

# JUDAISM, THE CIRCUMCISION OF GENTILES, AND APOCALYPTIC HOPE: ANOTHER LOOK AT GALATIANS 1 AND 2<sup>1</sup>

Memoriae Menachem Stern ל"י sacrum.

PAUL's letter to the Galatians offers us glimpses of three precise moments in the unfolding of nascent Christianity: the negative, even hostile response to the kerygma on the part of the synagogue community in Damascus, within a few years of Jesus' execution (1: 12-16); a major decision affirmed in Jerusalem concerning the halakhic status and, thus, obligations of Gentile members of the movement, c. 49 (2: 1-10); and the confusions occasioned by the close social interaction of Jewish and Gentile members within Antioch's ekklesia in the early 50s (2: 11-15).<sup>2</sup> Paul does not review these moments neutrally. They serve as his ammunition in the battle for the allegiance of the Galatian churches that he wages, mid-century, against other Christian missionaries who preach a 'different gospel' (1: 6 and passim): that those male Gentiles who would be saved in Christ should be circumcised, that is, convert to Judaism (5: 3).

Paul's position in this controversy—that salvation in Christ is through 'grace' and not through 'the works of the law'—has served

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Shaye J. D. Cohen, John Gager, Martin Goodman, A.-J. Levine, Daniel R. Schwartz, and Robert Tannenbaum, who endeavoured to save me from the worst excesses of my own ignorance; and the members of the New Testament Seminar at Oxford University, who commented on an earlier version of this paper in June 1989.

During my stay at Oxford on that occasion, word came of Menachem Stern's assassination in Jerusalem. I never knew Professor Stern, but as so many others in the field of Christian origins, I have turned often and gratefully to his magisterial *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. That work now stands as his monument. The present essay I offer, in sorrow, as a small token of my deepest appreciation and respect. יי זכרו ברוך: May his memory be for a blessing.

<sup>2</sup> While the sequence of events is clear the chronology remains uncertain, partly because of Paul's own ambiguous phrasing, partly because the chronology implicit in Acts compounds the problem. See the relevant sections in W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, 1975); H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia, 1979); E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia, 1971), 64-71; two recent revisionist chronologies, R. Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia, 1979) and G. Luedemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* (Philadelphia, 1984); the older historiographical discussions of these problems in B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul et ses Lettres* (Paris, 1962) and (esp. on using or not using Acts) J. Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (Nashville, 1959). On Acts, Galatians, and the Antiochene community, see Meier's essay in R. Brown and J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (New York, 1983), 28-44.

for centuries as the fundamental statement of the difference between Christianity and Judaism.<sup>3</sup> But the historian and theologian know something that the actors in this drama could not; namely, that Jesus Christ would *not* return to establish the Kingdom within the lifetime of the first (and, according to their convictions, the only) generation of his apostles.<sup>4</sup> Our interpretive context for Galatians is the birth of Christianity; theirs was scriptural—that is, Jewish—hopes and expectations in the face of the approaching End of Days. To understand the episodes, issues, and arguments related in Galatians, then, we must consider Paul's statements within his own religious context, first-century Judaism. More specifically, we must consider Judaism's views on Gentiles.

## I. JEWISH VIEWS ON GENTILES

Judaism, of course, did not have views on Gentiles; Jews did. Their encounter with other nations, across cultures and centuries,

<sup>3</sup> This 'distinction' between Christianity and Judaism, born of mid-first-century religious polemic, continues to control much of what passes for historical studies of Christian origins, the recent work of such scholars as Lloyd Gaston, John G. Gager, H. Räisänen, and E. P. Sanders notwithstanding. See esp. Sanders's analysis in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1977), 33-59 and 434-42 (hereafter *PPJ*), and his shorter synthetic study *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, 1983; hereafter *PLJP*); before him; G. F. Moore's fundamental essay, 'Christian Writers on Judaism', *HTR* 14 (1921), 197-254.

<sup>4</sup> That Jesus expected the Kingdom at or as the conclusion to his own ministry has been an operating assumption of most New Testament scholarship since Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (orig. pub. 1906). The most recent full study is Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1985; hereafter *JJ*). I attempt to reconstruct the ways in which the continuing expectation of the End and its continuing delay affected the earliest post-resurrection community and, consequently, the kerygma, *From Jesus to Christ. The Origins of the NT Images of Jesus* (New Haven, 1988), esp. 133-215. On the eschatology of Paul's communities in particular, esp. W. Meeks, *First Urban Christians* (New Haven, 1983), 164-92. My use of the term 'Christian' for this first, transitional generation is thus necessarily anachronistic: they expected none further.

Paul's own belief is vivid and clear: 1 Cor. 7: 31 the form of this world is passing away, and thus he can reasonably suggest that the Corinthians foreswear sexual activity, if they are able, in order to prepare themselves for the End, vv. 26-9; 10: 11 the end of the ages has come; so soon is it expected that some of his congregations evidently were surprised by some Christians dying before Christ's return, 1 Thess. 4: 13; Paul suggests elsewhere that such deaths might be punitive, therefore exceptional, 1 Cor. 11: 30; for Romans, see below, p. 562. See also W. D. Davies, 'Paul and the People of Israel', *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (Philadelphia, 1984), esp. 133 ff.; Sanders, *PPJ* 441 f., 549.

We are accustomed to asserting that Paul expected the End within his own lifetime. What we fail to ask, however, and what needs to be accounted for, is why, mid-century, despite (a) the passage of time since Christ's resurrection and (b) the failure of the mission to Israel, Paul had remained convinced: *How, after a quarter-century delay, could he reasonably assert that 'salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed'?* (Rom. 13: 11). See below, p. 564.

resulted in a jumble of perceptions, prejudices, optative descriptions, social arrangements, and daily accommodations that we can reconstruct from the various literary and epigraphical evidence only with difficulty. To draw from this synchronic and diachronic mass a coherent (and so somewhat artificial) picture of what early first-century Jews would have thought of Gentiles, I have applied a form of the criterion of multiple attestation: if an identifiable position can be seen to exist in several different strata of Jewish material (LXX, pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Mishnah, and synagogue prayers, for example) or in material of ethnically, historically, and religiously varying provenance (pre-mid-first-century Jewish and pagan, coincident with post-first-century Jewish, pagan, and Christian), then, I will argue, that position *probably* obtained, at least as one among many, in the mid-first century as well. As with synoptic material, the burden of proof is on the claim to historical authenticity; and the coherence of the Jewish position that I identify with the early New Testament data will be one of my proofs. The material relevant to Jewish views of Gentiles falls into two categories, quotidian and eschatological.

### Quotidian Situations

What, on the average, did the average Jew think of the average Gentile? I think that we can rely here on Paul who, even when addressing Gentiles and in some sense acting as their advocate, refers to them, quite unselfconsciously, as 'sinners' (Gal. 2: 15). Their characteristic social and sexual sins—slander, insolence, deceit, malicious gossip, envy, heartlessness, disrespect of parents, homosexual and heterosexual fornication<sup>5</sup>—are the varied expression of a more fundamental spiritual error: they worship idols.<sup>6</sup>

Could there be such a thing, then, as a morally good Gentile?

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 1: 18–31, said specifically of Gentile culture; cf. the similar list, Gal. 5: 19–21, there characterized simply as 'the works of the flesh' (τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός), Rom. 13: 12–13 (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους).

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 6: 9–11 (personal, not abstract, nouns: 'idolators, adulterers, sexual perverts . . . And such were some of you', i.e. his Corinthian Gentile Christians); cf. 1 Thess. 4: 4–6: Paul's Gentiles are to avoid not only *porneia* but also, within marriage, physical passion, 'unlike the Gentiles who do not know God' (εἰδέναι . . . τὸ ἐαυτοῦ σκεδὸς κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἀγίασμῳ . . . μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδοτὰ τὸν θεόν. Such lists of vices are common in Hellenistic Jewish literature: see E. Kasemann's discussion in *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, 1980), 49 f.; in Paul's letters in particular, under *porneia*, Sanders, *PLJP*, for such lists in Hellenistic philosophy, Betz, *Galatians*, 281–3.

<sup>6</sup> Hence a standard rabbinic designation for 'Gentile', עובד כוכבים ומזלות or, abbreviated, *akkum* (עכרם), 'a worshipper of stars and planets', applied in talmudic literature to all idolators.

Josephus suggests that those pagans who respect Jews and Judaism are morally superior to those who do not. Later, the rabbis discussed the question (which is to say, there were dissenting views) and for the most part concurred: Gentiles could be righteous, and as such they would have a place in the world to come.<sup>7</sup> When the focus of rabbinic discussion shifts from 'real Gentiles considered in principle' to the imagined circumstances of the *ger toshav* or *ben Noah*, the abandonment of idolatry seems to be the measure of such righteousness: it features prominently in the various lists of the Noachite commandments.<sup>8</sup> The rules for the *ger toshav* describe the ideal behaviour of pagan residents in Palestine, to be observed or enforced (according to later rabbinic traditions) when the Jubilee year would be kept, that is, in a period of Jewish sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> Such 'legislation', drawn up as it was after the wars with Rome, was thus in many ways a form of wistful thinking.

In real life, Gentiles had another option: They could convert. Conversion to Judaism in antiquity was a common enough phenomenon to provide the material for sarcastic or satirical remarks—Horace's on modes of persuasion; Juvenal's on the effects of parents' bad habits on children.<sup>10</sup> Rabbinic law specified

<sup>7</sup> On Josephus, Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'Respect for Judaism by Gentiles in the Writings of Josephus', *HTR* 80 (1987), 409–30. T. Sanh. 13. 2 gives the debate between two first-century rabbis, R. Eliezer and R. Joshua. See also Sanders's discussion, *PPJ* 206–12, further developed in *JY* 212–21 (esp., on this debate, p. 215: 'The point of the Rabbinic passage is to pair that saying [i.e. Eliezer's denial of Gentile righteousness and redemption] with the opposite one by R. Joshua, to the effect that there are righteous Gentiles who will share in the world to come').

<sup>8</sup> The Noachite commandments establish certain minimal standards of moral behaviour enjoined on non-Jews, Sanh. 56–60. The seven traditional rules prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, violent bloodshed, sexual sins, theft, and eating from a living animal, and enjoin the formation of law courts, b Sanh. 56b. Cf. AvZar 8(9): 4–6; Jubilees 7: 20 ff.; cf. James' ruling in Acts 15: 20. See Robert Tannenbaum's comments in J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge, 1987), 48, 59; Martin Goodman, 'Proselytising in Rabbinic Judaism', *JJS* 40 (1989), 178–85, esp. p. 182; Cohen, 'Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew', *HTR* 82/1 (1989), 13–33, esp. p. 22. David Novak provides a comprehensive discussion, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism* (Toronto, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> b Arakin 29a; discussion in Tannenbaum, *Godfearers* 48; Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, 1927), vol. 1, 339–40; E. Schürer and G. Vermes, *The History of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 1973–86), vol. 3, 171–2 (hereafter *HJP*).

