Neusner, 'Formation'; Schäfer, 'Flucht' and in *Studien*; Davies, *Setting*, 284ff.; *SVM History* 1, 508ff. On the post-70 situation, see Büchler, *Economic Conditions*; Smallwood, *Jews*, 331ff.
- 91 See Schäfer, op. cit.
- 92 See Horbury, 'Benediction'; *SVM History* 2, 454; Kuhn, *Achtzehngebet*; Kimelman in Sanders, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 2.
- 93 Barrett, *NT Background*; 167. On the textual problems, see Horbury, op. cit.

- 94 See Neusner, *Eliezer*; Bokser, *Pharisaic Judaism*; Podro, *The Last Pharisee*; Neusner, *Yohanan; Development of a Legend*.
- 95 Additional bibliography: Cohen, 'The Significance of Yavneh' and (with Frerichs) *Diasporas*; Goodman, 'Saducees and Essenes'; Goodman, 'Nerva, the *Fiscus Judaicus* and Jewish Identity'.
- 96 For the Jewish background to the Fourth Gospel, see Martyn, *History*; Meeks, *Prophet-King*; Smalley, *John*; Bowker, 'Origin'; Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 307ff.; Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*; and Dunn 'Let John be John', and now particularly Ashton, *Understanding*.
- 97 Robinson, *Redating*, 254ff.; *John and Qumran*, ed. Charlesworth.
- 98 See Meeks, 'Am I a Jew?', 172.
- 99 See Pancaro, *Law*, 489ff.
- 100 For a pre-70 date, see Robinson, *Redating*, 254ff.
- 101 For the hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel reflects differing attitudes towards Jesus, see Brown, *Community* and further, Woll, *Johannine Christianity*.
- 102 On this chapter and its possible historical setting, see Martyn, *History*; Pancaro, *Law*.
- 103 On the term *apostynagogos*, see Martyn, *History*; TDNT 7, 852.
- 104 See Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, 70; Brown, *John* 1. LXXIII and Lindars, *John*, 35ff.; cf. Robinson, *Redating*, 272ff.
- 105 Brown, *John* 1, 381 and Schnackenburg, *John* 2, 257f.
- 106 Cf. Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 81 and further, Strack-Billerbeck 2, 535.
- 107 See Schnackenburg, *John* 2, 251.
- 108 Strack-Billerbeck 2, 534; 1, 465.
- 109 Brown, *John* 1, 378; Schnackenburg, *John* 2, 243; Strack-Billerbeck 4, 293ff.; Forkman, *Limits*.
- 110 On the history of the Johannine traditions, see, e.g., Dodd, *Historical Tradition*; Brown, *John* 1, XLI.
- 111 On Jesus as a deceiver, see Smith, *Jesus the Magician*; Pancaro, *Law*, 87ff.
- 112 On the obsolescence of the Temple in John, see Schnackenburg, *John* 1, 356.
- 113 List of references to the sending of Jesus: (*pempo*) 4.34; 5.23f.; 5.30; 6.38f.; 6.44; 7.16; 7.18; 7.28; 7.33; 8.16; 8.18; 8.26; 8.29; 9.4; 12.44; 12.49; 13.16; 13.20; 14.24; 15.21; 16.5; cf. 20.21; (*apostello*) 3.17; 3.34; 5.36; 5.38; 6.29; 6.57; 7.29; 8.42; 9.7; 10.36; 11.42; 17.3; 17.8; 17.18; 17.21; 17.23; 18.25; 20.21.
- 114 On the importance of the Bar Kochba revolt as a significant moment in the separation of church and synagogue, see Eusebius, *EH*; Justin, *Apol.* 31.6; *SVM History* 1,
- 115 Summary in Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 237ff. On the Jewish background, see Williamson, *Philo*; Hofius, *Katapausis; Vorhang*; Lincoln, *Paradise*.

- 116 See McKelvey, *New Temple*; Barrett, 'Eschatology of Hebrews'.
- 117 On the situation of Hebrews, see Kümmel, *Introduction*, 398; Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 242ff.
- 118 See Bornkamm *et al.*, *Tradition*; Przybylski, *Righteousness*; Stanton, *Interpretation*.
- 119 See Davies, *Setting*; Kilpatrick, *Origin*.
- 120 Additional bibliography: Ashton, *Understanding and Interpretation*; Boyarin, *Dying for God*; Dunn, *Partings*; Hurst, *Hebrews*; Luz, *Theology*; Robinson, *Priority of John*; Taylor, *Anti-Judaism*; Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*.
- 121 Summaries and discussions of this complex subject may be found in *Le Origini*, ed. Bianchi; Wilson, *Problem*; Gnosis; Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*; Grant, *Gnosticism*; Doresse, *Secret Books*; Logan, *The New Testament and Gnosis*. Texts in Foerster, *Gnosis*; Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*; Layton, *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*.
- 122 See Davies in *Christian History and Interpretation*, ed. Farmer, Moule and Niebuhr.
- 123 Translation in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 152ff.
- 124 On the influence of Platonism, see *Le Origini*, ed. Bianchi.
- 125 See Burkitt, *Religion of Manichees*; Henrichs and Koenen in *ZPE* 5.
- 126 On Augustine, see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*; *Religion and Society*.
- 127 See Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, and above, 154; 221f.; 279.
- 128 See Gunther, *Opponents*, for a collection of materials relating to these themes.
- 129 See Bauer, *Orthodoxy*, 44ff.
- 130 Concise survey in Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, though he minimizes the extent of the possibility of pre-Christian Gnosticism.
- 131 See, e.g., Dunn, *Christology*; Wilson, *Gnosis*.
- 132 On the Jewish background, see Quispel in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. Hyatt; Fallon, *Entronement*; Grant, *Gnosticism*; see also Macrae, 'Sophia' and *Le Origini*, ed. Bianchi.
- 133 Segal, *Two Powers*.
- 134 Cf. Gruenwald in Dan and Talmage, *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, and Fallon, *op. cit.*
- 135 See Scholem, *Major Trends*; *Jewish Gnosticism*; Yamauchi, *op. cit.*, 158.
- 136 See Grant, *Gnosticism*. Additional bibliography: Brown, *Body and Society*; Deutsch, *Gnostic Imagination*; Garnsey and Humress, *Evolution*; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic to Gnosticism*; Lieu, *Manichaeism*; Pagels, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent*; Markschiess, *Valentinus*.
- 137 On the subject of persecution, see Frend, *Martyrdom*; Lohse, *Märtyrer*; de Ste Croix, 'Why were the Early Christians persecuted?'; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*. On Roman attitudes, see R. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*.
- 138 Trites, *Witness*; TDNT 4, 474ff.

