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"Antisemitism" in the Gospel of St. Matthew *

E.A. Russell

In 1975, an American Scholar, Dr Rosemary Ruether, wrote a book entitled "Faith and Fratricide". In it she insisted that anti-Jewish trends were in the NT from the very beginning. This, she claimed, was supremely true of two Gospels, Matthew and John. The book was influential in a number of significant areas eg Dr Gregory Baum ten years previously had argued that anti-Jewish trends were always peripheral in the NT, accidental and not grounded in the NT ("Is the NT anti-semitic? 1965) writes in the foreword to Dr Ruether's work that he has abandoned his previous stance and that now he sees these anti-Jewish trends as more basic and central. It was this kind of claim that initially prompted an enquiry into the Gospel of St Matthew to see how far such an interpretation was justified or otherwise.

Another preliminary remark should perhaps be made by way of clarification of the description "Antisemitism". Anti-semitism had however hardly emerged at the time of the writing of the Gospel ie the fourth quarter of the first century of the Christian era. /2 Far from speaking of "Antisemitism" in Mt's Gospel, it could be insisted that the church of St. Matthew's day was still linked with Judaism /3 ie it is a dispute within Judaism,. Hostile attitudes are there but they belong to both sections of Judaism, that which insists Jesus is Messiah and that section which denies such identification. Not that the church remained a mere appendage of Judaism. Rather it was becoming more and more conscious of its separate identity over against Judaism and thus we are, to some extent, justified in speaking of "Antijudaism". Yet such a charge of "Antijudaism" could apply both ways. If the claim of the Jewish-Christian is correct that the only true Jew is the one who acknowledges Jesus to be the Christ, then the new form of Judaism is embodied in Christianity and all opposition to it from this point of view could presumably be called "Antijudaism". The basic point at issue could be: what is it that constitutes the true Jew. /4

The theme however is not "Antijudaism" but "Antisemitism". Such a description is a recognition of the historic fact that elements of the Gospel of Matthew have, over the centuries, contributed to an extension and intensification of antisemitic prejudice. Such elements are not always properly understood

or properly used if they are. A prejudice that exists is not always scrupulous in the way it uses material that may suit its purpose. Yet throughout the history of the church misunderstanding of what Matthew has to say has again and again given rise to distortions and it is in relation to such possible misunderstandings - if such indeed they are - that this paper is offered.

From the moment of writing, it has to be stressed that Matthew's Gospel was a very influential document. Associated with its writing may well have been an important school of early church thinkers /5 and an important church. /6 It could cater for the catechetical and liturgical needs in a way that the other gospels could not. /7 Unlike Mark and Luke it was associated directly with an apostle and contained the promise of Jesus to found his church. No other Gospel links the OT so closely with the details of the life of Jesus by the formula, "that it might be fulfilled". /8 Again, while Matthew has emphasizes relating to the mission to Judaism (Mt 10.5; 15.24), it was also concerned with the Gentile mission (Mt 12. 1-12; Mt 28.18-20). There can be no doubt that this Gospel was well-equipped to play an important role in the life and witness of the church.

Further, Matthew develops in history into one of the authoritative books of the church. It became, in other words, "canonical", one of the twenty-seven books of the NT accepted as the rule of faith for the Western church and this without difficulty from a very early stage. Others of the twenty-seven had great difficulty in getting accepted but this was never true of Matthew. It stood on the highest level of authority and not unrelated to this was the persistent tradition that it was the earliest Gospel. The authority of the Gospel was extended of course to infallibility, to plenary inspiration, and to the belief that it expressed the divine will for mankind. Not all will accept such a view even within the Christian church but for most churchmen that Gospel of Matthew must still be authoritative to a high degree.