<sup>10</sup> Horace, *Satires* 1. 4. 142–3 ('like the Jews we shall force you to join our crowd' *cogemus in hanc concedere turbam*). John Nolland has argued that this jibe targets Jewish political, not religious, persuasion, 'Proselytism or Politics in Horace, *Satires* 1, 4, 138–43' *Vig. Chr.* 33 (1979), 347–55. Juvenal complains that the sons of Judaizing fathers actually convert fully to Judaism, *Sat.* 14. 96–106 (n. 13 below). See too John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism. Attitudes toward*

as halakhic requirements for those who would join Israel instruction in the *mitzvot* and accompanying ritual acts: immersion; while the Temple stood, sacrifice; and finally, for the male convert, *milah*, circumcision.<sup>11</sup> Circumcision is likewise singled out in Hellenistic Jewish, pagan, and Christian literature as the premier mark of the Jew, and specifically of the convert to Judaism. According to both Juvenal and Josephus, the decision to receive circumcision is what distinguishes, quite precisely, the sympathizer from the convert.<sup>12</sup>

*Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 1983), esp. 56 ff.; Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 3, 162–65, 169; also the material cited in Stern, below n. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Sifre Num. 108 on 15: 14; m Ker. 2: 1; b Ker. 9a; b Yeb. 46a–b. Circumcision stands last in my list for rhetorical reasons; in reality, it precedes immersion. That conversion requires acceptance of the whole Torah is frequently emphasized, *HJP* vol. 3, 175 n. 93 for many references; so too Paul, Gal. 5: 3 'every man who receives circumcision [i.e. converts to Judaism] ... is bound to keep the whole Law'. Further primary references in *HJP* vol. 3, 170 n. 78 (Mishnah). On the phenomenon of conversion to Judaism in antiquity, the older discussions in Moore, *Judaism* 1/331 ff.; B. J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period* (New York, 1968, orig. pub. 1939); W. G. Braude, *Jewish Proselytism in the First Five Centuries* (Providence, 1940); K. G. Kuhn, 'προσηλυτισμός', in *TDNT* vi. 727–44; more recently Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, 55–66; L. Schiffman, 'At the Crossroads: Tannaic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism', *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and A. Mendelson (Philadelphia, 1981), vol. 2, 122–39, revised and expanded as *Who was a Jew?* (Hoboken, 1985), 19–40. See too John J. Collins, 'Circumcision and Salvation in the First Century', 'To See Ourselves as Others See Us': *Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs (Chico, 1985), 163–86; Cohen, 'Crossing the Boundary'; Goodman, 'Who was a Jew?' Yarton Trust (Oxford, 1989), 4–19 and notes; id., 'Proselytising in Rabbinic Judaism'. The proposal that some proselytes in some communities need not have been circumcised, put forth most recently by N. J. McEleney ('Conversion, Circumcision and the Law', *NTS* 20 (1974), 328–33) and P. Borgen ('Observations on the Theme "Paul and Philo"', *Die paulinische Literatur und Theologie*, ed. S. Pedersen (Aarhus, 1980), 85–102, esp. 85–89) has been sufficiently refuted by Schiffman (cited above) and John Nolland, 'Uncircumcised Proselytes?', *JSTJ* 12 (1981), 173–94. The question of female conversions is more problematic. Cohen has pointed out that non-rabbinic materials seem to assume the usual method to be marriage to a Jewish male, 'The origins of the matrilineal principle in rabbinic law', *AJSR* 10 (1985), 19–53, esp. 25–9.

<sup>12</sup> 'Quidam sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem ... mox et praeputia ponunt; ... Iudaicum ediscunt et servant ac metuunt ius', Juvenal, *Sat.* 14. 96, 99, 101; Josephus, on Izates' receiving circumcision as the final stage in his conversion, *AJ* 20.38–42 (see too Nolland's analysis, 'Uncircumcised proselytes?'); on circumcision for conversion in other cases, 11. 285; 13. 257–8 and 318–19; 15. 254–55; 20. 139, and 145–6. See esp. Cohen, 'Respect for Judaism', 419 ff., and 'Crossing the Boundary', 25 ff. On the Christian perception of circumcision as the prime identifier of the Jew, more above; for the non-Christian outsider's perspective, the material collected in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors* 1, nos. 55, 56, 81, 115 (37) (Strabo wrongly construes female circumcision, i.e. excision, as well), 117 (same author, same mistake), 124 (again), 129, 146, 176, 190, 193–5, 240, 241, 243, 245; 2, no. 281 (Tacitus, who comments on circumcision both of the born Jew and of the convert).

Philo speaks warmly of the proselyte: he is to be welcomed and esteemed as one who spiritually recapitulated the journey of Abraham, quitting his idolatrous homeland and travelling 'to a better home ... to the worship of the one truly existing God'.<sup>13</sup> The 'true proselyte' is included as part of the community in the thirteenth benediction of the chief synagogue prayer, the *Amidah* or *Shemoneh Esreh*.<sup>14</sup> The convert had certain legal disabilities with respect to marriage (in particular, with priestly families), but in most other respects was integrated and integrable. As such, he or she becomes irrelevant to this discussion, because the Gentile who converts is no longer a Gentile, but a Jew.<sup>15</sup>

Some scholars take this well-attested fact of conversion to Judaism together with other data to mean that Jews actively sponsored actual *missions* to Gentiles: Judaism, they contend, was a missionary religion. According to this line of reasoning, missions are implied by ancient demography: the Jewish population increased 'vastly' from the time of the Babylonian Exile to the early Imperial period; only aggressive proselytism can account for such an increase. The significant body of Hellenistic Jewish writings supports this view: it is the literary remains of an active campaign to attract Gentiles to Judaism. The effectiveness of this campaign in turn accounts for ancient pagan anti-Semitism: pagans resented Judaism's success. And finally Matt. 23: 15 states what this evidence otherwise strongly implies: Jews would cross sea and land to make a single convert. They actively proselytized Gentiles.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *de virt.* 20. 102–4; also, e.g. *sp. leg.* 1. 52–4.

<sup>14</sup> 'Over the righteous and over the pious; and over the elders of thy people of the house of Israel; and over the remnant of their Torah scholars; and over the righteous proselytes; and over us [i.e. the praying community] may thy mercy shower down, Lord our God.' Text from Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 2 457; for the addition of proselytes to the benediction, Meg. 17b.

<sup>15</sup> See Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* 3. 175 and nn. 93–101 for rabbinic discussion of rights, duties, and disabilities of the convert who, upon the completion of immersion (since sacrifice was no longer possible) 'is in all respects like an Israelite', Yeb. 47b. Similarly Philo, *de virt.* 20. 103; Josephus, *c. Ap.* 2. 210, 261; also *BJ* 2.388, where Agrippa II refers to the princes of Adiabene as ὁμόφυλοι; after Achior converts and is circumcised he is considered to be 'joined to the house of Israel', *Jdt* 14: 10; cf. Justin Martyr's lament that converts to Judaism strive in all ways to be like 'native' Jews, *Dialogue with Trypho* 122. Isa. 56: 3–7 asserts that those who have joined Israel will be gathered in with them at the End: more on this prophetic verse and its relation to conversion in antiquity below, n. 39.

<sup>16</sup> The issue is not whether Jews encouraged admiration of their religious cult and culture—clearly they did—but whether this is tantamount to 'mission' as the word is normally understood and used, implying clear ideological commitments to religious advertising and solicitation, self-conscious organization—the image drawn, in other words, from later Christian practice. Besides the older studies of Jewish proselytism cited above, also F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (London, 1965), esp. 21–5; the more recent work of D. Georgi, *The Opponents of*

But receiving and encouraging converts is one thing; actively soliciting them is another. Do data attesting to Jewish influence or, conversely, to Jews' awareness of their wider cultural environment, require missionary enterprise as explanation? To address the data in the sequence in which I presented them above: (a) A supposed increase in the Jewish population over more than half a millennium should count neither as a phenomenon that needs to be explained by an appeal to massive conversions (and so, *qal vahomer*, to missions), nor as a datum supporting the missionary hypothesis. We simply cannot *know* enough about ancient populations to make the argument.<sup>17</sup> (b) Hellenistic Jewish literature of the sort that argues the superiority of Judaism to idolatry, of Jewish religious and ethical notions to their pagan counterparts,<sup>18</sup> reveals only one voice in the sparring of competitive middle-brow *salon* cultures. It aims to inspire respect and admiration for Judaism, presented as an ethical philosophy; its intellectual and literary pretensions indicate how small, relatively, the audience for such writings must have been.<sup>19</sup> (c) As for pagan 'anti-

*Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia, 1986), 83–228; S. J. D. Cohen, 'Conversion to Judaism in Historical Perspective: from Biblical Israel to Post-biblical Judaism', *Conservative Judaism* 36/4 (1983); Louis H. Feldman, 'Jewish Proselytism', *Eusebius, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Detroit, forthcoming; I thank Professor Feldman for allowing me to consult and cite his manuscript). Jeremiah states: 'This was a wholly new phenomenon: Judaism was the first great missionary religion to make its appearance in the Mediterranean world', *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London, 1958), 11. He cites in support Moore, *Judaism* 1. 323; but Moore's view is more nuanced, see n. 24 below.

<sup>17</sup> See Georgi, *Opponents*, 83 ff. and nn. 4–15. Reliance on so-called demographical data for this period is extremely hazardous. Harnack (*Mission and Expansion* 1; 4th edn. 1924), Juster (*Les Juifs* 1; orig. pub. 1914) and Baron (*A Social and Religious History of the Jews* 1; 2nd edn. 1954) are the *loci classici* for this data; see now Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 2, 1–19, on Palestine, vol. 3, 3–86 on the Diaspora.

<sup>18</sup> Which are usually condemned (hence the vice lists, mentioned earlier) or, at best, damned with what amounts to faint praise; i.e. where the Greeks got something right (philosophical monotheism, for example) they relied on Jewish learning and revelation. Hence the traditions that a Greek translation of Jewish scriptures existed before Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–246 BCE) commissioned the LXX: Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato had obviously had some access to Torah! (Aristobolus, a 3rd–2nd century BCE Jewish writer, preserved in Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* 13: 12, 1–16). Sometimes pagans even conceded the point: 'What is Plato', asked Numenius of Apamea, 'but Moses speaking Greek?' (*apud* Clement, *Strom.* 1. 72, 4).

<sup>19</sup> See too Tannenbaum's remarks, *Aphrodisias*, 60. Put differently: *Joseph and Asenath* does indeed 'argue' that conversion to Judaism is preferable to continuing in idolatry. But does that make it a 'missionary' tract? Is persuasion by one literate minority directed toward another tantamount to 'missionary activity'? Only in a limited sense. But scholars who maintain the existence of Jewish missions think in terms of vast numbers. To the degree that this literature had a target, that target would have been individuals rather than populations; and its primary intended

Semitism', the supposed response of Gentile culture to Jewish missionary success, most of the writers cited in support of such are culturally xenophobic: passages satirizing circumcision and abstention from pork target not Jews or Jewish customs *per se*, but anything perceived as foreign, hence threatening.<sup>20</sup> Finally, (d) Matthew's Pharisees evidently do seek converts. But they do so in a passage of highly charged rhetoric, within a document whose social situation is difficult to reconstruct. Whether real Pharisees—or, for that matter, Jews generally—sought converts is a question that Matthew cannot help us with.<sup>21</sup>

If the external evidence for Jewish missions is unobliging, the internal evidence is no less so. 'One of the great puzzles of the proselytizing movement is how to explain the existence of a mass movement when we do not know the name of a single Jewish missionary, unless, of course, we except Paul.'<sup>22</sup> Beyond not know-

audience might have been internal, its goal to affirm Jewish identity in the Diaspora. See, e.g., V. Tcherikover, 'Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered', *Eos* 48 (1956), 169–93; cf. for the opposite argument, e.g. Feldman, 'Jewish Proselytism', *MS*, p. 20–4 and the literature cited nn. 43–54. See too the remarks introducing 'Jewish Literature composed in Greek' in Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 3, 470 ff.; also 160, persuading Gentiles to the fundamental viewpoints of Judaism (esp. regarding ethical life) is not tantamount to converting them to Torah.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Seneca's remarks, *Ep. Mor.* 108, 22, *Stern* 1, no. 189; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2. 2, 85 mentions a ban on Jewish and Egyptian practices; on the cultural xenophobia of Roman literati, Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, Part II.

<sup>21</sup> See now esp. A.-J. Levine, "'Traversing Sea and Land": The Search for the Origin of Matthew 23: 15', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (forthcoming 1991). Levine conjectures that such activity was an *ad hoc* response to preceding missions by Matthew's group. Similarly Martin Goodman, on third-century rabbinic statements that seem to favour actual missions: 'One new factor that might have encouraged this novel attitude is that the rabbis in Palestine were by now aware of the success of some Christians in winning pagans . . . [T]he effectiveness of the Church's methods may have gradually changed the religious assumptions of some non-Christians in the ancient world', 'Proselytising in Rabbinic Judaism', p. 185.