- 139 See Brown, *Making*, 37f.
- 140 On Decius and Diocletian, see summary in Brown, *World*, 33, 86; cf. the career of Julian the Apostate.
- 141 Additional bibliography: Boyarin, *Dying for God*; Dronke, *Women*; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*; Musurillo, *Acts*; Rowland, *Revelation*; Thompson, *Revelation*.

Appendix: The Sources

1 *Jewish Literature*

- 1 There is a comprehensive bibliography to 1997 in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 631–3.
- 2 On Josephus, see Betz *et al.*, *Josephus-Studien*; Schlatter, *Theologie*; Rhoads, *Israel*; Attridge, *Interpretation*; Thackeray, *Josephus*; Rajak, *Josephus*; Mason, *Josephus*; and Stone, *Jewish Writings*.
- 3 On Philo, see Goodenough, *Introduction*; Wolfson, *Philo*; Sandmel, *Philo*; Smallwood, *Legatio*; Stone, *Jewish Writings* and the annotated bibliography prepared by Runia.
- 4 See *SVM History* 1; Denis, *Fragmenta*.
- 5 On the interpretation of Gen. 22, see Vermes, *Scripture*; Hayward, 'Present State of Research'; Bowker, *Targums*.
- 6 On this, see Smallwood, *Jews*, 377f.
- 7 Smallwood, *Jews*; Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People* 1, 420ff.; Kraabel, *Judaism*; Goodenough, *Politics*.
- 8 See also a work attributed to Philo, the *Biblical Antiquities*, which is an account of Israel's history from Adam to the death of Saul. There are editions by Kisch (with ET) and Harrington *et al.* See also Wadsworth, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*.
- 9 The literature is collected in Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* and Charlesworth, *OT Pseudepigrapha*, vol 1 and in a smaller collection in Sparks, *Apocryphal Old Testament*; see also Stone, *Jewish Writings*; Mulder, *Mikra*.
- 10 For a concise introduction, see Stemberger, *Introduction* and earlier Bowker, *Targums*; Neusner, *Study*; Horbury 'Rabbinics'; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*.
- 11 English tr. of the Mekilta of Rabbi Ishmael by Lauterbach.
- 12 Tr. of Ps. Jonathan and Onkelos by Etheridge and of Neophyti I by Diez-Macho. Editions: Ps. Jonathan and the Fragmentary Targum by Ginsburger; Onkelos: Sperber, *Bible*; Targum on Isaiah: Stenning. For the Cairo Genizah material, see Kahle, *Geniza*. Bibliography of material to 1983 in Grossfeld, *Bibliography*. Additional bibliography: Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and Klein, *The Fragment-Targums*; Mulder, *Mikra*.

2 *Early Christian Literature*

- 1 For an introduction, see Metzger, *Text*; Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption and Text*; Trobisch, *First Edition* and Parker, *Living Text*. On the formation of early Christian books, see Gamble, *Books*. On the possibility of glosses in NT texts, see e.g. O'Neill, *Romans and Galatians*, and Muddiman, *Ephesians*.
- 2 von Campenhausen, *Formation*; Moule, *Birth*; Metzger, *Canon*. On the canon of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, see Anderson in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, ed. Ackroyd and Evans; and above, 44f. and Saebø, *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*.
- 3 Jackson and Lake, *Apostolic Fathers*, in Loeb edition, and Ehrman, *After the New Testament*.
- 4 Translation of the Nag Hammadi texts in *Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. Robinson.
- 5 Survey in Johnson, *Writings* and Ehrman, *New Testament*. For earlier introductions to the New Testament writings, see Kümmel, *Introduction*; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*; Lohse, *Formation*; and Koester, *Introduction*. A useful introduction to the apostolic age may be found in Caird, *Apostolic Age*.
- 6 On the history of research, see Kummel, *New Testament*; Schweitzer, *Quest*. On the Aramaic background to the gospels, see Casey, *Aramaic Sources*.
- 7 The classic exposition of the Two- (Four-) Document hypothesis, which asserts the priority of Mark and dependence of Matt. and Luke on Mark and another source *Q*, is set out by Streeter in *The Four Gospels*. For criticism of this, see Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem*; Rist, *Independence*. For an assessment of recent study, see Stoldt, *History and Criticism*; Tuckett, *Revival*. For a cautionary comment on the complexity of the sources behind the Gospels, see O'Neill, 'Lost Written Records'.
- 8 The best examples of this in English are Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, and Robinson, *Redating and Priority*, cf. Casey, *John's Gospel*.
- 9 On the historicity of Acts, see Barrett, *Acts*; Hemer, *Acts*; Lüdemann, *Acts*; Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*; Hengel, *Acts and Between Jesus and Paul*, and Jewett, *Dating Paul's Life*.

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