Thus the more influence attributed to Matthew within the church, the greater the force of any latent or open anti-Jewish prejudice it may contain. Yet if our quest is for possible antisemitic elements, we must keep in mind the total perspective of the Gospel. A section,

for example, that is found most difficult for readers is that where Jesus delivers a concerted attack on Pharisees and scribes ie ch.23 in terms that recall the OT prophets: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites...". Some try to alter the translation "Woe" to "Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" but would retain "Woe" for the prophets without being fully aware of a certain inconsistency. One cannot escape the emphasis where the solemn phrase, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" is repeated no less than on seven occasions. Yet this is only a section which makes up perhaps a mere two per cent of the total material of Matthew. To make it a basis of judgment without keeping in mind its relation with the rest of the Gospel material is to invite a distortion of the kind we are trying to avoid. /9 It is not a fragment isolated from the rest of the synoptic gospels but is firmly rooted in the Q source tradition. It appears to be a section constructed from Q and Matthew's own sources. This appears to have taken place elsewhere in the Gospel eg in the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and in the Parables. /10

The main conflict emerges in relation to Jesus as might be expected. It has its basis firmly in the tradition and there are few who would doubt its authenticity. /11 It was inevitable that if there were those who confessed that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16.16), such confession would run up against the authoritative interpreters of the law for "orthodox" Judaism, the Pharisaic scribes. /12 The opening sentence expressed in titular form announces the theme of the Gospel, "The book of the history of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham." So the theme of the Gospel is also a confession of faith. This is Jesus, the Messiah of the Davidic line and firmly within the traditions of Judaism.

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The nature of the faith which forms the background of the Gospel is a fully articulated one. Such a faith would have been nurtured, over some fifty years or so, within the services of worship, in acts of prayer and devotion to Jesus or in acts of witness for mutual edification or in missionary activity to the whole world. Such a self-conscious faith is hardly what we expect to find in the early years of the disciples' fellowship with Jesus. There the disciples are pictured, sometimes in faith, and sometimes out of it, sometimes confessing and sometimes denying. They are never quite certain who Jesus is

and even their most profound insights seem too fleeting to support them in moments of testing. /14

In emphasizing the self-conscious and firm nature of this faith, we are suggesting that over against this the way of non-faith is more clearly understood. The church is on its guard against all those forces that destroy the faith of the community and we must be prepared to see in any attitudes of life or conduct that it attacks something which it discerns as a danger to its own survival. Thus the lines of contrast between those who represent the way of non-faith and who may constitute such a danger and those who are in the way of faith are much more sharply drawn than they might have been in the days of Jesus.

There is little doubt that the way of non-faith for Mt is best represented by the scribes and Pharisees, though of course not exclusively by them. The better righteousness is set over against the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees and must be greater.(5.20) It is a claim for inner reality in the matter of human relations and personal piety. It is not the characteristic of true religion to advertize its piety to men. This is no real heart religion. At various points we find Mt introducing the word "Pharisees" where it is absent from parallel accounts in the tradition. /15 It is done almost mechanically, unthinkingly at times. It even becomes representative of a way of life that is hostile to Jesus. It could perhaps be done by someone who knew the Pharisees only at a distance in time or space and for whom the term had become a stylized way of speaking of conduct that the disciple must not follow.

Mt does not attempt to soften the image of the Pharisees as he might on reflection easily have done. After all, it is never true to declare a whole party evil or good and it could be that the story of Nicodemus represents a qualification of such a point of view (John 3.1ff) There are elements of good and bad of course in every group and the final redactor (or his source) must surely have been aware of this. Parts of the other Gospels can tell us of sympathetic Pharisees eg inviting Jesus for a meal /16 or of Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15.43) /17 This however is never the case in Matthew. In every case the Pharisees are presented in a hostile context. In Mt's Gospel alone are the Baptist and Jesus brought

together in their description of the Pharisees as "generation of vipers." (3.7;12.34;23.33) In Luke, the only other gospel writer to have the phrase, the description is only to be found on the lips of the Baptist (3.7) but addressed to the crowds and not the "Pharisees and Sadducees." The phrase may have developed within the tradition from its usage by the Baptist to its expression on the lips of Jesus or perhaps it was a common phrase of both if Jesus was greatly influenced by the Baptist as he appears to have been.