Pagan evidence on Jewish proselytism is no easier to assess. Valerius Maximus suggests that Jews were expelled from Rome in 139 BCE who 'Romanis tradere sacra sua conati sunt' or 'qui Sabazi Iovis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erunt': Was this effective influence or active missionizing? Astrologers were likewise expelled (*loc. cit.*; *Stern* 1. nos. 147 a–b; also discussion pp. 359 f.) These passages are preserved in two epitomes drawn up some 500 years after Valerius' lifetime, well into the Christian era. Dio Cassius also says that Tiberius expelled the Jews from Rome in 19 CE because they were converting many Romans (τῶν τε Ἰουδαίων πολλῶν ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην συνελθόντων καὶ συχνοὺς τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐς τὰ σφέτερα ἔθνη μεθιστάντων, τοὺς πλείονας ἐξήλασεν *Historia Romana* 57. 18: 5a, *Stern* 1. no. 419). They may have been; but, again, receiving converts is not necessarily synonymous with missionizing.

<sup>22</sup> Feldman, *MS* p. 19, who goes on to tackle the problem. I *would* except Paul: he is Jewish, his gospel is quintessentially Jewish; but it is his anonymous competi-

ing *who* missionized, we do not know *how*. We might expect, at least from the rabbis—those Jews of antiquity evidently most concerned about categories, boundary-formation, and halakhic precision—prescriptions for and legal discussion of correct missionary practice, if missionizing were a normal and widespread Jewish activity: in fact, we find nothing. Rather, the rabbis' (perhaps idealized) accounts describe the procedure to follow once a Gentile requests conversion: by implication, the initiative is the Gentile's, not the Jewish community's.<sup>23</sup> Further, the earlier Jewish evidence both of Josephus on the royal house of Adiabene and the broader data of the earlier New Testament writings evinces the improvisational character of 'Jewish outreach'. If conversions were the result of missions—as opposed to the freelance, amateur, non-institutionally based efforts of individuals or the side-effect of unstructured contact through diaspora synagogue communities<sup>24</sup>—we should be able to have a better sense of how such Jewish missions proceeded. Again, on the evidence of Paul's letters, no one, when faced with a missionary situation (which, according to this line of argument, would have to be accounted for) apparently knew quite what to do. And finally, to mention here a point that I will develop shortly, Judaism had little reason, ideologically or theologically, to solicit converts.

Between these two extremes of fornicating idolators and full converts we find a gradient of Gentile affiliation with Judaism, especially in the Diaspora. Synagogues drew interested outsiders. Some, as the Greek Magical Papyri perhaps show, might attend out of a sort of professional interest, in order to make the acquaintance of a powerful god in whose name they could command

tion, the circumcisers, who preach Judaism to the Gentiles, not he; see below, p. 559.

<sup>23</sup> Yeb. 47a: 'When a man comes in these times seeking to convert, he is asked, "What is your motive? Do you not know that Israel is now afflicted, distressed, downtrodden . . ." If he answers, "I know . . .", they accept him at once.'

<sup>24</sup> So Moore: '[T]he belief in the future universality of the true religion, the coming of an age when "the Lord shall be king over all the earth", led to efforts to convert the Gentiles . . . and made Judaism the first great missionary religion of the Mediterranean world. When it is called a missionary religion, the phrase must, however, be understood with a difference. The Jews did not send out missionaries . . . They were themselves settled by thousands in all the great centres and in innumerable smaller cities . . . Their religious influence was exerted chiefly through the synagogues, which they set up for themselves, but which were open to all whom interest or curiosity drew to their services', *Judaism* 1. 323-4, emphasis mine. This is the point that Jeremiah either missed or misunderstood, above n. 16. Izates' wives evidently become sympathizers through Ananias while at Charax; Helena's contact is unnamed; once back in Adiabene, Izates is urged to convert through contact with an itinerant Jewish merchant, *AJ* 20. 34-5, 49-53.

demons.<sup>25</sup> Others, as Philo mentions in his *Life of Moses*, were drawn by the public Jewish festivals, like the one held on Pharos near Alexandria to celebrate the translation into Greek of the Bible.<sup>26</sup> But others, well attested in literary and epigraphic data, formed an identifiable, if liminal, group of adherents. Their ancient designations vary: φοβούμενοι, σεβόμενοι or, in inscriptions, θεοσεβείς; in Latin, *metuentes*; in Hebrew, שִׁמְיָיִם, 'fearers of heaven'. I am speaking of course, of the 'God-fearers'.<sup>27</sup>

Who are the Godfearers? They are Gentiles, but not proselytes; if they were proselytes, they would then be Jews. To think of them as 'semi-proselytes' is unhelpful: the word suggests some sort of arrested development or objective impediment. These people were voluntary Judaizers. According to both Philo and especially Josephus, they could be found in significant numbers in any urban centre where a Jewish community lived.<sup>28</sup> Some of these people assume—again I emphasize voluntarily—certain Jewish religious practices: ancient data speak most often of dietary

<sup>25</sup> 'Adjure demons by the god of the Hebrews . . . [and say]: "I adjure thee by him who appeared to Osrael in the pillar of light and in the cloud by day [cf. Exod. 13: 21-2] . . . I adjure thee by the seal which Solomon laid upon the tongue of Jeremiah [sic] and he spoke"', *PMP* ii. 3007-85. The anonymous pagan author (third century CE) may well have copied out his charm from a Jewish magical handbook; but the confusions in biblical chronology incline me to suspect that he relied on impressions and memories from scriptural readings in a synagogue service. See now on these texts *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells in Ancient Mediterranean Culture*, ed. John G. Gager (Oxford, forthcoming 1991).

<sup>26</sup> 'Therefore, even to the present day, there is held every year a feast and general assembly on the island of Pharos, whither not only Jews but multitudes of others cross the water, both to do honor to the place where the light of that version [scil. LXX] first shone out, and to thank God for the good gift so old yet ever new', 2. 41.

<sup>27</sup> For an overview of the current interpretative debate, see the articles in *BAR* 12 (1986); for further discussion and bibliography, Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 3, 150-76, esp. 165 ff.; also the lengthy note to Juvenal in Stern, 2, pp. 103-7.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., *AJ* 14. 7, 2 σεβόμενοι contribute to the Temple; *BJ* 2. 18, 2 ἰουδαῖζοντες can be found in every city in Syria; 7. 3, 3 Greeks attend synagogue services in Antioch and after their fashion become part of the community. *C. Ap.* 2. 39 (282) is ambiguous: he might refer either to adherence (hence Godfearers) or conversion (hence proselytes) when he speaks of the spread of Jewish observances in Gentile populations. See Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 3, 166-8 for review of this and the inscriptional data. Luke, in Acts, also refers to the ubiquity of Godfearers, 10: 2, 22; 13: 16, 26, 43, 50; 16: 14; 17: 4, 17; 18: 7. A. T. Kraabel offers an astute analysis of the Godfearers' function in Acts as a theological middle term between Judaism and Christianity, but he concludes from this observation that they had no existence in fact ('The Disappearance of the "God-fearers"', *Numen* 28 (1981), 113-26.) In light of all the other data, reports of the Godfearers' demise seem greatly exaggerated.



restrictions, the Sabbath, and the festivals.<sup>29</sup> Since they are not Jews, their observance of Jewish law is not regulated by Jewish law: halakhically, they are literally anomalous.<sup>30</sup>

The Aphrodisias inscription presents further evidence of the Godfearers' anomaly, their Law-freeness.<sup>31</sup> This stone lists the names of Jews and Godfearers—contributors, perhaps, to a fund-drive for the establishment of a soup kitchen for the poor. Among the Jews are given three proselytes, who have assumed Jewish names; and, listed separately, fifty θεοσεβείς, that is, participating Gentiles. Two of these appear as well among the names of those belonging to the δεκανία (probably the prayer quorum); nine others are identified as βουλευταί, members of the town council.<sup>32</sup> This last is most intriguing, since it indicates that Gentiles whose status in the larger urban community necessitated their public idolatry (their office would require their presence at sacrifices to the gods of the πόλις and the empire) could at the same time be active (if not, perhaps, fully integrated) participants in the synagogue community and worshippers, after their fashion, of the Jewish God.

Scattered literary evidence supports this view. The centurion Cornelius, for example, described as a 'fearer of God' who prays constantly and supports the poor, whether fictive or not, would have been understood by Luke's ancient audience to be a public pagan too, since as an officer he would have participated in his unit's military cultus.<sup>33</sup> Pagan and later Christian sources speak mockingly of Gentiles who worship in the synagogue and at tradi-

<sup>29</sup> C. Ap. 2. 39 (282) mentions Sabbath, food laws, and festivals; similarly Tertullian, *ad Nat.* 1. 13, 3-4; Juvenal *Sat.* 14. 96-106, cited above nn. 10 and 12.

<sup>30</sup> 'The purpose of halakah is to determine whether or not a biblical passage does in fact constitute a commandment, if there can be any doubt; to establish the application of a biblical commandment; to define its precise scope and meaning; and to determine precisely what must be done in order to fulfil it', Sanders, *PPJ* 76. We should not be surprised, then, at the absence of halakah (whether rabbinic or other) on such topics as the status of Godfearers within the synagogue community, on the one hand, or on the way Gentiles would enter into the Kingdom of God, on the other. We find, rather, *ad hoc* social arrangements in the first instance, and opinions (bad Gentiles destroyed; other Gentiles liberated from the blindness of idolatry, and so participants) in the second: neither constitutes an halakhic issue. See below n. 45.

<sup>31</sup> For the text of this inscription, Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *Godfearers*, 5-7; Tannenbaum's translation of the first eight lines, p. 41; for a survey of other pertinent inscriptions, 25 ff.

<sup>32</sup> On the δεκανία, Tannenbaum, *Godfearers* 28-38; the βουλευταί 54 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Acts 10: 1-4, 22, 31; observed by Tannenbaum, *Godfearers* 63. So too with Luke's centurion at Capernaum who 'loves Israel' and builds a synagogue (Luke 7: 5; cf. Matt. 8: 5-13).

tional altars both. Tertullian in North Africa and, centuries later, Cyril of Alexandria comment bitterly on the inconsistency of such practices; while Commodian—who can be placed reasonably in either the third century or the fifth—criticizes Jews for tolerating this behaviour.<sup>34</sup> The foggiest of rabbinical discussion of Godfearers reinforces this impression: their association with the synagogue was voluntary, their status ambiguous (since, as Gentiles—and unlike proselytes—they were not subject to the strictures of Torah), their religious allegiances various.<sup>35</sup> Despite the Jewish horror of idolatry, Jews evidently made room in the synagogue for those Gentiles who, like Naaman, worshipped YHWH as a god among gods.

Idolatrous pagans condemned in the abstract, ideally forbidden residence in the Holy Land, welcomed fully as Jews should they decide to convert, tolerated (and evidently solicited for *tzedakah*) should they stay in the synagogue's penumbra as affiliated outsiders. Let us consider Gentiles now in a different situation: Can they, ultimately, be redeemed? What happens to Gentiles at the End?

<sup>34</sup> Tertullian, *ad Nationes* 1. 13, 3-4. Some pagans keep the sabbath and Pass-over, yet continue to worship at traditional altars; Cyril, *de adoratione in spiritu et veritate* 3. 92, 3. Men in Phoenicia and Palestine, calling themselves θεοσεβείς follow consistently neither Jewish nor Greek religious custom. Commodian mocks those who 'live between both ways': they rush from synagogue to pagan shrine, 'medius Iudaeus' (*Instructiones* 37. 1). He adds, disapprovingly, that the Jews tolerate such behaviour ('Dicant illi tibi si iussum est deos adorare', 37. 10). On dating Commodian, J.-P. Brisson, *Autonomisme et Christianisme dans l'Afrique Romaine* (Paris, 1958), 378-410.

Gentiles evidently continued in their Judaizing ways even after conversion to Christianity: Ignatius, *Ep. Mag.* 10: 3 ('It is foolish to talk of Jesus Christ and to Judaize'); *Ep. Phil.* 6: 1 ('If anyone should undertake to interpret Judaism to you, do not listen to him. For it is better to hear of Christianity from a man who has been circumcised [= a Jew or a convert to Judaism, become Christian] than to hear of Judaism from someone uncircumcised [= a pagan Judaizer]'). Chrysostom, in 386, delivered eight bitter sermons during the autumn High Holidays against those members of his church (πολλοί, as he says frequently) who attend synagogues and observe Jewish festivals and fasts. See discussion in Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Missoula, 1978), 25-36; also 85-126 for translations of Sermons 1 and 8). Justin, more than two centuries earlier, discusses a number of types of Gentile Christian affiliation with Judaism, up to and including full conversion to τὴν ἐννομον πολιτείαν, asserting that even such proselytes will be saved as long as they believe fully in Christ. He frankly admits, however, that other Christians do not share his liberal views, *Dial.* 46-7.