Again, we have no hint in the other Gospels that the Pharisees have anything to do with the charge that Jesus carried out his exorcisms in league with Satan. Mark has "scribes"; Lk prefers the vague "some of them" (14.15) / 18 Yet on two occasions Mt records the charge on the lips of the Pharisees and this serves to make emphatic the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in Mt. If the phrase "scribes and Pharisees", repeated in the sevenfold woes, means "Pharisaic scribes" then it is the learned representatives of the Pharisees who are charged.

It may be that this situation of opposition to the Pharisees reflects, to some extent, the situation of Mt's day. / 19 After the fall of Jerusalem the Pharisees became dominant and their hostility to the church more pronounced (No institutional authority cares to have its authority flouted). It is possible that steps were being taken to exclude Jewish Christians from active participation in the synagogue worship though the terms of excommunication may not yet have been formulated. It is claimed that, at the time of the final redaction of the Gospel, Jewish measures against Christians included controversy, propaganda, exclusion from the synagogue, persecution and even death. Such active opposition would naturally constitute a real threat to the church - Jesus himself, in a saying peculiar to Mt in the NT, can refer to the extraordinary zeal of the Pharisees in compassing sea and land to make one convert (23.15) / 20

Such missionary zeal would not merely be concerned to extend the boundaries of Judaism among non-Jews. It would be concerned to win back those who had defected, in their view, from Judaism. They may not have been as aggressive as Paul in his attempt to arrest those who had given themselves over to Jesus as the Christ. / 21 Yet the concern was there Thus by his clear stand over against the Pharisees Mt is repudiating these efforts as an act of

protection for those Jewish Christians who felt drawn back to the old securities and to those who had exercised such authority in former days. But the Pharisees need not be divorced from the unbelieving Judaism which they represent and which is seen as a unity. /22 Jesus is shown to have a primary concern for his own people, the Jews and it is only rarely, and in exceptional circumstances, that he is deflected from this. His words are "I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15.24) A striking example of his commitment to the Jewish mission is especially brought out in the severely stringent account of the interview with the Canaanite woman where the reluctance of Jesus to engage in any kind of Gentile mission is brought out in a somewhat shocking way (Mt 15.25-28 and par.)

We have attempted, however inadequately, to explain in various ways the opposition to the Pharisaic scribes in Mt's Gospel and if they are seen as representing Judaism as a whole then the indictment becomes unfair. It can be eased by thinking of such scribes as those likely to be among the most hostile to the church and most able to express it effectively and therefore the opposition that is in mind. Mt's Gospel can then be an attempt to win the Jewish people while setting the authorities apart. Such scribes are, however, not the only ones to be arraigned. Jesus does not spare the Sadducees nor the chief priests as representative authorities. Is it because, given the privilege of leadership and therefore the greater responsibility, they inevitably must bear the burden of the indictment, especially in the light of their failure. While there is an active tendency in the tradition which continually strives to present the opponents of Jesus as "scribes and Pharisees" /23 there is also evident a tendency to group together typical opponents of Jesus eg Sadducees are grouped rather oddly with Pharisees. /24 The Sadducees appear on only one occasion without the Pharisees and in connection with a question to Jesus about the resurrection (Mt 22.23f) Again, whereas the Sadducees are mentioned only on one occasion in Mk (12.18) and Lk (20.27), Mt mentions them on eight occasions, five of them in ch 16 and all of them in hostile contexts. The chief priests are mentioned in various contexts with the elders (16.21;21.23;26.3,47; 27.1,3,12 20,41) or the scribes (2.4;16.21;20.18;21.15;27.41) or the Pharisees (21.45;27.62) or "the whole Sanhedrin" (26.59) or

on their own (27.6) - all of these are in hostile contexts, representative of the authorities and yet united with unlikely groups over against Jesus. It may be that the early tradition as it developed was unconcerned with possible awkwardnesses in the groupings. It was sufficient that they had a share in Jesus' death. It would seem then that Mt may not be too concerned about the precise situation in history. His main concern is with the various groups responsible for the decision to put Jesus to death as handed down in tradition

His severest charges, however, are directed against the Pharisaic scribes, and it would appear that Mt (or his tradition) constructs ch.23 from Q and his special sources, making an unusually severe attack and high lighting where he finds the real challenge to the church (vide supra)