<sup>35</sup> 'Halakically they're easy to define. They're Gentiles. Period.' Shaye Cohen, personal correspondence. But there are Gentiles and Gentiles, and obviously a pious sympathizer would raise questions for his host community that a totally unaffiliated Gentile would not. See M. Goodman's nuanced speculations on this issue, 'Nerva, the *Fiscus Judaicus* and Jewish Identity', *JRS* 79 (1989), 40-4 and 'Who was a Jew?'

*Eschatological Situations*

The idiom of Jewish restoration theology draws on the images and experience of the Babylonian captivity. 'Redemption' is imaged concretely: not only from sin, and from evil, but from exile. The twelve tribes are restored, the people gathered back to the Land, the Temple and Jerusalem are renewed and made splendid, the Davidic monarchy restored: God's Kingdom is established.<sup>36</sup> What place, if any, do Gentiles have in such a kingdom?

We can cluster the material around two poles.<sup>37</sup> At the negative extreme, the nations are destroyed, defeated, or in some way subjected to Israel. Foreign monarchs lick the dust at Israel's feet (Isa. 49: 23; cf. Mic. 7: 16 f.); Gentile cities are devastated, or repopulated by Israel (Isa. 54: 3; Zeph. 2: 1-3; 8); God destroys the nations and their idols (Mic. 5: 9, 15). Many passages from the prophets and the pseudepigrapha bespeaking such destruction,<sup>38</sup> however, are followed closely by others describing the Gentiles' eschatological inclusion. Perhaps, then, such texts envisage the destruction of the unrighteous Gentiles alone, not of all Gentiles *tout court*; and *T. Mos.* 10: 7 speaks of the destruction only of idols, not idolatrs.

At the positive extreme, the nations participate in Israel's

<sup>36</sup> On the themes of Jewish restoration theology, Sanders, *JY*, 77-119, 222-41 (a reconstruction of Jesus' views within this traditional perspective); Schürer-Vermes, *HYP* vol. 2, 514-46; Fredriksen, *Jesus*, 77-86.

<sup>37</sup> For other florilegia on the same theme, but organized differently, Sanders, *JY*, 214; T. L. Donaldson, 'The "Curse of the Law" and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3: 13-14', *NTS* 32 (1986), 110 nn. 43-50; Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*, 46-75.

<sup>38</sup> *Sirach* 36: 1-10 a malediction against the nations ('Rouse thy anger and pour out thy wrath; destroy the adversary and wipe out the enemy'); *1 En.* 91: 9 'All that which is with the heathen shall be surrendered; the towers shall be inflamed with fire and be removed from the whole earth. They shall be thrown into the judgment of fire, and perish in wrath . . .'; *Baruch* 4: 25, 31-5 'Your enemy has overtaken you, but you will soon see their destruction and will tread upon their necks. . . Wretched will be those who afflicted you . . . fire will come upon her [the enemy city] for many days'; *Sib. Or.* 3: 517-40 the nations will see themselves subject to destruction, outrages, and slavery. 669: God will destroy the kings ringed round Jerusalem. 761: God will burn with fire a race of grievous men; *Jub.* 23: 30 'The Lord's servants . . . will drive out their enemies . . . and they will see all of their judgments and all of their curses among their enemies'; *Ps. Sol.* 7: 30 the Messiah 'will have gentile nations serving under his yoke'; *1 QM* 12: 10-13 'Rejoice, all you cities of Judah; keep your gates ever open, that the hosts of the nations may be brought in. Their kings shall serve you; and all your oppressors shall bow down before you.' Biblical passages and citations from the apocrypha from the Oxford RSV; pseudepigrapha from James A. Charlesworth (ed.) (New York, 1985), 2 vols.

redemption. The nations will stream to Jerusalem and worship the God of Jacob together with Israel (Isa. 2: 2-4//Mic. 4: 1 ff.); on God's mountain (i.e. the Temple mount), they will eat together the feast that God has prepared for them (Isa. 25: 6). As the Jews leave the lands of their dispersion, Gentiles will accompany them: 'In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you"' (Zech. 8: 23). Or the nations carry the exiles back to Jerusalem themselves (*Ps. Sol.* 7: 31-41). Burying their idols, 'all people shall direct their sight to the path of uprightness' (*1 Enoch* 91: 14).

Who are these redeemed Gentiles? Are they the ones who had already *converted* to Judaism before the Kingdom came? No: such a Gentile, though a special sort of Jew (that is, a proselyte) would already 'count' as a Jew. To say that a proselyte is not in the category of 'Gentiles redeemed at the End' is thus a tautology. I take this to be the point of a passage often cited in support of an End-time mission to convert Gentiles, Isa. 56: 3-7. Given the present force of the subordinate verbs and the future action of the main verb ('those who join . . . I will save'), these verses are better construed as speaking to the place of those quondam Gentiles—be they foreigners or even eunuchs—who have already converted at some indeterminate time before the End. God assures them that they will be gathered together with the native-born when final redemption comes. 'The foreigner who *has joined* himself to the Lord . . . the eunuchs who *keep my sabbaths and hold fast my covenant* . . . I *will give* them an everlasting name; . . . the foreigners who *join*, . . . every one who *keeps the sabbath and holds fast my covenant*, these I *will bring* to my holy mountain.'<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> . . . ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ προσκεείμενος πρὸς κύριον . . . [αὐτοῖς] ὄνομα αἰώνιον δώσω . . . καὶ τοῖς ἀλλογενέσι τοῖς προσκειμένοις κυρίῳ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ . . . καὶ πάντας τοὺς φυλασσομένους τὰ σάββατά μου . . . καὶ ἀντεχομένους τῆς διαθήκης μου, εἰσάξω αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἁγίον μου.

בן-הנכר הגולה אל-יהוה...  
שם עולם את-לו...  
ובני הנכר הגולים על-יהוה לשרתו  
ולאחבה את-שם יהוה  
להיות לו לעבדים  
כל-שמר שבת מחללו  
ומחזיקים בבריתו:  
והביאותים אל-הר קדשי...

What the 'historical' Isaiah might have intended by these verses I do not know. My point is that an ancient reader whether of the LXX or the Masoretic Text would have little reason to think (as New Testament scholars, to account for Paul's activity, frequently assert they did) that Isaiah here prophesies an End-time mission to the Gentiles.

Are the saved Gentiles the ones R. Joshua would have had in mind, when he spoke of the righteous of the nations having a share in the world to come (T. Sanh. 13. 2)? I think not. That context implies that Gentiles who are righteous *in this present world*, that is, who eschew the worship of idols *now*, will be redeemed *then*, in the future, at the End. The passages in the prophets, Tobit, Sirach, and the pseudepigrapha, however, imply a different sequence of events: at the End, the Lord of Israel reveals himself in glory, and it is that revelation which prompts the nations to bury their idols.<sup>40</sup> So too, as I construe it, the second paragraph of the synagogue prayer, the *Aleynu*: first God's final revelation, and then the repudiation of images.<sup>41</sup>

Do all Gentiles then become Jews at this point? Is this not conversion, if these 'eschatological Gentiles' enter the Kingdom and turn to Israel's God? Again, I think not. All the material we have reviewed—biblical and extra-biblical Jewish writings, Josephus, the rabbis, and outsiders whether pagan or Christian—emphasize circumcision as the *sine qua non* of becoming a Jew.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Isa. 45: 22 'Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, there is no other'; 49: 6 (and elsewhere) 'I will give you [Israel] as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth'; Zeph. 3: 9 'At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord'; Zech. 8: 20-2 'Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one shall go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord of hosts, I am going." Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem . . .'; Tob. 13: 11 'Many nations will come from afar to the name of the Lord God, bearing gifts in their hands.' 14: 5-6 'The Temple will be rebuilt forever; Then all the Gentiles will turn in fear to the Lord God in truth, and will bury their idols'; Sir. 36: 11-17 calls upon God to make good on his promises through the prophets, to restore Jerusalem and his people so that 'all who are on the earth will know that you are the Lord, the God of the ages'; Sib. Or. 3: 616 after the coming of the Great King, the nations will 'bend a white knee . . . to God'; 715-24 the nations will send votive offerings to the Temple and process there; they will renounce their idols; 772 'From every land they will bring incense and gifts to the house of the great God.'

<sup>41</sup> 'We hope, therefore, Lord our God, soon to behold thy majestic glory, when the abominations shall be removed from the earth and the false gods exterminated; when the world shall be perfected under the reign of the Almighty, and all humankind (כל בני בשר) will call upon thy name . . . May they bend knee and prostrate themselves and give honor to thy glorious name. May they all accept the yoke of thy kingdom, and do thou reign over them speedily and forever . . .' *Siddur ha-shalem*, ed. Ph. Birnbaum (New York, 1949).

<sup>42</sup> Again, the situation of female converts is harder to reconstruct, since the ritual and social acts, whatever they would have been at whatever period and place, simply do not receive the attention that circumcision does in these various texts. The much-misinterpreted episode concerning Izates, however, does conform to the principle I sketch here: Josephus does not depict Ananias 'allowing' Izates to be a convert without circumcision, while Eleazar insists on it; rather, Ananias

But the (male) Gentiles' *eschatological* acknowledgement of God and consequent repudiation of idols would not (theoretically) alter their halakhic status, which can change only through conversion, hence circumcision. Zech. 14 does envisage, peculiarly, these redeemed Gentiles' keeping Sukkot: but I have found no tradition anticipating universal ברית מילה. Given the precise focus on circumcision as the mark of the (male) convert, one would expect this. But Jews did not expect this, and so no such tradition exists.<sup>43</sup> They looked forward, rather, to the nations' spiritual, and hence moral, 'conversion': Gentiles at the End *turn from* idolatry (and the sins associated with it) and *turn to* the living God. *But moral conversion is not halakhic conversion*; and non-idolatrous Gentiles are Gentiles none the less. When God establishes his Kingdom, then, these two groups will together constitute 'his people': Israel, redeemed from exile, and the Gentiles, redeemed from idolatry.<sup>44</sup> Gentiles are saved as Gentiles: they do not, eschatologically, become Jews.

I want to emphasize this last point, because as far as I can see it has been universally missed. From the notes at the bottom of the Oxford RSV to virtually every secondary discussion in books or journal articles, interpreters routinely slip from seeing the eschatological *inclusion* of Gentiles as meaning eschatological *conversion*.<sup>45</sup> This is a category error. Saved Gentiles are *not* Jews.

welcomes Izates as a sympathizer precisely to preserve the king's status as a Gentile, and thus lessen the risk of provoking popular incident (A<sup>y</sup> 20. 38-41); Eleazar tells him that, if he would be a Jew, he must convert, i.e. be circumcised (42-7).

<sup>43</sup> *Retractandum est*: 'The tradition Paul's opponents criticize him for violating is the same one he invokes to legitimate his position: Jewish missionary practice in the face of the coming End of Days,' Paula Fredriksen, 'Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self,' *JTS* NS xxxvii (1986), 29 f. I knew such a tradition, because I had studied early Judaism at university; Paul and his co-religionists, deprived of my educational advantages, did not. Sanders errs similarly: in Paul's view, he says, the church was 'not established by admitting Gentiles to Israel according to the flesh, as standard Jewish eschatological expectation would have it,' *PLJP* 178, my emphasis; cf. 198.