Are we then to say that such leaders truly represent Judaism, and that, in attacking them, we are meant to see a direct attack on Judaism? In Mt it does appear that the church is more clearly set over against Judaism in certain parts of the tradition eg "their synagogues" , occurring on only one occasion in Mk (1.39), a phrase Mt develops extensively, thus emphasizing the church as a separate entity over against the synagogue. /25 Yet there remains the problem that, throughout the major and pre-passion material, the crowds generally remain sympathetic to Jesus. In this Mt is true to his Marcan source upon which he largely depends. /26 When we come to Jerusalem, the period dominated by the Trial and Crucifixion, we find the crowd hostile and become the mouthpiece of the hostile authorities only at this point. Such a situation must qualify the claim that in addressing the leaders Mt is addressing the whole of Israel. It also modifies any claim that there is a thoroughgoing anti-Judaism [if the author is a Gentile (So S. Schulz, S. van Tilborg,) he might well have brought his anti-semitism with him)] in Mt's Gospel. /27 The notorious cry "His blood be on us and on our children" (27.25) belongs to sections on Pilate and his wife that have been largely questioned as the construction of the final redactor of the Gospel. It is sobering to reflect what such a construction has caused over centuries of great suffering for the Jewish people by this Jewish act of self-cursing.

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We come now to the passage already mentioned which provides the fiercest denunciations in Mt - and without any attempt at

mitigation rather after the style of Amos ie Mt ch.23
The Pharisees are described as "hypocrites" (in ch.6
those described as "hypocrites" are not identified but
the descriptions fit in with what is said in ch.23 of the
Pharisees), oppressive and callous, vain and exhibitionist,
children of hell, blind, foolish, hair-splitting legalists,
extortionate and rapacious, iniquitous, serpents, broods of
vipers, ruthless murderers. The list reads like a catena
of sins, such as might be used to instruct new converts.
Yet all the commandments are not broken eg there is no
charge of idolatry, Sabbath-breaking ie there is a sense of
historic reality. A number of charges are based on tradit-
ion eg hypocrisy (Mk 7.6), oppressive and callous (Lk 11.46)
vain and exhibitionist (Mk 12.38,39); hair-splitting
legalists, extortionists and rapacious; brood of vipers,
ruthless murderers. Matthew, in expanding and organizing his
sources, gives an added sternness to what is said eg "You
blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel"
(Mt 23.24) on the matter of tithing.

It is possible to see the charges, in a number of
instances, as the kind of thing we might expect. Legalism
eg can be ruthless and callous; it can pretend to be what
it is not - and not even be aware that it is pretence; it
can be cunning and deceitful; it can be vain and exhibition-
ist; it may be more difficult to see it express itself as
rapacious and extortionist - yet the charge of devouring
widows' houses lies far back in the tradition. The charge
of murder seems unlikely, as a general rule, Jesus' cruci-
fixion being an extreme example Paul of course, the Phari-
see, is described as breathing out threatenings and slaught-
er against the disciples of the Lord. Stoning, as we know,
was the legal sentence for certain infringements of the
law. We can however understand such murder as that of a
murderous spirit. Jesus as we know equated murder with
anger or hate. Rigid orthodoxy is often not distinguished
for its compassion and love.

The charges, it should be noted, are to be seen in the
light of Mt's main purpose. He is setting forth Jesus as
the Christ, the One who proclaims the nearness of the
kingdom, the One who is to save his people from their sins
- a crucial verse, not always fully considered in its relat-
ion to the whole Gospel.(1.21) It is Jesus who gives to his
church the authority to bind and loose (16.19) and the

decision of the church on earth will express the decision of heaven: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and what you allow on earth will be allowed in heaven." It is in relation to Jesus himself who takes on the features of the exalted Lord that people find the way of wisdom or the way of folly, the way of life or the way of destruction, the way of forgiveness or the way of judgment. In other words it can be argued that what we are seeing in this indictment of the Pharisees is more a theological judgment in the light of the church's understanding of Jesus than anything else. It is the Pharisees who refuse to enter the kingdom. It is they who forbid Jews to have anything to do with the kingdom promised by Jesus. The pronouncement of the woes on the Pharisaic scribes begins significantly with the fact that they have rejected Jesus: "Alas for you, lawyers and Pharisees hypocrites that you are! You shut the door of heaven in men's faces; you do not enter yourselves, and when others are entering you stop them." (23.13) The mission of the church is one of the dominant concerns of Matthew, and the Pharisees lack of response, their strenuous efforts to resist the progress of the Christian church, call forth this indictment of Jesus. We have no clear evidence that any Pharisees came to follow Jesus in his lifetime. It is probable that in this highly influential people Jesus found his greatest obstacle.

We can come at the problem from another direction. The ministry of Jesus was concerned among other things with the expulsion of demons. It is especially stressed by Mark who sees in it one aspect of the meaning of Christ's death - triumph over evil spirits. Matthew retained in a modified way this interest of Mark. In Jesus the powers of the kingdom were let loose on the powers of evil and triumphed. Every aspect of the ministry of Jesus tends to be seen in the context of this struggle of good and evil. Jesus stands over against the evil powers who make use of people for their malign purposes. It is possible to see here a "Verteufelung" of the opposition. As the tradition develops, the opposition tends to be stereotyped and qualifications within it obscured. The "greys" that belong to the historical situation become obscured. The Pharisees are, so to speak, "devilized".

Confirmation of this way of interpreting the severe terms in which the Pharisees are described can be paralleled by other phenomena which become clear in Matthew's Gospel. Take eg

the portrait of Jesus. How human is the picture presented here? It must be confessed that what we find here is not primarily the portrait of an obscure Jew of uncertain orthodoxy with very human features. Such features are present but do not dominate the picture. Rather we are aware of the Lord of the Church who demands obedience: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my Father in heaven" (7.21) Jesus proclaims the new law of the kingdom with the authority of a second Moses. In the regal "But I say unto you..", we are conscious of the exalted Lord addressing the church. The human aspects of Jesus recede and are taken over by the divine. Again, while Mk preserves harsher features of the disciples' witness and character, Mt sometimes softens such features. (It is possible, on the other hand, that Mk highlights the disciples' weaknesses to challenge the church to costly discipleship). We may give one example: where Mk in the account of Jesus' walking on the water stresses the disciples lack of understanding, that they have forgotten the miracle of the loaves, that their hearts were hardened, Mt inserts a confession of wonder and worship: "They worshipped him, saying: "Truly you are the Son of God" (14.33) [Mt does not however always ignore the shabby aspects of the disciples' faith (cf 14.30-33; 16,8 and par; 16.23 and par.)] But if the portrait of the disciples does exhibit some inconsistencies, it is generally true that the portrait tends to be enhanced. The more remote the period of the disciples, the greater the reverence shown. Contrariwise, the image of the hostile authorities becomes all the more sombre.

Another question that is sometimes overlooked is this: "How far was it intended that the Pharisees would read this Gospel?" Was this not an internal affair of the church, undergoing severe testing at the hands of the authorities? By placing the powerful authorities who are constantly hostile to Jesus and his followers on the opposition, it may be that Mt is encouraging the church to endure eg "He who endures to the end, will be saved" (Mt 24.13 and par.). In this connection we may refer to the so-called "Beatitudes" in Mt. At the start, they are given in the third person eg "Blessed are the poor in spirit.." (Mt 5. 3-10). Then they change to the second person, after the beatitude: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for

righteousness' sake, for to them belongs the kingdom of heaven." They become words addressed directly to the church: "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account." Have we a description here of what the Pharisaic authorities were doing to the church of Mt's day? We ask the question because it is certainly difficult to fit into the period of Jesus.