<sup>44</sup> Thus Zech. 2: 11 concerns eschatological inclusion, not conversion: 'Many nations (עַמִּים; Heb. גוֹיִם) shall join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they shall be my people (עַמִּי; Heb. עַמִּי).' Isa. 66: 19, 21 might be taken to imply some sort of eschatological mission to the nations, and their subsequent conversion, but the passage is difficult: 'I shall send survivors to the nations . . . and they shall declare my glory to the nations' . . . The nations will carry the exiles back to Jerusalem, and 'some of them also I will take for priests and Levites.' The last verse in particular is extraordinary, since in the normal course of events for native Jews the status of *cohen* or *levi* is hereditary.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. the RSV notes on Zeph. 3: 8-13 and Tob. 14: 6. Historians who explain proselytism by asserting that Jews conducted missions to Gentiles appeal to these verses as support, claiming them as the biblical source of Judaism's supposed



They are Gentiles; they just do not worship idols any more. The speculations in *b Yebamoth* 24b that in the Messianic age Israel will not receive proselytes shows how unselfconsciously those rabbis assumed that Gentiles, too, would be present in the Kingdom; because, of course, only a Gentile could be a candidate for conversion.

To sum up the two main points of this section: First, with respect to the quotidian situation of Godfearers in diaspora synagogues, these Gentiles were free to observe as much or as little of Jewish custom as they chose; but, more specifically, they were not expected to abandon their ancestral observances if they chose to assume certain Jewish ones.<sup>46</sup> No consistent set of requirements was demanded of them; they could (and evidently some did) worship idols as well as the God of Israel, and yet still form a group within some synagogue communities. Their affiliation was completely voluntary; in Nock's terms, they were adherents, not converts.<sup>47</sup> Eschatological Gentiles, on the other hand, those who would gain admission to the Kingdom once it was established, would enter as Gentiles. They would worship and eat together with Israel, in Jerusalem, at the Temple. The God they worship, the God of Israel, will have redeemed them from the error of idolatry: he will have saved them—to phrase this in slightly different idiom—graciously, apart from the works of the Law.

How do these two interpretive facts help us to understand the events Paul describes in the first two chapters of Galatians?

## II. PAUL'S PERSECUTION OF THE EKKLESIA

Paul's general situation when writing Galatians is clear enough. Other Christian missionaries—whether Judaizing Christian Gentiles or more traditionally observant Christian Jews<sup>48</sup>—have come

missionary ideal. I have not traced this interpretation back to its source in the academic literature, but the misunderstanding of these scriptural passages is at least as old as Justin Martyr, who both castigates Trypho for the Jewish failure to missionize Gentiles as Christians are doing, and argues that such missions are proof that the Church has realized the eschatological promises to Israel (and thus that the Messiah really has come) because Gentiles, through Christ, now abandon their idols, *Dial.* 122–3.

A study of the LXX's use of ἐπιστρέφω and related words (which I cannot undertake here) would go far to clear up this ambiguity: 'turning to' and 'converting', esp. in an apocalyptic context, are two quite different things.

<sup>46</sup> So too Gentiles were free to go up to the Temple and worship in Jerusalem without the expectation of an exclusive allegiance to the God of Israel: see Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 1, 176, 378; vol. 2, 222, 284 f.

<sup>47</sup> A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford, 1972, orig. pub. 1933), 6–7.

<sup>48</sup> All commentaries treat the question of the identity of Paul's opponents; see discussion in Betz, *Galatians*; also the earlier conjectures in H. J. Schoeps, *Paul*

into his Gentile communities and taught that membership in the ekklesia required conversion to Judaism, that is, circumcision. In repudiating their gospel, Paul asserts the divine source of his own (ch. 1), and cryptically relates three previous occasions on which he had encountered Peter and others of the original Palestinian followers of Jesus, and come away from those encounters secure in his own interpretation of the gospel. The telescoping of his current polemical situation with his accounts of these earlier events and conversations is both obvious and difficult. The issue when he writes is circumcision; and he implies that it was the issue as well for the episodes he relates in chapters 1 and 2.<sup>49</sup>

Commentators are well aware that Paul frames these episodes this way for rhetorical effect, and that the historical reality behind them is more nuanced than his report allows. None the less, most continue to see some sort of direct relation between the issue at stake in this mid-century letter—Gentile circumcision—and the reason why Paul himself persecuted the ekklesia some fifteen or so years earlier. I want to argue that there was not.

Let us consider the definition of 'persecution' first. Taking the evidence of the epistles over that of Acts, and drawing on the dating suggested by Paul's references in chapter 1, we distil the following: that sometime before 33 CE or so, the year of his call, Paul persecuted the Jewish members of the ekklesia that had formed in his synagogue community in Damascus. I follow, *inter alia*, Hultgren in construing 'persecution' to mean, not 'execution' (Luke's picture) but disciplinary flogging, *makkot mardut* (cf. 2 Cor. 11: 24). I translate Paul's καθ' ὑπερβολήν as 'to the utmost' (cf. the RSV's 'violently'), and in this context construe him to be saying that he (as an officer of the Damascus *bet din*?) administered the maximum number of stripes permitted by the Law, namely thirty-nine lashes.<sup>50</sup> Those receiving this flogging would have been other Jews—as Sanders has pointed out, punishment implies

(Philadelphia, 1961), 74–8; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Atlanta, 1959), 87–134. Again, my use of 'Christian' here is anachronistic.

<sup>49</sup> Thus 2: 14 speaks to 6: 12–13; 2: 20, to 6: 14; see Sanders, *PLYP* 174.

<sup>50</sup> A. Hultgren, 'Paul's pre-Christian Persecutions of the Church', *JBL* 95 (1976), 97–111; cf. my discussion in 'Paul and Augustine', art. cit., 10–14; also *From Jesus to Christ*, 142 ff. While only Acts claims that Paul was acting in an official capacity (and then as an agent of the High Priest), I assume that Paul himself would not have been a free agent, 'persecuting' on his own authority.

Hultgren implies that Paul received *makkot arba'im*, 'the thirty-nine lashes', the fixed number referring to the penalty for violation of a biblical prohibition (m Makkot 3): this is unlikely. *Makkot mardut*, however, is not a fixed number (except for its upper limit, thirty-nine blows), and could be assigned at the discretion of the court. On disciplinary flogging, D. R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge, 1967), 42–6.

inclusion<sup>51</sup>—and in any case no synagogue court would have had a jurisdictional authority over local Gentiles. So: within three years or so of Jesus' execution, the gospel in his name had spread at least as far as Damascus, where a Christian cell formed *within* the synagogue community there. Paul participated in having Jewish members of this group flogged, to the maximum degree permitted by the Law. Why?

What can we know about the early kerygma that can explain why its apostles or adherents would have been subject to synagogue discipline? A minimal reconstruction would permit us to say that it declared that the Messiah had come, that he had been crucified and raised, and that he would shortly return (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 1 ff.).<sup>52</sup> Once in the Diaspora, this message would be heard by Gentiles as well as Jews, since Gentiles were present with Jews in diaspora synagogues. Why then the synagogue's hostile response? Scholars focusing primarily on the content of the kerygma—the message of the crucified Messiah—conjecture either that the proclamation of the arrival of the Messiah would have led to legal offence, since with the arrival of the Messiah the Law would be seen to be ended; or, second, that the proclamation of a crucified Messiah would have been religiously offensive, since such a claim presents the Messiah as having died as a criminal, a death 'cursed by the law'—Deut. 21: 23, by way of Gal. 3: 13.

One sees the first explanation less frequently now. It suffers not only from lack of evidence in sufficiently early Jewish tradition,<sup>53</sup> but also from counter-evidence: the first generation of Jesus' original Jewish followers evidently proclaimed him Messiah while continuing to keep Torah.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, Paul nowhere makes the

<sup>51</sup> *PLYP* 192. This is perhaps the burden of ἡμᾶς in Gal. 1: 23: The other churches in Judea that rejoice because of Paul's change of heart ('they only heard it said, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching . . .") would have been almost exclusively Jewish; Christian Jews in Damascus had been Paul's prime target.

<sup>52</sup> For my reconstruction of the content of the primitive kerygma in this period between the apostolic resurrection experiences and the composition of Paul's letters, *Jesus* 133–43.

<sup>53</sup> See esp. B. J. Levy, 'Torah in the Messianic Age', *Gesher* 7 (1979), 167–81; Sanders, *PPY* 479 and n. 25, 480, 496; cf. W. D. Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age* (Philadelphia, 1952).

<sup>54</sup> On the continued Torah observance of Jesus' disciples, e.g. Acts 2: 46; 3: 1; 5: 12, 42; 21: 23–7; cf. Matt. 5: 23–4, on how a Christian should sacrifice at the Temple's altar. In all the Passion narratives, the caesura between Jesus' burial and the discovery of the empty tomb occurs because his (female) disciples wait until the Sabbath is over, Mark 16: 1//Matth. 28: 1; cf. Luke 23: 56, which states this explicitly. John 19: 42 and 20: 1, with its slightly different chronology, refers to Passover ('the day of Preparation') rather than the Sabbath in particular, but my

claim, when arguing that the Law is no longer valid, that it is the Messiah's coming as such that overthrows or undoes the Law.<sup>55</sup> If such a Jewish tradition existed, then, evidently the first generation of Jewish apostles did not know it.

The second explanation is more complicated. The 'hanging' in Deuteronomy refers not to a mode of execution, but to the publication that a sentence of capital punishment has been executed: the offender's body is displayed by hanging. In the biblical text, such a person would have been perceived as 'cursed' because of the crimes for which he would have been executed, presumably by stoning: blasphemy or idolatry (cf. m Sanh. 6. 4). The 'hanging' itself is not the reason for the 'curse'. Paul interprets 'nailed to a cross' as 'hanged on a tree', and suggests, by invoking Deuteronomy, that someone (or perhaps, according to some commentators, in particular a Messiah) dying like a criminal was cursed. Such a message, so goes the argument, would be deeply offensive to religious Jews.<sup>56</sup>

Several observations. First, Paul is not the only ancient Jew to conflate the biblical hanging with crucifixion. 11 Q Temple 64. 6–13, which paraphrases Deuteronomy, mandates execution by hanging/crucifixion as a punishment for treason or for maligning the Jewish people: the 'curse' would obtain, one presumes, because of the deceased's crime of betrayal, not because of the mode of execution itself. Similarly, popular Purim celebrations in antiquity could refer to Haman's gibbet as a 'tree': Haman was 'cursed', however, because of his role in the Esther story, not because he died by hanging.<sup>57</sup> My point is that nowhere outside of Paul's snarled passage in Gal. 3 does one see the claim that death by crucifixion *eo ipso* means a death cursed by God—not in Josephus' description of the eight hundred Pharisees crucified by Alexander

point remains. On the strains caused by the evangelists' commitment to present a Jesus opposed to the Law, while using traditional material attesting otherwise, Fredriksen, *Jesus*, esp. 98–114; on Jesus' disciples, Sanders, *JY* 323; also 245–69 (Jesus).

<sup>55</sup> So too Sanders, *PPY* 479–80.

<sup>56</sup> A ubiquitous tradition in New Testament scholarship: See discussion and bibliography in Fredriksen, 'Paul and Augustine', art. cit., 10–13 and n.

<sup>57</sup> See discussions in F. F. Bruce, 'The Curse of the Law', *Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London, 1982), 30 ff.; T. C. G. Thornton, 'Trees, Gibbets, and Crosses', *JTS* NS, xxiii (1972), 130–1; on ἔσλον/γυ id., 'The Crucifixion of Haman and the Scandal of the Cross', *JTS* NS, xxxvii (1986), 419–26; Max Wilcox, "'Upon the Tree"—Deut. 21: 22–3 in the New Testament', *JBL* 96 (1977), 85–99; J. A. Fitzmeyer, *To Advance the Gospel* (New York, 1981), 125–46, orig. pub. 'Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament', *CBQ* 40 (1978), 493–513.

Janneus (*AJ* 13. 14, 2), nor in his discussions of the thousands of insurrectionists (for whom he otherwise shows little sympathy) so dispatched by Rome. Further, a crucified Jew might look like a criminal to Gentiles; to other first-century Jews, Deut. 21 notwithstanding, he would probably look more like a fallen hero. And finally, once again, the original apostolic community actually presents counter-evidence: it existed in Jerusalem unmolested for decades,<sup>58</sup> though it too proclaimed a crucified Messiah.