If then the circumstances of the church are those of persecution, of defamation, outrage and misrepresentation and these from the scribal experts, then the Gospel can be seen as a message of encouragement to stand fast. Similarly, in the indictment of the Pharisaic scribes, the situation of Mt's day helps to shape and expand the polemic which in other circumstances might not have been constructed. If Mt keeps inserting the description "Pharisees" into his Gospel, such an action only makes sense if it has relevance for the people to whom he is writing

The Gospel was never meant to be an absolute judgment on the Judaism of that time, though sadly the church may have taken it this way. Jesus in Mt never ceases to be the Jesus who insists on mercy, on forgiveness without limit, who sums up the essence of the whole law in the command to love, to love God and to love our fellows, who fulfils the purpose enshrined in his name - "to save his people from their sins" Mt does not charge the whole of Judaism for the crowds in Galilee were generally sympathetic to his ministry. They are those who listen to what he has to say and are depicted as forming an eager and responsive audience. Rather Mt charges only a powerful, energetic and chasidic group within Judaism.

There is something else that is worth bearing in mind. The prophets of the OT still remain for the Jewish-Christian community an ideal. Their writings often include severe indictments of the people of God which were intended to elicit a response in repentance. They proclaimed judgment and made no apology for it. Mt, more than any other Gospel, allows us to see the stern side of Jesus. While the main thrust is directed to the scribal experts, Jesus also addresses those who were guilty of lawlessness ie charismatic groups who appear to have claimed that moral demands did not matter. Such professed believers work "lawlessness" (7.23) The judgment to which they are liable is expressed in stern terms reminiscent of judgement eg "furnace of fire", "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

If Jesus like the prophets proclaims judgement, he also emphatically proclaims mercy whether it be to disciples or to Pharisees. Indeed it would be possible to substitute "disciples" for "Pharisees" throughout Mt. "Disciples" equally with the Pharisees are required to produce the fruits of righteous living. The emphasis throughout Mt is on practical, down to earth religion.

We have continually to ask the question as to why Mt wrote his Gospel. Mt wrote it to cater for catechetical and pastoral needs. He uses polemic as a safeguard for the faithful over against what would distort the way of Jesus and obscure the real Christ. If the Gospel has been misused or misrepresented in church history, this does not imply or suggest necessarily that it is anti-semitic.

Notes

* Lecture delivered at the Opening Public Meeting of Union Theological College, Belfast on 6th October 1986

1. Search Press, London
2. Writing on prejudice in John's Gospel, R. Leistner prefers the description "antijudaism" (Antijudaismus im Johannevangelium, Bern/Frankfurt 1974), claiming that the idea "antisemitism" was first coined in its contemporary sense by W. Marr in 1879, op.cit. N.24, 154
3. D. Hill, "Some recent trends in Matthaean Studies" (IBS, 1, 1979 141f) writes: "I find it difficult to say that he (Mt) has severed all links with emerging Judaism to the extent of denying that the Jews have any longer hope of being part of the true or new Israel of God."
4. Cf W.G. Kümmel, (Introduction to the NT 1973², 115f) suggests that Mt's position is in no way particularistic and what he is saying is not that church is the "new" Israel but the "true" Israel
5. Cf. K. Stendahl, The School of St Matthew, Philadelphia 1968², x where in the revised edition he still holds on to the "school" idea, not of Jesus, but of Mt.
6. B.H. Streeter's contention (The Four Gospels, London, 1930, 150) is still a possibility; also D.Hill (The Gospel of Matthew London, 1972, 50-52) for a discussion on the place of origin; also IBS op.cit 141
7. The catechetical motif hardly covers all the Mt material of Kümmel op.cit 118; cf also G.D. Kilpatrick (Origins of the gospel

- of St Matthew, Oxford 1946, 72-100) for the liturgical motif and evaluation by D. Guthrie (New Testament Introduction, London 1963) ad loc.
8. For the tradition of eg W. Barclay, The First Three Gospels, London 1966, 19
 9. This is almost inevitable in a NT scholarship dominated by R. Bultmann (The History of the Synoptic Tradition, EI London 1963) who declares (147) that in Ch 23. 16-19, 23f, and 25f inter alia that "this is the first time that we have any right to talk of sayings of Jesus".
 10. For the Beatitudes see Hans-Theo Wrege (Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der Bergpredigt, Tübingen 1968); for the Lord's Prayer of J. Jeremias, [NT Theology (ET) 1971, 193ff]
 11. Conflict belongs to each part of the tradition, Q, Merk and special sources.
 12. Official standards of orthopraxis were in ancient Judaism laid down by the religious party (or parties) in power; this in Jesus' time was made up predominantly by the Pharisaic party. (Cf M. Black, (The Scrolls and Christian origins, London 1960, 6)
 13. M.D. Johnson (The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies, Cambridge 1969) claims that the genealogy in Mt represents a defence of the Davidic Messianic line over against the Levitical (177)
 14. The common view that Mt softens the portrait of the disciples in Mk has notable exceptions (cf Kühnel, op.cit.106)
 15. cf for the Q source (3.7 and par) and for Mk (9.34;12.24 and par)
 16. The three occasions are 7.36;11.37; 14.1; it is not necessary to see hostility behind the invitations.
 17. On Joseph cf Howard C. Kee, IDE ad loc.
 18. If the identification of "some of them" as "scribes" and the term "Pharisees" is secondary, then Lk's phrase could be original even if tis ex is characteristic of his style; cf. I. Howard Marshall, (The Gospel of Lk Exeter 1978, 472) for the last point.
 19. Some scholars despair, however, of finding a sitz im leben for Mt's Gospel eg W. Trilling (Das Wahre Israel, Munich 1964, 220): "So scheint sich auch hier zu ergeben, dass eine allseits befriedigene Antwort auf die Frage nach der 'Sitz im Leben' bis heute nicht gefunden ist"
 20. Dr Mary Smallwood (The Jews under Roman Rule, Leiden 1976) points out the remarkable impact of Jewish proselytism in the Roman Empire and notably in Rome itself. It may have occurred as early as the second century EC (205) and been the reason for the expulsion of the Jews in 139 AD. In spite of edicts from various Emperors forbidding proselytism, converts continued (472, 541)
 21. On this point there is no difficulty in bringing Acts (8.3;9.1) and Paul (Phil 3.6) together .

22. Cf Kümmel, op.cit. 117
23. Refs to phrase are found in Mt 3.7; 16.1, 6, 11, 12; cf. also Acts 23.7
24. P. Bonnard (L'Evangile selon Saint Matthieu, Paris 1969²) points the difficulty of attributing the phrase to Mt's time if after the fall of Jerusalem when the Sadducees disappeared. It is possible it belongs to early tradition but a tradition which tended to bring together the various authorities as those associated with the trial and death of Jesus.
25. The phrase only occurs one occasion in Lk and apparently in dependence on Mk.; Mt however has the phrase at 4.23; 9.35; 10.17; 13.54; cf. "your synagogues" (23.34) This would suggest the church is separated from Judaism but it could be a phrase brought back from a later stage into the tradition. It is not found in the FC which only has the singular (6.59; 18.20)
26. The exceptions to this friendliness are Jesus' own family (3.21; cf. 3.31 Mk) and his own home town (Mk 6.1-6). Even at the Cleansing of the Temple, there is no mention of crowd hostility (Mk 11.15-19) finally it is only at the Trial we are told that the chief priests stir up the crowd to ask for Barabbas and after this we find the crowd hostile. The picture is much the same in Mt; any conflict there is, is with the authorities
27. On this whole question see W.G. Kümmel, Introd., 114f who does not find the argument for Gentile Christian authorship convincing
28. Cf J. Fitzmyer, "Antisemitism and Mt 27.25" TS XXVI:669, 1965; also D.E. Garland, The Intention of the Woes of Mt 23, Leiden 1979, 81, 159
29. So W.G. Kümmel, "Die Weherufe über die Schriftlehrten u. Pharisäer (Mt 23.13-36)" in Antijudaismus im NT (ed. W. Eckert, N.P. Levinson and M. Stöhr) Munich 1967, 146 ; cf also S. Legasse, 'L "antijudaisme" dans l'Evangile selon Mt', in L'Evangile selon Matthieu (ed M. Didier) Gembloux 1971, 417