Nothing in first-century Judaism, in other words, seems to require that a crucified man *ipso facto* be seen as cursed of God, and we have no evidence of Jews having done so. Paul deploys Deut. 21: 23 in order to wend his way from 'curse' to 'blessing' in Gal. 3. In this context the verse has rhetorical force.<sup>59</sup> But it cannot provide the grounds for a religious reason why Paul, and others in his synagogue, would have moved to discipline Jewish members of the *ekklesia* in their midst.

What else, then, have we got? The fact that this kerygma of the crucified Messiah was evidently heard also by the synagogue's Gentiles, who were in turn welcomed into the *ekklesia*. The controversy in Galatia revolves around whether to circumcise Christian Gentiles; Paul implies elsewhere that he is persecuted because he does not preach circumcision (Gal. 5: 11; cf. 6: 12); where he speaks of his former activity as a persecutor of the Church, he sometimes mentions his zeal for the Law (Gal. 1: 13; Phil. 3: 6; cf. Gal. 1: 23 and 1 Cor. 15: 9). Pulling these disparate pieces of evidence together, a third explanation for Paul's pre-Christian activity emerges. Paul persecuted for the same reason he later claims to be persecuted: admission of Gentiles to the *ekklesia* without requiring circumcision, that is, conversion to Judaism. The Law-free mission to the Gentiles, in other words, would have

<sup>58</sup> Luke reports a flurry of activity, usually initiated by the Sanhedrin, in the period immediately following Jesus' execution (Acts 4: 1-23; cf. 5: 17-42, where the apostles are first 'beaten' [i.e. lashed, v. 40] and then released; 6: 8-8: 1 charges are brought against Stephen, which culminated in his being stoned; whether this is done by order of the court or by mob action is unclear; 8: 1-2, the curious 'persecution' aimed at everyone 'except the apostles', who remain in the city). See Haenchen's treatment of these passages, *Acts*. Thereafter, Luke reports nothing until Agrippa II executes James the son of Zebedee c. 44 (12: 1 ff.; no motive provided; similarly, Peter is arrested but escapes). Finally, some fifteen years later (c. 58?), Jews from Asia accuse Paul of defiling the Temple, and so incite a riot (21: 27 ff.). Josephus relates briefly that the High Priest Ananus, c. 62, had James, Jesus' brother, arrested and executed along with unidentified others. His action offended some other Jews (perhaps Pharisees), who protested to the secular authorities; they deposed Ananus (*AJ* 20. 9, 1). The point is that, from c. 30 to the destruction of the city in 70, the church in Jerusalem by and large was left alone.

<sup>59</sup> Sanders, *PLYP* 25-7.

existed before Paul; once its opponent, he later became its champion.<sup>60</sup>

Let us consider this proposal in light of the material on Jews and Gentiles with which I began our investigation. Once in the Diaspora, the gospel spread so quickly to Gentiles because Gentiles were present in synagogues to hear it. These Gentiles would demonstrate their reception of the gospel, we can suppose, by voluntarily doing something never demanded of them by the synagogue: they relinquished completely their native observances, most especially the worship of idols.<sup>61</sup> And the original apostles would have readily accepted these Gentiles, because such a response was consonant with a prominent (indeed predominant) strain of Jewish apocalyptic expectation with which the earliest movement—also Jewish, also apocalyptic—aligned itself. Gentile reception of the gospel of the coming Kingdom and their subsequent repudiation of idolatry, in other words, would seem one more 'proof'—as Jesus' resurrection itself—that the Kingdom was, indeed, at hand.<sup>62</sup> The *ekklesia*, this mixed association of Jews and Gentiles, would then form as a subgroup *within* the synagogue. Paul then would persecute the Jewish members of this group precisely because they permitted (uncircumcised) Gentiles as members.

I do not see how this can work. The same factors that explain the early apostles' ready inclusion of Gentiles—namely standard Jewish practice toward sympathizers, on the one hand, and a strong and articulated apocalyptic tradition, on the other—make

<sup>60</sup> This mission is usually associated with the Hellenists, who are then construed as somehow in opposition to the Aramaic-speaking core group of disciples—see, e.g., M. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul* (Philadelphia, 1983); also *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1979); J. G. Gager, 'Some Notes on Paul's Conversion', *NTS* 27 (1981), 700 ff.; cf. W. D. Davies's discussion, 'Paul and Jewish Christianity', *Jewish and Pauline Studies* 170; Sanders, *PLYP* 190 ff.

<sup>61</sup> On this expectation in other Jewish literature, above p. 545. Paul too rigorously insists that his Gentiles 'in Christ' absolutely abandon their idols (and so, fornication; e.g. 1 Thess. 1: 9 ff.; 1 Cor. 5: 11, 6: 9 f., 10: 7-22; cf. 2 Cor. 6: 15-7: 1; Gal. 4: 1-11, which probably accounts for some of their confusions regarding food, e.g. 1 Cor. 8: 1-13, cf. 10: 18). No synagogue would do this; it is an *eschatological* demand to make of Gentiles. In it we see the strength of the earliest Church's conviction that, through Jesus' resurrection, the Kingdom had in some sense already dawned, and that the community gathered in Jesus' name proleptically represented this Kingdom in the interregnum between his resurrection and parousia. See Fredriksen, *Jesus*, 165-75 (Paul); also, on this aspect of 'now/not yet' in Jesus' own preaching, 98-101.

<sup>62</sup> See Fredriksen, *Jesus*, 127 ff. Sanders observes, 'The overwhelming impression is that Jesus started a movement which came to see the Gentile mission as a logical extension of itself' (author's emphasis), *JJ* 220 and discussion 212-21 (though he conflates inclusion with conversion, 216-17).

circumcision impossible as an issue between Paul and the *ekklesia* c. 33. *Gentiles within Paul's own synagogue could attend services without receiving circumcision*: why then should Paul and his community persecute an internal subgroup for following exactly the same practice?

Perhaps the higher degree of intimate social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles within the *ekklesia* religiously offended the larger community. During the group's eucharistic celebrations—especially if these were held in the homes of Gentile members—problems with table-fellowship, or with the ritual status of food or wine, might have arisen. Three practical and historical considerations, however, compromise such a reconstruction. First, we must recall that Jews, too, belonged to their religious communities voluntarily. If they were publicly flogged by religious authorities every time they privately violated the laws of *kashrut*, zealous synagogue officials would soon have had trouble assembling a *minyan*.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, Gentiles and Jews in the first-century Diaspora and later would have eaten together; later rabbinic Judaism even discusses the procedure to be followed on such occasions.<sup>64</sup> Thirdly, if food were already the issue in Damascus in 33, it is hard to understand why, more than fifteen years later, Paul and Peter have their falling out at Antioch (Gal. 2: 11–14).

We return then to circumcision. Clearly by mid-century, normal Jewish practice notwithstanding, some members of the community objected strongly to the Church's admission of uncircumcised Gentiles. Why would this *not* have been the issue c. 33? *Precisely because the question addresses the conditions for the admission of Gentiles into the ekklesia, not into the synagogue*. Gentiles could and did enter synagogues voluntarily, and as they would. And should they choose to enter *Israel*, i.e. become a Jew, the standard practice was perfectly clear, specifying, for males, circumcision. The question *whether*, at community initiative, to urge Gentiles to be circumcised arose only within the Church, and only eventu-

<sup>63</sup> Philo's lament in *de migr. Abr.* 16. 89–93 should help to remind us that, in ancient Jewish populations as in modern ones, those Jews who troubled to think about religious legislation when they ate could be perfectly comfortable transgressing traditional prohibitions in light of 'higher' modern understandings—allegory in the first century, scientific hygiene in the twentieth (cf. R. Hertz on Leviticus 11 in the Soncino *Chumash* (London, 1988; orig. pub. 1936)).

<sup>64</sup> The point is that, if such intercourse is acknowledged and legislated even by that stream of Judaism explicitly concerned to articulate domestic applications of purity laws, we should expect even freer mixing in other pre- or non-rabbinic communities. See now Sanders, 'Jewish Association with Gentiles and Galatians 2: 11–14', in *Studies in Paul and John*, ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa (Nashville, 1990), 170–88.

ally; it was, in other words, an internal problem for the churches, not for their host environment, the synagogues. Paul stood outside the Church when he persecuted it. His reasons, then, must have had to do with issues important to the larger Jewish community, not issues of membership and group identity within the small new cell.

What, finally, do we know about the *ekklesia* in Damascus around 33? That, on whatever conditions, it probably included Gentiles who were exposed to the Christian message through the synagogue. The content of this message was: Jesus the Messiah, crucified for the atonement of sin and raised to the right hand of God, is about to return to establish the Kingdom. We have failed to derive from these two facts any religious reason for Paul's persecution of this group. What other reason might he have had?

Here we have to consider the mood of the movement in the years immediately following Jesus' death. An intense expectation that the Kingdom was about to arrive had motivated Jesus' ministry. His disciples had shared this belief. Their faith in his message would have been radically challenged by the crushing disappointment of his crucifixion; just as radically, the post-resurrection appearances would have reconfirmed it. These Christophanies multiplied: first only Peter, and then the twelve, later more than five hundred brethren, and finally 'all the apostles' and James saw the Risen Christ (1 Cor. 15: 4–7).

And still nothing happened.

At some point not long after, this group burst into sustained and energetic missionary activity. The word 'mission' is perhaps not quite correct, because they were Jews taking a very Jewish message—that the Kingdom approached—to other Jews. They would have fanned out through Palestine, then on into the Diaspora through the network of Jewish communities ringed round the Mediterranean, continuing Jesus' work of preparing Israel for the impending redemption.

Into Paul's synagogue in Damascus, then, sometime shortly after the year 30, came apostles enthusiastically proclaiming the imminent subjection of the present order through the (returning) Messiah to the coming Kingdom of God. If we can generalize from the picture later presented in Paul's letters and Acts, these apostles would have found opportunities at the regular Sabbath service or thereafter to speak, debate, interpret scripture, and perhaps demonstrate the authority of their message with charismatic healings and exorcisms. Normally present on such occasions would be Gentiles voluntarily attached to the synagogue. Their reception of this message and consequent abandonment of idols

would only serve to confirm the apostles' conviction that the End was at hand. The ekklesia subsequently formed of Jews and Gentiles both would constitute a committed, energetic, and vocal subgroup *within* the larger community—meeting separately to celebrate a common meal in anticipation of the Messianic banquet; praying, prophesying, interpreting scripture.

How would the larger community respond? The belief in a Messiah known to have died must have struck many *prima facie* as odd or incredible; a Messiah without a Messianic age, irrelevant. But the enthusiastic proclamation of a Messiah executed very recently by Rome as a political troublemaker—a *crucified* Messiah—combined with a vision of the approaching End *preached also to Gentiles*—this was dangerous. News of an impending Messianic kingdom, originating from Palestine, might trickle out via the ekklesia's Gentiles to the larger urban population. It was this (by far) larger, unaffiliated group that posed a real and serious threat. Armed with such a report, they might readily seek to alienate the local Roman colonial government, upon which Jewish urban populations often depended for support and protection against hostile Gentile neighbours. The open dissemination of a Messianic message, in other words, put the entire Jewish community at risk.

The synagogue court would have no formal jurisdiction over Gentile sympathizers. But it could discipline those Jews who seemed oblivious to the politically sensitive nature of their proclamation of a coming *christos*. The form that discipline would take was *makkot mardut*—discretionary lashing. Were Paul an officer of the court, responsible for the administration of its decision, he might execute its orders *kath' hyperbolēn*, to the maximum thirty-nine lashes allowed by the Law.

This reconstruction is of course speculative. Lest it seem unduly so, we should pause to consider seriously the casualty figures of Jewish urban populations at the outbreak of the first revolt: 20,000 in Caesarea; 2,000—the entire community—in Ptolemais; in Paul's home community, Damascus, variously 10,000 or 18,000 Jews slain.<sup>65</sup> Alexandria's convulsions in 38–41, Antioch's in 40, and again in 66 and 70, stand as striking attestation of the Jewish

<sup>65</sup> These figures derive from Josephus, so the usual cautions obtain. Accuracy aside, their simple existence points to the indisputable fact that these communities were slaughtered. On Caesarea, *BJ* 2. 18, 1; 7. 8, 7; Ptolemais, 2. 18, 5; Damascus, 2. 20, 2; cf. 7. 8, 7. On the destruction of Jews in Gaza and Anthedon, 2. 18, 1; in Ascalon, 2. 18, 5; Hippus and Garada, 2. 18, 1 and 5; Scythopolis, 2. 18, 3–4; 7. 8, 7; *Vita* 6. See review of these data in Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 2, 85–183; also the following note.

community's vulnerability to the violent hostility of local populations if Rome's attention were alienated or withdrawn.<sup>66</sup> And the pagan urban casualties at the outbreak of the War in 66, and in later rebellions in the Diaspora, underscore the reasonableness of Gentile anxieties should they hear of news originating from Palestine, desemenated through the local synagogue, of a coming Messiah.<sup>67</sup>

This reconstruction can also suggest an explanation for the very different experiences of the nascent Church in Jerusalem as opposed to abroad. As both Acts and Josephus attest, Jewish anti-Christian activity was fairly subdued in Jerusalem, whereas—Acts and Paul<sup>68</sup>—in the Diaspora it continued. Why? The answer may lie in the fact that Jerusalem, unlike Damascus or the cities in Paul's eventual itinerary, had a Jewish majority. The social situation was accordingly much less volatile. Also, in the course of the four decades until the destruction of the Second Temple, the Sanhedrin had other noisily apocalyptic popular movements and *living* messianic preachers to worry about. As long as normal

<sup>66</sup> For the anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria, Philo, in *Flaccum* and *ad Gaium*; Josephus, *AJ* 18. 8, 1; on the anti-Roman nature of this incident, see Gager, *Anti-Semitism* 46–54.

Greeks in Antioch apparently attempted to clear the way to molesting Jewish residents of the city by first alienating Roman colonial government. Their attack on Jews in 40 CE may relate to the Jewish reaction earlier that year to Caligula's efforts to put his statue in the Temple in Jerusalem (*AJ* 18. 8, 2; on the attack on the Jews, Malalas, *Chronographia* 50. 10; see discussion in G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, 1961), 190–5). In 66, rumours that Jews were plotting to burn the city started a pogrom (*BJ* 7. 3, 3); four years later, when fire did break out, more slaughter was prevented only when the Roman deputy-governor Gnaeus Collega intervened, conducted an investigation, and cleared the Jews of all charges (7. 3, 4). And shortly thereafter, when Titus, then Caesar, stopped in Antioch after his successful campaign against Palestinian Jews, Greek Antiochenes demanded that Jews be stripped of their civic privileges. Titus refused (7. 5, 2).

<sup>67</sup> On Hippus, Gadara, Scythopolis and Pella, all attacked by Jewish insurgents in 66, *BJ* 2. 18, 1; Josephus attributes the revolt specifically to popular Messianic expectation, 6. 5, 4. He further relates that Alexandrian Jews, after provocation, likewise took up arms against Greeks in 66 (2. 18, 7). Dio Cassius reports that Jewish rebels killed 220,000 in Cyrene and 240,000 in Cyprus during the insurrection of 115–17 (*Hist.* 68. 32, 1–3); the actual figures are probably no more accurate than his lurid details, but again they make the point. The deliberate destruction of pagan temples in this last insurrection may indicate a messianic enthusiasm; see discussion in Schürer-Vermes, *HJP* vol. 1, 529–34; also S. Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene* (Leiden, 1979); E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: from Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden, 1976), 389–427.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. Acts 13: 13–52 (Pisidian Antioch); 14: 1–6 (Iconium); 17: 1–9 (Thessalonica); vv. 10–15 (Beroea); 18: 1–17 (Corinth), etc. Paul both gave and received lashing, which he characterizes in both instances as 'persecution' (Gal. 1: 13, 23; Phil. 3: 6; 1 Cor. 15: 9; 2 Cor. 11: 24).



conditions obtained—that is, in any situation short of outright war—Jerusalem's Jewish community was fairly secure.<sup>69</sup> But in the Diaspora, and in a situation of messianic agitation, things could, and ultimately did, worsen abruptly.

In brief: to understand the reasons for early first-century Jewish persecutions of Jewish Christian apostles, we should look not to supposed exegetical traditions defining theological offence (the appeal to Deut. 21: 23); nor should we retroject a mid-first-century ecclesiastical issue—the circumcision of Gentile Christians—back into the earliest years of the preaching to synagogues. Paul indeed invokes his past as a persecutor of Jewish Christians before his current Gentile Christian audience against other mid-century (and probably Jewish) Christian missionaries who do advocate full conversion to Judaism. Our confusions in reconstructing that past are in part the measure of his rhetorical skill. But to understand the reasons why he and other Jews 'persecuted', we would do well to remove the issue from his rhetorical framework and place it where it belongs: incarnate in the mixed and often mutually hostile urban populations of the Roman Mediterranean. Ideas and ideology do provide important motivations for human actions; but in real life they are grounded in social fact—in this instance, in the politically precarious situation of urban Jewish communities in the Western Diaspora, dependent as they often were on protection from Rome.

### III. JERUSALEM, ANTIOCH, AND GENTILES IN THE EKKLESIA

I have argued that, from its inception, the Christian movement admitted Gentiles without demanding that they be circumcised and observe the Law. This was so precisely because nascent Christianity was Jewish. Diaspora Jews, as we have seen, routinely permitted sympathetic Gentiles access to their synagogues on a 'Law-free' basis; and those who thought in traditional ways about the Kingdom of God would have expected Gentiles too to be redeemed, again as we have seen, on a 'Law-free' basis.

Neither quotidian practice nor prophetic tradition, then, can

<sup>69</sup> The periods around the great pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot—would be exceptions, both because the city would be swollen with visitors, and because the Roman government, in light of this fact, garrisoned extra troops there during the holidays (*Bῆ* 2. 12, 1). Crowded conditions, excited crowds, messianic fervour (esp., naturally, at Passover) and skittish Roman soldiers could and did combine to make the atmosphere in Jerusalem volatile and the Sanhedrin, accordingly, more than usually anxious to preserve peace. See Fredriksen, *Jesus*, 110–25.

help us account for the situation Paul describes in Gal. 2. Some fourteen years after his first visit (1: 18), Paul again went up to Jerusalem 'by revelation', together with Barnabas and a Gentile co-worker, Titus, in order to present to 'those of repute the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles' (v. 2). Other Christian Jews (in Paul's view, uninvited and unwelcome, v. 4) at this point apparently urged that Titus be circumcised (*ἡναγκάσθῃ περιτεμῆσθαι*, v. 3) — an idea that the 'pillars' reject (vv. 6–10). Most commentators have seen these 'circumscisers' as conservative Jews, backsliding into some supposedly traditional Jewish view that (Christian) Gentiles, to be saved, must be made to observe Torah.<sup>70</sup> In the light of our review of Jewish beliefs and practices, however, we know the opposite to be the case: *these men, the 'false brethren', were actually proposing a startling novelty* both within Judaism and, *a fortiori*, within the Christian movement. For until c. 49, evidently—that is to say, for nearly twenty years—the *ekklesia* had never demanded circumcision as an entry requirement for Gentiles. What had changed between c. 30 and c. 49, and why?

Posing the question puts the answer. By the time of this council, Paul had been a member of a movement that had been preaching the imminent establishment of the Kingdom of God for almost a generation. Certainly among the members of the Church in Jerusalem—perhaps even among the 'false brethren'—were those who had followed Jesus of Nazareth in his lifetime, and so had lived with this expectation even longer. If Jesus' execution had crushed this hope, their experience of his resurrection would have revived it. And as the Kingdom (now linked to Jesus' Parousia) tarried, these apostles continued his work of preparing Israel by taking the message out to the Israel of the dispersion. There they received another unexpected confirmation of their belief: Gentiles in these synagogues, finally abandoning their idols, also embraced the gospel. But still the Kingdom did not come.

Time drags when you expect it to end. Put differently: millenarian movements tend, of necessity, to have a short half-life. As the Endtime recedes, reinterpretations and adjustments must reshape the original belief, else it be relinquished to unintelligibility or irrelevance.<sup>71</sup> By mid-century, surely, all these Christians must

<sup>70</sup> So, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 82. See Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 18–32, for a review of the arguments; also Sanders, *PLJP* 17–27.

<sup>71</sup> On the intrinsic interpretive instability of millenarian prophecy, J. Gager, *Kingdom and Community. The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, 1975), 20–65, esp. 37 ff.; on the paradoxical longevity and vitality of Christian millenarianism, P. Fredriksen, 'Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity. From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo', *Vig. Chr.* 45 (1991),

have realized that their expectations had not been fulfilled. Worse: the traditional prophetic scenario—from which the kerygma, in proclaiming Jesus crucified and raised, had already deviated—had gone awry. Gentiles continued to join the movement in numbers; the mission to Israel, however, had foundered. How could they interpret these facts and hold on to the gospel, continuing in their belief that Jesus' resurrection truly did signal the turning of the age and the nearness of the Kingdom?

We see in Paul's terse review of the Jerusalem council the variety of Christian responses to this double disappointment of the Kingdom's delay and Israel's increasing hostility or indifference. One group, the 'false brethren', evidently began to press for Gentile conversions to Christianity—meaning, of course, to this particular branch of first-century Judaism—rather than simple inclusion. And there the halakhah was clear: male Gentiles would have to be circumcised. Paul angrily suggests that they would have 'compelled' Titus (v. 3). We have the measure of his hyperbole when we hear him speak similarly to Peter in Antioch: 'How can you compel the Gentiles to adopt Jewish practices?' (πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις ἰουδαίζειν, 2: 14). At worse, Peter was passive-aggressive: he 'compelled' Gentile Christians by withdrawing (v. 12b). The coercion Paul alleges of the 'false brethren' was most likely heated and passionate argument—and more likely not with Titus, but with Paul.<sup>72</sup>

2-30; R. Landes, 'Lest the millennium be fulfilled: Apocalyptic expectations and the pattern of Western Chronography, 100-800 CE', *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, and A. Welkenhuysen (Leuven, 1988), 137-211.

<sup>72</sup> Similarly Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 47. 3: 'Those men of your race [i.e. the Jews, though here Justin intends Jewish Christians] who . . . compel the Gentiles who believe in this Christ to live completely by the law ordained through Moses, or do not choose to have close fellowship with them, these I do not accept' (ἐὰν δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους τοῦ ὑμετέρου πιστεύειν λέγοντες ἐπὶ τοῦτον τὸν Χριστὸν, ὃ Τρύφων, ἔλεγον, ἐκ παντὸς κατὰ τὸν διὰ Μωυσέως, διαταχθέντα νόμον ἀναγκάζουσι ζῆν ἐξ ἐθνῶν πιστευόντας ἐπὶ τοῦτου τὸν Χριστὸν ἢ μὴ κοινωνεῖν αὐτοῖς . . . τοὺς οὐκ ἀποδέχομαι).

In this context, ἀναγκάζειν may have the sense of 'to require'. Some Jews in Justin's period, feeling the force of biblical injunctions to circumcise their non-Jewish slaves (e.g. Gen. 17: 12, 23-7; Exod. 12: 44), permitted the man a year to consider the proposition. If he declined, the *tannaim* urged that he be sold to a Gentile owner. This raises the question: If Jews, at least in principle, were not to compel their own slaves to be circumcised, in what way would those in Jerusalem 'compel' Titus? See Schiffman, *Jew*, 36-7, on the *eved kena'ani*; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 124-31. On forced conversions as part of military conquest, *AJ* 13. 9, 1 (Hyrchanus and the Edomites); cf. Ptolemy, *Hist. Herodis*, Stern 1, no. 146 (ἀναγκασθέντες περιτέμνεσθαι); *AJ* 13. 11, 3 (Aristobulus and the Ituraeans), but this too is confusing: unless we conjecture the existence of vigilante *mohelim*, the generations subsequent to the one conquered would have been circumcised at

We can speculate on their rationale. Perhaps, sizing up the movement's situation mid-century, they adduced a causal connection between the Kingdom's delay and the worsening unreadiness of Israel. Perhaps—not unreasonably—they saw the increasing prominence of Gentiles in the movement as a factor contributing to most Jews' rejecting the gospel. Perhaps they had in mind converting not all Gentiles members, but only those who, like Titus, held highly visible positions of leadership in their diaspora communities. If Jews had to be reached, better such spokesmen be Jews; were Titus circumcised, he would be a Jew. For their conviction that Israel should be the movement's first priority, and that Gentile redemption was contingent upon Israel's, they had no further to look than the teaching of Jesus himself and, behind him, to scripture. Whatever their rationale, their motivation and their goal were, doubtless, to ensure the spread of the gospel.

But their proposal was rejected. Jews other than Paul also found the idea of an actual mission to Gentiles to convert them to Judaism too novel. We know the names of some: James, Peter, John, Barnabas. Despite the stress-points in the gospel message caused by the Kingdom's delay, the traditional Jewish apocalyptic view held: Gentiles would be admitted into the Kingdom—and so, for the (as far as they knew, brief) time being, into the Church—with only the requirement of moral, not halakhic, conversion. This meant no idols. It also meant no circumcision.

These 'false brethren', caught between their faith in the gospel and its evident disconfirmation, improvised a strategy, and so devised something both awkward and new: a Jewish *mission* to the Gentiles. Caught in the same dilemma, Paul improvised too, on a much larger scale. They revised traditional practice; he revised biblical history.

We see how, most clearly, in Rom. 9-11.<sup>73</sup> Paul's letter had built to a crescendo in chapter 8 where, overwhelmed by his vision of the imminent and universal redemption of all creation at Christ's second coming, he had burst forth in praise of the power and constancy of God's love as manifest in the sending of his son. But what about God's constancy as manifest in history toward his

parental initiative. For a more plausible reconstruction, see Cohen, 'Respect for Judaism', 423; A. Kasher, *Jews, Idumaeans and Ancient Arabs* (Tübingen, 1988): circumcision was embraced as part of a voluntary federation with the Jewish kingdom in a common reaction against Seleucid Hellenistic rule.

<sup>73</sup> On Paul's revision of the sequence of events expected by more traditional Jewish eschatology, e.g. Sanders, *PLJP* 171, 192-7; Davies, 'Paul and Israel', 130-3, 142-7 (Rom. 9-11 a tortuous discussion that ends in paradox); Donaldson, 'Curse of the Law', 100, 106 f.

people—Israel's election ('sonship'), God's presence (δόξα; Heb. שִׁינָה), the covenants, the giving of the Law, the Temple cult (λατρεία; cf. RSV's much-weakened 'worship') and the promises, the patriarchs and even, κατὰ σάρκα, the Messiah (9: 2–5)? Was that for nothing? Would history end with God breaking his promises to Israel?

Ingeniously, tortuously, Paul integrates biblical history and his religious convictions as a Jew with precisely those discouraging facts of the Christian movement mid-century—too many Gentiles, too few Jews, and no End in sight—to formulate a solution to both dilemmas: the status of Israel in light of the gospel, and the status of the gospel in light of continuing quotidian reality. Israel did not heed the gospel? That was part of God's plan: just as in the past the elder (Esau) had served the younger (Jacob), so now Israel serves the Gentiles (vv. 11–13). And as God had once hardened Pharaoh's heart so that his own name might be proclaimed in all the earth, so now, to that same end, he hardens Israel's (vv. 17–18; 11: 7). Gentiles overwhelmed the Church with their response? That too was God's plan all along: the Kingdom would come once their 'full number' was brought in (11: 25). The Kingdom tarried? No: rather it waited on Paul (and doubtless others, though Paul fails to keep them in mind here) to complete the work among the Gentiles, bringing their donation, and in a sense themselves, as an acceptable sacrifice to Jerusalem (15: 16, 31). Then God would cease hardening Israel, then Christ would be revealed in glory, then the final events would unwind (11: 7–15, 23–32; 15: 8–12). Paul's very success among the Gentiles confirmed for him that the time was indeed at hand.<sup>74</sup> 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan beneath your feet' (16: 20).

Ultimately, all these issues and arguments were settled by the *force majeure* of time. The apostolic generation died away, Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem, and traditions from and about Jesus grew in increasingly Gentile milieux. As evangelical tradition evolved, Christianity distanced itself both from its apocalyptic past and from its parent religious culture. The Jesus of the canonical gospels comes less to announce the coming Kingdom than to establish the (Gentile) Church.

Yet Luke did draw, as he claims, on historical sources;<sup>75</sup> and

<sup>74</sup> We must take Paul to speak figuratively when he claims to have preached the gospel from Jerusalem around to Illyrium (Rom. 15: 19) so that he had no work left in these regions (v. 23); but his phrasing conveys his own sense of satisfaction with nearing the πληρωμα των εθνων (11: 25).

<sup>75</sup> Luke 1: 1–4, equally introductory of Acts.

thus embedded in Acts, his late first-century reshaping of these sources notwithstanding, lie nuggets of historical fact. We detect these most securely where we have convergent lines of independent evidence.<sup>76</sup> Luke names diaspora synagogues as the particular loci of resistance to the gospel, and usually in this connection mentions the Godfearers' enthusiastic response; I have argued, from Josephus, Philo, and other historical sources, that there are solid social reasons to hypothesize such a link.<sup>77</sup> Luke's Paul avails himself of the network of diaspora synagogue communities, and through them makes contact with Gentiles. Nothing in Paul's own letters rules this out,<sup>78</sup> not least his statements about his Gentiles' former idolatry (e.g. 1 Thes. 1: 9; Gal. 4: 8; 1 Cor. 5: 12, 10: 14—apparently the Corinthians' idolatry is not entirely effaced). As we know from the scattered literary evidence, Jewish, pagan, and Christian, and most especially from the stone at Aphrodisias, idolatrous Godfearers could indeed be found in the synagogues of the Diaspora. And Luke's account of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, chronology aside, recognizably echoes some of the voices in Gal. 2. James did not require circumcision, and the Church did not sponsor missions, in this sense, to the Gentiles.

Luke further relates (and in relating, disowns) yet another tradition that Paul himself might confirm: the Asian Jews' accusation that Paul brought Gentiles past their boundary on into the Temple

<sup>76</sup> I stand closer to Knox than not on the issue of using Luke to reconstruct episodes in Paul's career: see 'Paul and Augustine', 6–19.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. Acts 13: 45, 50 (jealous of multitudes harkening to gospel, the Jews instigate persecution); 14: 1–5 (Gentiles react positively; the unbelieving Jews dissuade them and instigate trouble); 17: 1–5 (Paul persuades many Godfearers ['devout Greeks' in Thessalonica's synagogue] and leading women; the Jews, jealous, set the city in an uproar); vv. 10–15 so too in Berea; 18: 1–17 Paul speaks in Corinth's synagogue and persuades many Jews and Greeks; the Jews finally bring him before Gallio and accuse him of transgressing Jewish law, v. 12 ff. Jews from the Diaspora residing in Jerusalem instigate the fatal contretemps with Stephen (6: 9), and later, finally, with Paul (21: 27 Jews from Asia). On this theme of the diaspora Jews' villainy, Fredriksen, *Jesus*, 193–4. Luke always attributes bad motivations to them; I have argued, from the data on urban populations in Josephus et al., that their actions, triggered by the messianic enthusiasm of Gentile adherents, may have stemmed from a justifiable anxiety, above p. 556.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Sanders *PLYP* 181–90 for the counterargument; I am obviously not convinced. The assumption that Paul did work through the synagogues provides a plausible social context for, e.g. 2 Cor. 11: 24 (receiving thirty-nine lashes five times) and 1 Cor. 9: 20 (becoming as a Jew to win Jews), a plausible explanation for his constant appeal to scripture (his Gentile congregations would have been even more at sea than they seem to have been in any case were the source for Paul's exhortations and arguments completely unfamiliar), and a plausible environment for Paul's circumcising opponents mid-century, who are obviously making some headway within his groups.

(Acts 21: 28).<sup>79</sup> A trajectory that we might draw from Paul's own statements in the closing chapters of Romans could converge on Luke's report. Paul's letter revises biblical history and 'rearranges the eschatological sequence so that it accords with the facts'.<sup>80</sup> The prophets had thought that Gentiles would be redeemed from their idolatry and turn to the God of Israel only once Israel had been redeemed from exile; he, Paul, knew better. God's adoption of the Gentiles had preceded the restoration of Israel: God must have wanted it that way, and so temporarily hardened Israel until Paul could complete his mission. This reordering of traditional elements enabled Paul to confront what might otherwise seem unambiguous disconfirmation of the gospel, and feel encouraged and enthused. Thus, a generation after his experience of the Risen Christ, Paul could coherently and reasonably affirm to the Church at Rome that 'salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed' (13: 11).

The process begun by Christ's resurrection, Paul firmly believed, would be brought to fulfilment through his own work. In his revised scenario, the Gentiles serve as the trip-switch of the Eschaton. What would be more like him, then—confident in God's promises, confirmed in his interpretation of events by the very success of his ministry—than to attempt to inaugurate the Endtime by enacting a paradigmatic moment from the traditional scenario? Though the sequence is changed, the prophetic script remains.

I see Paul coming up to Jerusalem with the collection and, following through the logic of his own convictions, walking with his Gentile brother-in-Christ into the Temple. He knew that he lived in the very last days. And in those days, according to his tradition, God would redeem the nations from their idolatry graciously, without the works of the Law; in those days Jew and Gentile together would go up to the mountain of the Lord, to worship, together, at the house of the God of Jacob.

PAULA FREDRIKSEN

<sup>79</sup> Luke represses both in his gospel and in Acts traditions that might seem hostile to the Temple: cf. Luke 19: 45–48//Mark 11: 1–19; he drops the accusation at the trial scene that Jesus threatened or predicted its destruction, Luke 22: 54–71//Mark 14: 57–61; Stephen's prediction of the Temple's destruction is put in the mouth of false witnesses, Acts 6: 13.

<sup>80</sup> Sanders, *PLYP* 185.

## HEGEL AND THE 'SYNOPTIC PROBLEM'

Review Article of the new translation of *The Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (ed. Peter C. Hodgson)\*

FOLLOWING Hegel's sudden death in 1831, his friend and pupil Konrad Philipp Marheineke collated and synthesized student notes and produced the unified text of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*,<sup>1</sup> which (following revisions by Bruno Bauer<sup>2</sup>) has supplied the foundation text upon which a longstanding subsequent 'reception' has been based. Yet, as A. A. McCarthy has rightly pointed out: 'While the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* constitute Hegel's last public word on religion and the philosophy of religion, there is in the strict sense no text, and even the most recent edition of the *Lectures* does not alter that fact. *For Hegel neither authored nor authorized a published philosophy of religion* (author's emphasis)'.<sup>3</sup>

The recent German critical edition has reinstated four distinct versions of the lectures which are reproduced in Professor Peter C. Hodgson's translation. This act of critical reconstruction has created what amounts to a 'synoptic problem' that in turn transvaluates the '*Rezeptionsgeschichte*'. The California translation, a veritable 'Authorized Version' in the making, calls for evaluation not simply in terms of translation (*Übersetzung*) but *interpretation* (*dolmetschen*).<sup>4</sup> A cluster of issues arise out of the juxtaposition of the then contemporary discussion of language (associated with Hamann, Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, besides Hegel himself) on the one hand, and, on the other their developed analogates in

\**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson; translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Steward, assisted by J. V. Fitzer and H. S. Harris. Vol. I, pp. xxv + 494, vol. II, pp. xvi + 825, vol. III, pp. xvii + 423. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984 ff. \$60, \$70, \$50.

<sup>1</sup> Philipp Marheineke (ed.), *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, vols. XI–XIII of *Werke: Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten* (Berlin: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1832).

<sup>2</sup> Philipp Marheineke and Bruno Bauer (eds.), *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, vols. XI–XII of *Werke* (Berlin: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1840).

<sup>3</sup> *Quest for a Philosophical Jesus Christianity and Philosophy in Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Schelling* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer UP, 1986), 116.

<sup>4</sup> We here draw a distinction formalized by Schleiermacher in his lecture *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*, in H. J. Storig (ed.) *Das Problem des Übersetzens* (Darmstadt, 1973). ET in Andre Lefevre, *Translating Literature: The German Tradition* (Assen, 1977), 67–89.